Emotions in Bystander Intervention Simulation: Dealing with a Harassing Senior Resident while Placing a Central Line

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Abstract

Background

Amid calls for anti-harassment education, scarce research has examined factors for successful interventions. Emotions are recognized as pivotal in simulation-based education[1]; we therefore investigated the roles of emotions when medical residents received harassment bystander simulation training. Our research asked: What emotions pertaining to the bystander simulation were related to different intervention strategies?

Summary of Work

We analyzed 20 of 32 residents attending the surgical foundations' objective structured clinical examination (OSCE). Our bystander intervention station required residents to place a central line on a mannikin while a senior resident (actor) verbally harassed a medical student (actor). We assessed six emotions (enjoyment, curiosity, anxiety, boredom, frustration, hopelessness) via the multiple object foci emotion questionnaire (MOFEQ), and identified residents' intervention strategies (from Right to Be's 5D strategies[2]) via a checklist. We conducted Kendall's tau-b tests for analyses.

Results

The "direct" strategy was significantly negatively correlated to hopelessness ($\tau b(18) = .443$, $p = .037$). The "distract" strategy was significantly positively correlated to frustration ($\tau b(18) = .439$, $p = .040$), but negatively to enjoyment ($\tau b(18) = -.464$, $p = .030$).

Discussion

Prior emotions research links loss of control to hopelessness[3]; we speculate learners who perceived the risk of challenging the hierarchy conceded control of the situation, thus viewed "direct" as hopelessly unviable. Those using "distract" showed less enjoyment and more

frustration, likely driven to intervene by the disruptive nature of the harassment and a desire to regain control.

Conclusions

Dealing with harassment is an emotionally charged task. Various emotions can be linked to whether residents more directly or passively intervene harassment.

Implications for Further Research or Practice

Emotion-aware training can guide educators on how to better deliver individualized training. Future training and research can target the source of these emotions with the aim of fostering helpful emotions for effective interventions while dampening counterproductive emotions.

References (maximum three)

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