

Medical students' attitude toward persons with disabilities: a before-and-after study

Bomyee Lee, Oh Young Kwon, Song I Lee, So Youn Park*

Department of Medical Education, Kyung Hee University School of Medicine, Seoul, Korea
(Correspondence to : ukii77@gmail.com)



Background

- Due to barriers and discriminations, persons with disabilities have difficulty in access to the opportunities of health promotion and disease prevention services, and a timely medical care.
- One of the reasons for the difficulty is medical staff's prejudice and misunderstanding about them.
- To amend the difficulty, the positive change in medical staff's attitude toward the persons with disabilities is needed.

Objective

- This study was conducted to investigate the change in medical students' attitude toward the persons with disabilities after taking the disability awareness training and the students' satisfaction with the training.
- This study was expected to show the effect of the training on the medical students, as future medical staffs, and the direction for the medical school education.

Methods

Participants & Setting

- To investigate medical students' attitude toward persons with disabilities, 99 medical students in their third year at Kyung Hee University Medical School were instructed to participating in the disability awareness training: two 90-minute-long lecture and clinical performance examination (CPX) to standardized patients (SP).

Study Design

- The changes in the students' attitude toward the persons with disabilities before and after the training were compared by using two parallel questionnaires. A chi-squared test was used to analyze the results of the questionnaires.

Summary of Results

- The training had a positive impact on the students' attitude toward the persons with disabilities ($p \leq 0.05$) (Table 1).
- The students' satisfaction with the training increased ($p \leq 0.05$) (Table 2).

Table 1. The changes in the medical students' attitude toward the persons with disabilities before and after the training

		before		after	p
		NO	YES		
Q.1	“I am interested in learning about persons with disabilities.”	24	75	4	<0.001
				95	
Q.2	“Even in private hospitals, a separate waiting area for patients with physical disability is needed.”	33	66	20	0.03
				79	
Q.3	“I am interested in the development of medical technology for the treatment of the persons with disabilities.”	16	83	5	0.01
				94	
Q.4	“Persons with disabilities do not make me uncomfortable.”	28	71	11	<0.001
				88	
Q.5	“I don't think it will be difficult to treat persons with disabilities.”	34	65	22	0.05
				77	

Table 2. The changes in the medical students' satisfaction with the disability awareness training

		before		after	p
		NO	YES		
Q.1	“The training provided me with confidence in treating persons with disabilities.”	61	38	39	<0.001
				60	
Q.2	“I learned a lot about the treatment of persons with disabilities from the training.”	62	37	39	<0.001
				60	
Q.3	“I have become to treat persons with disabilities more easily.”	59	40	24	<0.001
				75	
Q.4	“The training made me more sympathetic to persons with disabilities.”	57	42	22	<0.001
				77	
Q.5	“The training is helpful in interacting with persons with disabilities.”	62	37	45	0.01
				54	

Conclusion

- Persons with disabilities have unmet needs in the areas of medical services in Korea.
- At present, the disability awareness training is rarely included in medical school curricula.
- Our findings highlight the need to include the training for the further understanding of persons with disabilities.