

Analysis of the Perception of Medical Professionalism by Specialists of Family Medicine in Kazakhstan

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Abstract : Professionalism is a core competency that all medical students must achieve throughout their studies. Clinical knowledge, good communication skills and an understanding of ethics form the basis of professionalism. Patients, medical societies and accrediting organizations expect future specialists to be professionals in their field, which in turn leads to the best clinical results. Currently, there are no studies devoted to the study of medical professionalism in the Republic of Kazakhstan. As a result, medical education in the Kazakhstani system has a limited perception of the concept of professionalism compared to many Western medical schools. Thus, the primary purpose of this study is to analyze the perception of medical professionalism among residents and teachers of family medicine at the West Kazakhstan Marat Ospanov Medical University. A qualitative research method was used based on the content analysis methodology. A focus group discussion was held with 60 residents and 12 family medicine teachers to gather participants' views and experiences in the field of medical professionalism. The received information was processed using the MAXQDA-2020 software package. Respondents were selected for the study based on their age, gender, and educational level. The results of the conducted survey confirmed the respondents' acknowledgment of the basic attributes of professionalism, such as medical knowledge and skills (more than 40% of the answers), personal and moral qualities of the doctor (more than 25% of the answers), respect for the interests of the patient (15% of the answers), the relationship between the doctor and the patient and among professionals themselves (15% of responses). Another important discovery of the survey was that residents are five times more likely to define the relationship between a doctor and a patient in a model "respect for the interests of the patient" in comparison with teachers of family medicine, who primarily reported responsibility and collegiality to be the basis for the development of professionalism and traditionally view doctor-patient relationship to be formed on the basis of paternalism defined by a high degree of control over patients. This significant difference demonstrates a rift among specialists in the field of family medicine, which causes a lot of problems. For example, nowadays, professional family doctors regularly face burnout problem due to many reasons and factors that force them to abandon their jobs. In addition to that, elements of professionalism such as reflective skills, time management and feedback collection were presented to the least extent (less than 1%) by both groups, which differs from the perception of the Western medical school and is a significant issue that needs to be solved. The qualitative nature of our study provides a detailed understanding of medical professionalism in the context of the Central Asian healthcare system, revealing many aspects that are inferior to the Western medical school counterparts and provides a solution, which is to teach the attributes and skills required for medical professionalism at all stages of medical education of family doctors.

Keywords : family medicine, family doctors, medical professionalism, medical education

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