IMPROVING STUDENT CONFIDENCE THROUGH CLINICAL REASONING THEATER

CF Cheema PT, MPT, OCS, FAAOMPT; K Randall PT, PhD, MHR; L Jeffries PT, PhD, PCS

Department of Rehabilitation Sciences, University of Oklahoma Health Sciences Center, Tulsa OK

Background: Clinical reasoning is a skill that is essential to practice in all health care settings. Sound clinical reasoning skills may lead to: more accurate and early diagnostic hypotheses; better understanding of the patient's condition; and enhanced examination and interventions that are well-tolerated and safe with minimized risk of diagnostic error. Recently, skilled clinical reasoning has been purposefully addressed to prepare Allied Health students for clinical placements. A set of seminars consisting of an interactive lecture and a "clinical reasoning theater" experience was designed as a coaching experience to build confidence in first year physical therapy students prior to their first full-time clinical placement. However, there is limited evidence that these type of experiences improve student confidence.

Purpose: The purpose of this pre- and post-comparison study will be to assess the perceived change in student confidence before and after participating in the interactive lecture and clinical reasoning theater.

Methods: All first year Doctor of Physical Therapy students were contacted prior to the first Clinical Reasoning Interactive Lecture via email, offering them the option to complete the online Likert scale for baseline data which will be repeated in March 2020 after completing the Clinical Reasoning Theater experiences. The Clinical Reasoning Interactive Lecture consisted of patient "examples" designed specifically for the experience and student ideas and opinions that were informed by their developing clinical knowledge base drove the discussion. The instructor challenged the students with complications or comorbidities and asked them to consider how this would change their examination or plan. The Clinical Reasoning Theater was designed using instructor-led demonstrations, students acting as patients in specifically designed scenarios, and encouraged the students to formulate their own appropriate intervention plans. Student "confidence" was measured before and after instruction using the Clinical Confidence Scale, a specifically designed 5-point Likert scale that is based on a modified version of Lasater's clinical judgment rubric that is used for practical skills examinations that occur prior to clinical placements in summer 2020.

Results: This early, ongoing study (which will conclude in March 2020) presents the initial preliminary findings of the larger 1-year study, at which time the outcome measures of student confidence will be gauged and reported.

Relevance to Allied Health: Clinical reasoning is a skill that spans all health disciplines. The results of this study may demonstrate a new type of experience that could be implemented to elevate student confidence in their clinical reasoning prior to clinical placements. Increased confidence in these skills should lead to enhanced reasoning while in the clinic.