Good, better, the best? Self-assessment as a tool of teamwork skills improvement

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Background: Teamwork has become a major focus in healthcare. Together with effective communication, it offers increased productivity, improved efficiency and safer patient care. The aim of our study was to evaluate medical students’ self-assessment of their teamwork skills.

Methods: For our study, we prepared clinical scenario of acute deterioration of chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) using iStan patient simulator. We included 18 year-6 medical students who were divided into six equal teams (T1-6). In every team each member was assigned a role (doctor, medical student and nurse). Three teams (T4-6) were given a lesson about communication in medical team (use of Situation Background Assessment Recommendation (SBAR) approach, Closed loops communication approach, importance of being a leader/follower). At the end of the simulation students had to evaluate their work in four aspects (competences of leader, competence of followers, team performance and team communication).

We compared medical students’ self-assessment with our objective assessment of their teamwork skills. Furthermore, we compared the team assessments regarding the given communication lesson.

Results: Teams (T1-6) assessed their work at the end of the simulation with 75%, 87.5%, 87.5%, 100%, 75% and 87.5% of points respectively. However, in our objective assessment, they reached 50%, 37.5%, 25%, 100%, 75% and 100% of points respectively. Teams with communication lesson (T4-6) gained higher scores comparing to other three teams. The self-assessment of all the groups was similar regardless of theoretical introduction on team communication (Figure 1).

Figure 1. Assessment of medical students’ teamwork skills. Teams 4-6 were given a lesson about communication in a medical team.
**Conclusion**: The teams with communication lesson were more attentive to the transfer of information between team members and their functioning as a team. Consequently, their self-evaluation was similar or even more strict that our objective assessment. Contrary, T1-3 evaluated themselves better in comparison to our appraisal because of lack of criticism related to lower team communication knowledge. In order to improve teamwork and team communication together with self-assessment skills, we should give more attention to that subject already during undergraduate education.