

Recommended – not recommended: The essential parameters for high quality in clinical education. A students perspective.

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Introduction

Physiotherapy students in the BSc degree program in Physiotherapy at the Zurich University of Applied Sciences (ZHAW) have to pass three different clinical placements each lasting twelve weeks. Clinical instructors, specially trained physiotherapists of the team at the clinical site, foster and promote students learning. At the same time they are responsible to assess the students' performance.

Purpose

The purpose of this project was to identify the essential parameters for high clinical education quality out of the students' perspective.

Questions

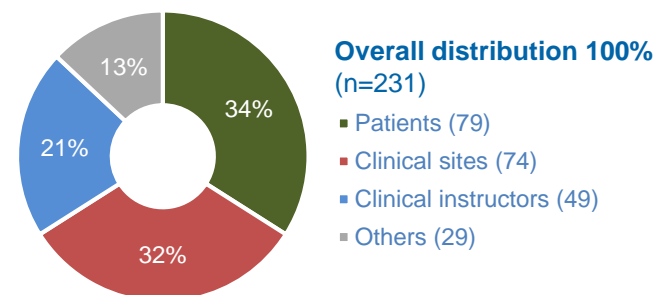
- 1) Which characteristics did students for a successful clinical education mention?
- 2) What are the relevant mentioned criteria's referring to patients?

Methods

- At the end of the third clinical placement 118 statements were gained by written evaluation from students related to the quality of clinical placements.
- The statements were analysed by a qualitative content analysis based on Mayring (2002).
- 231 code units (= n) could be assigned to a developed category system with 12 categories (categories are shown in the diagrams).

Results

Following results show the distribution of the 231 code units allocated into nine categories clustered in three main issues.



Out of the students' perspective:

- The clinical instructors are positively described, if they perform their role as an attentive, reflected, engaged and professional teacher.

Example: "The clinical instructor is very good, has a huge knowledge and knows how to teach." (Nr. 85, translated from German)

- The clinical site can enable productive learning processes by integrating the students' into the team, offering to ask questions any time and establishing processes and structures to foster students' learning.

Example: "The team established a perfect learning atmosphere... The balance between autonomous work and the possibility to ask questions were perfect." (Nr.150, translated from German)

- A big variety of patients matching the competencies of the students' has an essential impact for good clinical placements.

Example: "The complexity of the patients was understandable and they were treatable." (Nr. 214, translated from German)

Conclusion and implications

The education of clinical instructors, the careful selection of the patients and the development of an encouraging, stimulating learning environment at the clinical site support successful clinical placements. Those should be subjects of discussion with clinical instructors and responsible authority at clinical sites.

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