

ORIGINAL RESEARCH ARTICLE

DOI: 10.26727/NJRCM.2021.10.1.005-011

Year: 2021 Vol: 10 Issue: 1. Jan.-Mar. Page: 005-011

Teaching learning methods effective in improving communication skills among medical students: A systematic review

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Date of Submission : 12-02-2021

Date of online Publication : 31-03-2021

Date of Acceptance : 21-03-2021

Date of Print Publication : 31-03-2021

ABSTRACT

Background: Competency Based Medical Education curriculum has incorporated multiple changes from traditional curriculum one among which is teaching communication skills. This review focused on systematic analysis of research articles to identify various teaching learning methods found to be effective in improving communication skills among medical students. **Methods:** Articles on communication skills, written in English, published between the years 2000 to 2020 in Medline database were retrieved. All full text articles with intervention study design were included. A total of 1061 articles were retrieved using different search strategies. After removing duplications, title and abstract screening was done that was followed by full text review for quality assessment using Cochrane Effective Practice and Organisation of Care Review Group (EPOC) checklist. **Results:** Out of total 1061 articles retrieved, 22 were found to be focusing on communication skills training and assessment. Quality assessment were done using EPOC checklist which resulted in 18 articles for full text review. Among these 18 studies, 7 used role-plays performed either by peers/near peers or student themselves coupled with/without feedback by teachers, peers and reflection writing. Student-patient/standardized patient interaction with feedback by faculty/peers/standardized patients, recorded videoclips of roleplay/student-patient interaction, virtual simulation, structured scripts, workshop, and seminar were few other TL methods used. **Conclusion:** Role-play was the teaching learning method commonly used. Studies varied in TL methods, context of implementation, duration of intervention & follow up and assessment method. Since none of the articles reviewed were conducted in India, further studies with rigorous study design are needed to explore TL methods that would be effective in Indian context.

Key word: communication skills, interpersonal communication, medical education, medical school, medical students, teaching learning methods.

Nat.J.Res.Com.Med. 2021; 10(1). © Community Medicine Faculties Association-2021