Students' Perception on Using Movies in Medical Education

Adlina Suleiman, National Defence University of Malaysia, Malaysia
Aye Aye Mon, National Defence University of Malaysia, Malaysia
Halyna Lugova, National Defence University of Malaysia, Malaysia
Edariah Abu Bakar, National Defence University of Malaysia, Malaysia

Abstract

Using movies can be an effective way to stimulate rich discussion about professional and personal development. Reflection on the actions of a character in a movie can assist students to understand behaviors, motivations and life choices far beyond their own view and develop empathetic awareness of the experiences and different realities of others. The aim of this study is to determine whether movies can assist the students in developing personal and professional attitudes. First year medical students (n=206) from three universities in Malaysia participated in this study. An audit form was completed after the screening of the movie during the personal and professional development module session. Scoring was based on Likert-type scale for students' perception measurement. More than 90% of students from all three universities agreed that movies were relevant to medicine, helpful in thinking about a doctor's behavior, enjoyable, useful for future endeavors, and the session was well facilitated. All students from MARA University of Technology agreed that movies and post-movie discussion were useful for learning purposes, and scenario was acceptable. In MAHSA University and National Defence University of Malaysia, the majority agreed that movies and discussions were useful (89.6% and 82.6% respectively), and found scenario acceptable (83.5% and 84.9%). Medical students felt that movies enhanced their learning related to personal and professional development and could motivate the applicability of medical education concepts.

Keywords: students' perception, movies, medical education

iafor

The International Academic Forum
www.iafor.org

Introduction

Nowadays, medical students do not have to skip their lectures if they want to watch a movie. The innovative teaching method of using movies has received a consistent level of interest from medical students and professionals. The students perceive movies as one of the components of their learning process. Alexander, Hall, and Pettis (1994) have mentioned the use of cinema in teaching psychosocial aspects in medicine and termed it as "cinemeducation". The number of published papers about this subject has increased in the last decade (Alis & Nazan, 2014; Darbyshire & Baker, 2012; Rosenthal et al, 2011). Short video clips help stimulating rich discussions with medical learners, especially with the first year undergraduate medical students who often have limited personal life experience, so that they find observing the life of a character in movies helpful (Midmer, 2004). Movies show common human problems, such as scenes of pregnancy and birth, critical and chronic illness, family and intimate partner violence, problems with children, teens, elderly and dying. Using short clips from movies is an effective way to initiate a discussion with students in personal and professional development module. Reflection on the actions of the character often helps medical students to understand sympathy, motivations and life choices, and to develop an empathetic awareness in different realities of others, which are important factors in medical profession.

Materials and Methods

This paper presents an education study that was conducted among 206 first year medical students from 3 universities in Malaysia, such as MARA University of Technology, MAHSA University and National Defence University of Malaysia (NDUM). Convenience sampling was used to draw the sample and verbal informed consent was obtained from the medical students in this study. The movie "Patch Adams" was chosen for this study. The participants were distributed the audit forms after the screening of the movie and discussion during the personal and professional development (PPD) module session. The audit forms contained self-administered questionnaires with the Likert-type scale for assessment of students' perception on movies and subsequent discussion. Scoring was based on a 3-point Likert-type scale: 1 (disagree), 2 (not sure), and 3 (agree). The quantitative and qualitative data from this study were derived from the questionnaires, whereas the questions were focused on relevance to medicine, level of enjoyment while watching the movie, acceptability of scenarios, role of doctors, and usefulness of movies for future career. The questions related to discussion assessed how relevant, interesting and useful was the discussion, as well as the role of facilitator.

Results and Discussion

Two hundred and six (206) medical students from year 1, who were studying PPD module and participated in this study, included 20 medical students from MARA University of Technology, 139 students from MAHSA University and 46 students from the National Defence University of Malaysia.

Table 1

First Year Medical Students' Perception on the Use of the Movie in PPD Module

Audit Item	MARA University of Technology (n = 20)			MAHSA University (n = 139)			NDUM (n = 46)		
	A[1] (%)	D[2] (%)	NS[3] (%)	A (%)	D (%)	NS (%)	A (%)	D (%)	NS (%)
Movie was good for teaching	20 (100)	0	0	NA[4]	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Movie was relevant to medicine	20 (100)	0	0	127 (91.3)	0	12 (8.7)	46 (100)	0	0
Movie helped to understand doctor's behavior	20 (100)	0	0	130 (93.5)	0	9 (6.5)	42 (92.2)	0	4 (7.8)
Movie was useful for future endeavors	20 (100)	0	0	126 (90.9)	0	13 (9.1)	44 (95.7)	0	2 (4.3)
Movie was enjoyable	20 (100)	0	0	136 (98)	2 (1.3)	1 (0.7)	45 (98)	0	1 (2)
Scenario was acceptable	20 (100)	0	0	116 (83.5)	5 (3.4)	18 (13.1)	39 (84.9)	2 (4.3)	5 (10.8)
Post-movie discussion was useful	20 (100)	0	0	125 (89.6)	0	14 (10.4)	38 (82.6)	0	8 (17.4)
Facilitator played positive role	20 (100)	0	0	135 (97.4)	0	4 (2.6)	46 (100)	0	0

*A= Agree   D = Disagree   NS = not sure   NA = not applicable

Table 1 showed that the students from MARA University of Technology fully agreed (100%, n = 20) that the movie was really good for teaching purpose, relevant to medicine, helpful in understanding doctor's behavior, useful for future development and enjoyable. Besides, all of them felt that the scenario was remarkably acceptable, post-movie discussion was useful, the facilitator worked with the group in a positive manner. Among the students from MAHSA University and NDUM, 89.6% (n = 125)

and 82.6% (n = 38) respectively, agreed that post-movie discussion session was useful. The majority of MAHSA University students agreed that scenario was acceptable (83.5%, n = 116) and felt that the facilitator played a positive role in a discussion (97.4%, n = 135). In the NDUM, 84.9% (n = 39) of students also accepted the scenario, and all of them agreed that facilitator was good (100%, n = 46). More than 90% of students from MAHSA University and NDUM rated the movie as relevant to medicine, helpful in understanding doctor's behavior, useful for future endeavors and enjoyable.

Most of the studies on the use of movies in medical education applied qualitative approach to data analysis. Our study has some similarities with the recent study by Alis and Nazan (2014). Both studies conducted an analysis of the quantitative and qualitative data derived from questionnaires, which were distributed after the students had watched the movies followed by a facilitator-moderated discussion. Regarding the study results, Alis and Nazan (2014) showed that 88% of films used by them in medical education were rated as good by the students, and 54% of their respondents felt that terminally ill patients were fully portrayed in a very realistic way in the movies, which is consistent with our findings. Similar to our findings, most of the students (63%) in their study were personally satisfied after watching movies.

Besides, the above mentioned study revealed that 80.5% of their student respondents reflected to a considerable degree the emotional and spiritual suffering that dying patients were going through in the movies (Alis & Nazan, 2014). Importantly, the majority of their students (80%) thought that using movies about palliative care as the teaching approach was more useful than didactic lectures. The students thought to a great and considerable degree that movies were helpful in answering questions with regard to the medical profession such as "How to talk with patients about prognosis?", "How to give bad news?", "How to talk with patients about their end-of-life treatment wishes?", and "How physical pain is treated?" It is worth mentioning that the importance of end-of-life education by using dramatic arts has been also demonstrated by other researchers (Lorenz, Steckart, & Rosenfeld, 2004).

PPD is an important component of medical education which is responsible for nurturing future good medical doctors, who should be skillful and knowledgeable, and have positive attitude towards their patients. Patient care and professionalism are the key in medical profession, including respect for patient and peers, awareness of values, empathy and ability for compassion, sensitivity to patient's culture, age, gender and disabilities and so on. Our study tried to determine whether the important qualities of good doctors could be highlighted in the process of medical education by using movies. Additionally, the idea behind this study was that after watching movies on medically-related topics it is easier for the teachers or facilitators to discuss the non-teachable issues, especially empathy, and patient-doctor relationships and emotions, to comply with the holistic concept of medical education. The study of Blasco, Roncoletta, Moreto, Levites, and Janaudis (2006) stated that the lecturers commonly use a broad range of biographical experiences and situational factors to influence the PPD and promotion of empathy in medical students. Part of these experiences contribute to the role model teaching scenario, in which students and young doctors are inspired by the teacher's attitudes in dealing with patients. The role model allows medical students to incorporate attitudes, behaviors, and approaches in

relation to real patients and identify emerging issues useful for their future endeavor (Blasco et al., 2006).

From the understanding of many studies, the challenges that medical students face during their long clinical training can lead them to become less empathetic and more detached from their patients (Hojat et al., 2004; Hojat et al., 2009; Neumann et al., 2011; Chen, Kirshenbaum, Yan, Kirshenbaum, & Aseltine, 2012). Despite the fact that there are studies that do not support this view (Quince, Parker, Wood, & Benson, 2011; Costa, Magalhaes & Costa, 2013; Rosenthal, 2011; Newton et al., 2000), we decided to promote attributes of humanity by using the movie relevant to medical profession among the first year medical students. In other words, we introduced the movie which teaches future doctors to be empathic at the early stage of medical education when the medical students are not yet exposed to clinical training.

Regarding the post-movie discussion session, the study conducted by Blasco (2001) suggested that an open discussion of literature or screened films among students, facilitated by faculty educators to highlight emerging topics, has proven to be a useful and enjoyable way of teaching which successfully reflects in the development of personal and professional attitudes and values of medical students. In our study we also showed that the group facilitated discussion after movies stimulated the students to express views more openly. Our students appreciated the discussion session and found it enjoyable and useful for their future endeavors.

Conclusion

From the results of this study, it can be concluded that the vast majority of first year medical students from all three institutions of higher learning in Malaysia found the movie used in PPD module enjoyable, interesting and acceptable in learning, and agreed that the post-movie discussion was useful and relevant. Almost all the students felt that the facilitator played positive role in a discussion. Medical students felt that movies enhanced their learning related to PPD and could motivate the applicability of medical education concepts.

Acknowledgement

References

Alexander, M., Hall, M., & Pettice, Y. (1994). Cinemeducation: An innovative approach to teaching psychosocial medical care. *Family Medicine*, *26*, 430–433.

Alis, O., & Nazan, B. (2014). Educating medical students about the personal meaning of terminal illness using the film "Wit". *Journal of Palliative Medicine, 17* (8), 913-917.

Blasco, P.G. (2001). Literature and movies for medical students. *Family Medicine, 33* (6), 426-428.

Chen, D.C.R., Kirshenbaum, D.S., Yan, J., Kirshenbaum, E., & Aseltine, R.H. (2012). Characterizing changes in student empathy throughout medical school. *Medical Teacher, 34*, 305-311.

Costa, P., Magalhaes, E., & Costa, M.J. (2013). A latent growth model suggests that empathy of medical students does not decline over time. *Advances in Health Science Education: Theory and Practice, 18*, 509-522.

Darbyshire, D., & Baker, P. (2012). A systematic review and thematic analysis of cinema in medical education. *Medical Humanities*, *38*, 28-33.

Hojat, M., Mangione, S., Nasca, T.J., Rattner, S., Erdmann, J.B., Gonnella, J.S., & Magee M. (2004). An empirical study of decline in empathy in medical school. *Medical Education, 38*, 934-941.

Hojat, M., Vergare, M.J., Maxwell, K., Brainard, G., Herrine, S.K., Isenberg, G.A., Veloski, J., & Gonnella, J.S. (2009). The devil is in the third year: A longitudinal study of erosion of empathy in medical school. *Academic Medicine*, *84*, 1182-1191.

Lorenz, K.A., Steckart, M.J., & Rosenfeld, K.E. (2004). End-of-life education using the dramatic arts: The 'Wit' educational initiative. *Academic Medicine, 79*, 481-486.

Midmer, D. (2004). Cine-ed: using films to teach medical learners. *British Medical Journal*. [Online]. Available at: http://careers.bmj.com/careers/advice/view-article.html?id=457. (Accessed: 23 December 2014).

Neumann, M., Edelhauser. F., Tauschel, D., Fischer, M.R., Wirtz, M., Woopen, C., Haramati, A., & Scheffer, C. (2011). Empathy decline and its reasons: A systematic review of studies with medical students and residents. *Academic Medicine*, *86*, 996-1009.

Newton, B.W., Savidge, M.A., Barber, L., Cleveland, E., Clardy, J., Beeman, G., & Hart, T. (2000). Differences in medical students' empathy. *Academic Medicine, 75*, 1215.

Quince, T.A., Parker, R.A., Wood, D.F., & Benson, J.A. (2011). Stability of empathy among undergraduate medical students: A longitudinal study at one UK medical school. *BMC Medical Education*, 11:90. [Online]. Available at: http://www.biomedcentral.com/1472-6920/11/90. Accessed: 2 January 2015.

Rosenthal, S., Howard, B., Schlussel, Y.R., Herrigel, D., Smolarz, G.B., Gable, B., Vasquez, J., Grigo. H., & Kaufman, M. (2011). Humanism at heart: Preserving empathy in third-year medical students. *Academic Medicine, 86*, 350-358.

Contact email: aamdr1908@gmail.com, ayeayemondr@gmail.com