

Medical College Library's Assistant Function on Medical Humanistic Education and Its Application

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Abstract: Medical humanities education is good for developing the medical students' comprehensive skills and building a future harmonious doctor-patient relationship. Although the importance of medical humanistic education has been realized by most Chinese medical colleges these years, the actual results are not encouraging because of the influence from a long-time traditional biomedical teaching model and some unavoidable realities. So, it is necessary and important to shift thinking patterns and look for some new ways to supply the humanistic education for the medical students. The paper stands on the point of medical library to state that medical college library can and has the ability for playing a meaningful role in medical college students' humanistic education by planning and hosting some humanistic activities. And medical college library can be and should be an indispensable second-classroom for medical humanistic education.

1. Introduction

Medical humanistic quality mainly refers to accumulation of medical humanistic knowledge and cultivation of medical humanistic spirit. Generally speaking, medical humanistic quality can be classified into morality quality, cultural and aesthetic quality. The former includes ideological quality, political quality, physiological quality, psychological quality and physical quality, etc. The latter includes cultural quality, aesthetic quality, health and psychological quality, etc.[Guo, Yongsong& Zhang, Liangji,2006] Specifically speaking, the concept of "medical humanities" actually has three meanings: (1)it refers to "medical humanistic spirit", which is the ultimate concern of mankind and the promotion of human nature. It means the recognition of the "medical limitation" and emphasis of the respect for people and the fear of life. (2) it refers to "medical humanistic care", which is the emphasis of the good deeds for others, such as the ethical value in medical research and clinical treatment, a good doctor-patient communication ability. (3) it refers to "medical humanistic disciplines" about studying and exploring medical essence and value, such as medical history, medical philosophy, medical ethics and so on. Medical humanistic spirit is on the conceptual aspect and medical humanistic care is from the practical one, while medical humanistic discipline is between them, and it is from the concept to the practice and from knowledge to action.[2]

The concept of medical humanistic education was first put forward in the United States and its importance was embodied gradually. By the year 1995, almost all medical colleges in US had set up

medical humanities and social science courses, which were rich in content and high in quality. Following the steps of the United States, many medical universities in other Western countries, such as the United Kingdom, Canada, Germany, and Sweden also integrated the learning of medical humanities in their curricula and recognized their value.[Ousager J,2010;Wachtler C,2006; Evans M,2001;Rutberg PC,2017] In Japan, the core curriculum for humanities in medical education includes medical ethics and bioethics, a patient's rights and informed consent, a doctor's obligations and responsibilities, medical safety and risk management, communication and group medical care, and problem-solving and logical thinking.[Peipei Song &Wei Tang,2017] In China, the humanistic quality-oriented education started in the 1980s and was almost developed all over the country in the 90s.

2. The Importance of Humanistic Education for the Medical College Students

On the tombstone of Dr. Edward Livingston Trudeau (1848-1915), there is a very famous aphorism engraved on it, which is "To Cure Sometimes, To Relieve Often, and To Comfort Always". It has witnessed and been shining the light of medical humanities for one century. It is a reminder that medical practitioners' duties are not limited to the treatment of disease, but also include relieving and comforting patients. "To Relieve Often, To Comfort Always" is an expression of humanistic spirit; if humanistic spirit was to be separated from medical practice, then the essential goal of medicine would be betrayed[Peipei Song&Wei Tang,2017]. So, the medical graduates, the future medical worker, should be more like a healer and comforter and should attend to the whole patient, not just the disease [Shapiro J et al.,2009].

Medical humanities can provide insight into the human condition, illness and suffering, the perception of one's self, professionalism, and responsibilities to one's self and to others, colleagues, and patients. All of the sciences in medical humanities are keys to the quality education of future doctors. Realizing the importance of the medical humanistic education can make medical students focus on the patients more than disease; focus on patient care more than the treatment; focus on patients' subjective experiences more than lab tests; focus on psychological changes more than physical recovery; and focus on the ethical and social considerations more than the use of technology. An ideal modern medicine is to enhance the humanities in medical education, to foster medical talents with humanistic spirit, and to promote the integration of medical scientific spirit and medical humanistic spirit.[Peipei Song & Wei Tang,2017]

Medical humanities can foster medical students' critical thinking as well as their understanding of personal values, empathy, cultural competence, leadership, and teamwork, thus preparing medical students to respond appropriately to complicated clinical problems [Bolton G, 2003]. It does good to foster medical talents with humanistic spirit, such as compassion, engagement, integrity, respect for patients, and a commitment to their own human flourishing[Peipei Song,2017;10,11]

Research has shown that medical university students with a humanities and science background perform better in practice than those with a science background alone [Rolfe IE et al., 1995]. So, humanistic education is an important task for medical colleges and universities in China to carry out. With the diversification and globalization of medical humanities, medical humanities education has become an important component of medical education reform. So, it is necessary and important to shift thinking pattern and look for some new ways to give medical students the humanistic education.

3. The Status Quo of Medical Humanistic Education in China

In China, medical education has been paid more attention to the teaching of medical theory and skills, while the cultivation of humanistic qualities has been ignored for a long time. Although the

situation has been improved in recent years, more and more Chinese medical colleges have realized the importance of medical humanistic education, we cannot deny that the construction of humanities is the result of long-term accumulation and the following problems still exist and cannot be neglected.

(1) In the medical college, the design of humanities and social science courses is relatively limited, mostly with few class hours. Less teaching periods are allotted for the humanistic education. The teaching period is about 8% of the total class hours. Teacher allocation is also uneven. The number of medical teachers is much higher than that of humanities teachers. (2) The combination of teaching content and medical education and practice is insufficient. Educational concept relatively lags behind and humanistic courses have not obtained expected emphasis. The phenomenon of five emphasis and five ignorance is serious (namely, emphasis on universality and ignorance of individuality, emphasis on utility and ignorance of quality, emphasis of books and ignorance of practice, emphasis on nature and ignorance of humanity, and emphasis on indoctrination and ignorance of internalization). (3) Compared with traditional subject teaching, the arrangement of humanistic courses in medical ones is not rigorous and has more randomness. The systematicness is deficient and the curriculum system lacks standardization and perfection. Some courses like medical ethics, health law, medical psychology, aesthetics and art appreciation are only existed as the optional courses. Some courses are not scheduled in the teaching plans and have no teaching syllabus and fixed textbooks. (4) In terms of teaching method, teaching of humanistic courses in medical colleges is mainly inculcation of theories, and lecturing is the primary teaching method. Some more efficient teaching methods such as heuristic method, discussion method and interactive method have not been effectively applied. (5) In Chinese medical colleges, the medical humanistic education has a short history, and emphasis on humanistic subjects in medical colleges is obviously insufficient. Humanistic teachers' team is still weak and teachers' knowledge structure is single. There are quite a large number of humanistic subjects that have not a teaching and research office. [Wang, Dijuan& Wu, Peipei, 2007]

So, the Status Quo of Medical Humanistic Education in China reflects in the following aspects:(1)Because of low humanistic quality, medical students' imagination, creativity, thinking mode and innovative spirit are relatively not enough. (2)Doctors' attitude bias to different patients, more and more deteriorated doctor-patient relationships, most medical students' confusions about how to deal with the doctor-patient relationship during the clinical probation period and etc., which all means that humanistic concern is relatively insufficient. (3)Humanistic quality concept is relatively laggard. Quite a lot of medical students have not had enough knowledge in the essence of medical science and in the internal connection between medical science and humanistic courses. (4)Quite a lot of medical students have solid professional knowledge,while knowing little about humanistic science, especially ideological and political theory courses and traditional Chinese cultural, geographical and historical knowledge. (5)Doctor's occupation is relatively stable with high income, which is the reason for many Chinese students choose medical as their major. While this kind of utilitarian idea makes them have little consciousness in cultivating their concern for patients, dedication to the society and devotion to the medical treatment and public health career. (6) Under the pressure of the heavy professional courses and confusion about their future,the medical students'spiritual world is void. They are deficient in infiltration and direction of humanistic spirit. [Shulei Liu, 2012]

4. The Role of the Library in Medical College for Humanistic Education

In China, although the library exists as a teaching auxiliary unit, it plays a crucial role in improving and supplementing college students' education. The basic spirit of the college library is the

humanistic spirit. The library has a strong humanistic atmosphere since its birth. J. H. shera, a famous American library science theorist, once wrote a representative book---"the introduction to the library" and in the book he pointed outthat librarianship is mainly a humanistic one...Library science is getting closer to the social sciences and natural sciences in terms of its technology and services, but we should remind ourselves that libraries begin with humanism. As an important place for teaching and educating people, the university library undertakes the special mission of cultivating the humanistic spirit of college students and making the teachers and students absorb the nourishment of the humanistic spirit. So is the medial college library.[HU Jing, 2008]

According to the result of a research, it shows that most medical students are willing to go to the library for studying in their spare time. So, as a second-classroom for the college students and standing at the heart of the information sciences in a medical college, medical library, with tens of thousands of resources are available for the college faculty and students, is an obvious partner for providing materials, training and programs to support the teaching of medical humanities [Sally Birch, AmaniMagid&Alan Weber, 2013]. And medical college library can play the necessary and auxiliary functions in disseminating humanistic information.

Humanistic education is not an overnight success and the results and influences of it cannot be pursued immediately. The medical library has two kinds of advantages in cultivate students' humanistic quality, which are the spatial one and the resource one. In the aspect of spatial, the space in the library is opened to all of the students. After careful design and soft decoration, students can feel the strong humanistic atmosphere in some reading rooms of the library. Thus, the unique humanistic decoration can absorb more medical students. In the aspect of resource, there are amounts of books、 journals (paper and electronic) and videos stored in the library, many of which are related to humanity. Librarians can make full use of their working time to plan some interesting and meaningful activities to lead the students close to the humanity. Making medical students interested in the humanities and are willing to touch it is the starting point of the medical library. Although the library cannot be a leading force in medical humanistic education, it is a success if medical students can feel the humanity and are planted a seed of humanity in their body.

With this idea, the library of Xi'an Medical University tries to play a positive and supportive role in medical students' humanistic education. It bases on its own existing resources, deep excavates and utilizes them. Through some activities, it proves that medical college library can be a suitable supplement for humanistic education.

5. Here are two typical activities related to humanistic education that are launched by the library

These years, our library made efforts to cultivate medical students' humanistic quality by launching many activities. The two effective are Humanistic Salon and Reading Challenge for Ten Hours.

As we all know that academic report has some unmatched functionality in broadening students' vision and knowing something new or systematic in a short time. There are schools of arts and humanities in the comprehensive universities while humanities lectures are seldom and humanistic faculties are limited in the medical college. Facing this situation, the library can do something meaningful for creating a humanistic environment for the medical students. Using my library as an example, we plans and organizes a small-scale lecture named humanistic salon. We base on the existing resources and tap deeply the useful one in our own college. The first thing we do is to make the best of the teachers from literature department and from foreign language department. Every term, two or three of them will be invited to the library and introduce some Chinese traditional poems and culture; some famous Western movies, poems, fictions and music from a professional perspective. Because of teacher's wonderful sharing, many medical students become the teachers'

fans and gradually have some interests in the humanistic knowledge. The second thing we do is to invite some professors whose major is medical to the library to give students the humanistic speeches. When they are invited to the library, their role is changed from the medical professional to the sharer of humanity they are interested, such as photography, travel, art appreciation, film appreciation, fabric art and delicious food etc. How to make a good composition with own phone、 how to appreciate Da Vinci's paintings、 and how the ancient Greek, one of the four great ancient civilizations, do the papyrus and the secrets behind the pharaohs, all these interesting information will be passed on to the medical students. Instead of a teaching desk and a lectern, library supplies the space and create an easy sharing environment. We developed our humanistic salon this semester and opened up a series lecture. We invited our literature professor to give four lectures about A Dream in Red Mansions. The professor introduced this great work to medical students systematically from the author Cao xueqin, ideological content, characters and artistic features. In this way, students can be guided by the teacher comprehensively and we believed firmly that more and more medical students' interest in literature can be stimulated.

As we all know that medical students have a heavy academic burden. We expect the students have the ability to notice the beautiful things around them and their sentiments can be edified through literature, painting, art and so on. Our humanistic salon has been running for more than three years and some students are willing to recommend themselves to give some speeches, such as the poem appreciation, the self-reading of A Dream in Red Mansions, calligraphy appreciation etc. These lovely students give us a new perspective and inviting the medical students to give the humanistic speech is also a wonderful idea. Slowing down the rhythm of life, willing to put down the phones to read some books in their spare time, sharing their discoveries about beauty, and sharing their understandings of poetry and literature, these are the changes of medical students and it is precious for them and meaningful for us.

According to our research, 90% medical students cannot read ten humanistic books one year. 87.5% medical students prefer to play mobile games in their spare time. 65% medical students feel their academic burdens are heavy and they don't know how to relax themselves. They feel anxiety, fidget and are not willing to speak to others. Some students even say that they study for their parents and they don't know whether they will make a doctor, a nurse or a medical worker as their career goals after their graduation. How to make the medical students broaden their visions? And how to make the students stand in a higher space to see a problem? A famous Chinese hostand literary critic, Liang Wendao, once said that reading is to make us know how complex the world is with a merciful sight and heart. Reading does not make us realistic but make us have the power to face everything. If we have some confusion about life, we can have a try to get solution from reading. So, we planned and organized the "reading challenge for ten hours" activity. It means reading for ten hours continuously with the exception of one hour for meals. The activists can carry their own favorite books and also can read the classic literature books that are selected carefully by librarians. And at the end of the activity, all the successful challengers put down the books and share their ten-hour reading experience. One teacher challenger says that it is not easy to read a book attentively in the busy job of preparing lessons and doing scientific research, reading makes him peace and it is important for the medical teachers to get some humanistic knowledge. Some student challengers feedback that this kind of activity makes Sunday meaningful, they find new happiness from reading and they notice that putting down the mobile phone is not so difficult a thing. The effect and popularity of the activity is beyond our expectations. The activity has been made a fixed one once every month. Supplying a quiet place, making more and more medical students love reading is our objective.

6. Conclusion

The humanistic education cannot be regarded as the responsibility of academic unit only, it is the also the responsibility to the medical library. Many more activities can be launched in the following years like photographic exhibition, fine arts exhibition, living library etc. With the medical education and the humanistic education, the functions of medical library are more complete. Opening a humanistic door to the medical students and the influence is forever.

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