**“IT MEANS SOMETHING TO US”: EXPERIENCES OF ADULTS WITH INTELLECTUAL AND DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES AS PATIENT EDUCATORS**

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**Objectives:** This pilot project aims to 1) explore benefits from simulation work and 2) learn from the experiences of adults with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (IDD) when they participate as Patient Educators (PEs) in roleplay scenarios with medical students.

Research shows roleplay – a pedagogical method in medical schools – has personal benefits for standardized patients (SPs) (those simulating encounters with medical students), including a greater understanding of their own health and improved confidence interacting with healthcare professionals. Though some medical schools engage adults with IDD as SPs, there is an absence of research exploring benefits and their experiences.

It was hypothesized PE’s would benefit comparably to SPs without IDD and their reported experiences with role-creation, simulation, and evaluation would contribute to understanding of successful inclusion in simulation work. .

**Methods:** An Objective Structured Clinical Exam (OSCE) was developed with 5 PEs recruited from the Niagara region. OSCEs assess medical students’ clinical and communication skills through a series of one-on-one interviews featuring clinical cases. PEs attended 3 preparation sessions (1 for role development, 2 for role rehearsal). PEs and trainers co-developed simulation scenarios using personal experiences, adjusted to ensure anonymity. PEs were trained in roleplay skills similar to the training of SPs for typical medical school OSCEs, with adjustments made based on PE feedback regarding their comfort and required accommodations.

Twenty-two McMaster medical students were recruited from the Hamilton and Niagara campuses. The OSCE design included 5 stations (7-minute one-on-one interaction, 2 minutes of verbal feedback and 3 minutes for PEs to provide written feedback), and 2 iterations were performed at each site. Each cohort of students received a brief orientation prior to the OSCE and opportunity for feedback when finished.

PE experiences in role creation, role rehearsal, OSCE experience and student evaluation are being explored through elicited written and verbal feedback from semi-structured one-on-one interviews, OSCE sessions and focus group sessions following each set of OSCEs. Thematic analysis of PE narrative content will be conducted. . Pre/post questionnaires employing a semantic differential scale will be used to analyze changes in PE perceptions of health and healthcare.

**Results:** Preliminary results suggest PE experiences are positive overall, and OSCE participation led to self-empowerment and personal discoveries. Challenges for PEs were discussed, recorded and adjustments made at each stage for successful participation. OSCE iterations are complete. Qualitative analysis is in progress. Four month post-OSCE questionnaires and interviews will be completed in March. .

**Discussion/Conclusion:** Adults with IDD are often underserved by the healthcare system due to increased mental and physical health needs and barriers to care, including inadequate training of medical professionals. Early results suggest adults with IDD benefit from involvement in roleplay as SPs. There is a need for more study in this area. Results of this pilot study will contribute to understanding of the benefits for PEs and students in simulation work, and may provide guidance for educators and curriculum developers hoping to further integrate adults with IDD into medical education.

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