Medical Improv: A Skill For All Ages
Sara Lauck MD, Erica Chou MD, Thomas Reuter
Department of Pediatrics, Medical College of Wisconsin, Milwaukee WI

BACKGROUND

- Continuous reflection on communication skills and interpersonal interactions is essential throughout healthcare education and careers.
- Medical improv is the adaptation of improvisational theater principles and skills to the healthcare context.
- Improv skills of deep listening, affirmation of others, reading emotion and embracing spontaneity are essential for collaborative care and shared decision making amongst the healthcare team and patients.

OBJECTIVE

- The objective of our study was to assess the impact of a medical improv workshop on healthcare professionals at various levels of training and career stages.

METHODS

- A 2-hour medical improv workshop was created using information learned at the 5th International Medical Improv Train-the-Trainer Workshop at Northwestern University.
- The workshop was presented to medical students, pediatric residents, faculty in Child Neurology, interprofessional members of Palliative Care and Pediatric Hospital Medicine teams, and healthcare educators at regional educational conferences.
- Workshop participant anonymous pre- and post-session reflection surveys were completed.
- Investigators independently and then collaboratively coded data into themes through qualitative methods.

RESULTS

- 49 surveys were completed between February 2019 and June 2019 and analyzed for themes.
- Data Themes:
  - Introspection- Increased awareness of emotions and character portrayal
  - Communication-Use of “Yes, and” as a tool for conflict resolution
  - Empathy- Increased awareness of others’ emotions and perspectives
- Total 89 surveys were completed between February 2019 and February 2020

CONCLUSION

- Medical improv is a unique approach to teaching communication and interpersonal skills.
- Through the experiential learning process, participants have an opportunity for self-reflection and introspection.
- Participants expressed an overall satisfaction with the workshop and reported feeling more positive emotions post-workshop, suggesting an unintended, beneficial secondary impact of improved wellness.

SPECULATION

- Medical improv has value in teaching communication skills, encouraging personal introspection, and facilitating wellness across many groups of healthcare professionals, educators and trainees.

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