

Title: Training interns in group patient education in an urban Indian setting

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Context and Setting: Group patient education is frequently offered for patients suffering from mental health issues in India. It has been shown to be an effective tool for increasing patient understanding of their disease with subsequent improvement in self-management. This study was conducted in an outpatient department of a tertiary hospital in Mumbai. Patients with depression formed the patient education groups.

Purpose: Interns in India are not trained to conduct patient education sessions. We wanted to create a training program for them in this domain so that they could use these skills with patients suffering from a variety of chronic illnesses.

Methods: A workshop discussing the need for and methods of group patient education was conducted, during which interns were taught about depression and its impact on the role of self and families. The skills component covered introduction, greeting, gathering and giving information, listening, picking verbal and non verbal cues, rapport, empathy, negotiating, involving all members, facilitating and staying in control of the group. A focus group with patients was held to gather advice on the content of the workshop. The workshop was conducted using a combination of lecture and role play. In addition, when the interns were posted in small groups in the psychiatry department, they observed an actual patient education session in progress. Interns then conducted a group session with feedback from the psychiatry faculty.

Interns' pre- and post-knowledge was assessed with a written test. Psychiatry faculty observed and evaluated the sessions as well. Patients and their families were asked to evaluate the effectiveness of the sessions. In addition, their knowledge of depression was assessed pre- and post-intervention.

Items in the written assessment were developed by consensus among psychiatry faculty with input from other mental health experts in the Mumbai area.

Forty-three interns posted in psychiatry participated in the training. Pairs of interns conducted the group education sessions with 4-6 patients and relatives per group.

Evaluation/impact: Mean score on pre- and post-intervention testing was 74.37% and 91.56%, respectively. We found that most of the intern's had mastered 95% of content and skills required to conduct a group. Among the content, the highest score was for discussing signs and symptoms, etiology and options (>95%); lowest score was for discussion of risk factors for relapse (48.8%). Among the skills, staying in control was the least learned (53.5) while greeting, identifying problems, issuing solutions and giving information were skills well learned (>90%). Sixty-three percent of interns rated their overall satisfaction in the range of 75-100%. Patients and relatives increased their knowledge of depression. Greater than 90% of patients indicated that they felt heard,

their issues were addressed and understood, and that their role in management was clearer.

Our program increased interns' knowledge of the importance and skills in the methods for group education of patients. Patients expressed satisfaction with sessions and demonstrated an increase in their knowledge. We anticipate that the skills developed by interns will be used in other setting beyond the mental health arena.