



Can Medical Student Learn from Veterans?

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Introduction

- While veterans have served as standardized patients in medical education[1], it is not common for them to participate as panelists.
- Veterans who seek medical attention at the Veteran Affairs hospitals and centers constitute a special population of patients given their experiences with war [2].
- These experiences in healthcare and with providers could shape their perspectives about health delivery. Veteran patients could share their perspectives with medical students to help them improve their understanding of their needs in terms of communication and empathy.
- This poster describes an innovative instructional session in which four panels of veterans presented their perspectives on their personal experiences with illness, physicians and healthcare.

Methods

- The four facilitated panels were presented at the Rosalind Franklin University (RFU). The proximity to the Captain James Lovell Federal Health Care Center (FHCC) provides a convenient supply of veterans.
- The veteran panel presentation is part of a required RFU course for second year medical students.
- These students were divided into four learning communities, each consisting of approximately 48 students with a faculty facilitator.
- A common set of questions were used for the four panels.

Results

Below are results based on the percentage of chosen “Agree” (A) and “Strongly Agree” (SA) responses from a 2019 veteran panel post-survey completed by RFU second year medical students.

- I am satisfied with the information shared during the session.
A+SA, 89%; SA, 49%.
- I learned about the experiences and medical challenges of veterans.
A+SA, 88%; SA, 53%
- I will be able to use what I learned in the session.
A+SA, 85%; SA, 51%
- The panelists were knowledgeable on the issues covered in the session.
A+SA, 68%; SA, 37%
- The amount of time with the panelists was adequate.
A+SA, 70%; SA, 32%
- I benefited from the debriefing after meeting with the panelists. **A+SA, 49%; SA, 24%**
- The amount of time for debriefing was sufficient.
A+SA, 68%; SA, 37%
- The meeting space was adequate for the session.
A+SA, 78%; SA, 7%
- The session was facilitated well.
A+SA, 75%; SA, 29%
- The structure of the session was clear.
A+SA, 72%; SA, 31%
- I understood the contents of the session.
A+SA, 88%; SA, 44%
- I understood the instructions for the session.
A+SA, 87%; SA, 41%
- Overall, I am satisfied with the Veteran Patient Perspectives session.
A+SA, 83%; SA, 37%

Discussion

- Student ratings suggested that they learned from the perspectives of the veteran patient panelists.
- The veteran patient panel session has the potential of influencing the outlook of second year medical students about the physician-patient relationship.
- A convenient sample of veterans from the FHCC volunteered to participate in the panel experience.
- The panel of volunteer veterans have had counseling and/or treatment for different traumas at the FHCC.
- The volunteer panelists were a very small population as they were all male and predominantly Caucasian.

References

- The combat veteran is a potential source of information and life experiences that can influence the education of younger professionals.
- Veteran patient panelists were able to make a difference by contributing to the education of future physicians.
- From their life experiences, veterans can help medical students learn about relational and communication issues inherent in their future role as physicians.

References

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2. Olenick M, Flowers M, Diaz VJ. US veterans and their unique issues: enhancing health care professional awareness. *Adv Med Educ Pract*. 2015;6:635-639. Published 2015 Dec