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Exploratory comparison of credentialed clinical instructors' and non-credentialed clinical instructors' report of frequency and importance of professional behaviors in clinical education

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Purpose: Professional behavior characteristics are important to maximize student learning during clinical education affiliations. The purpose of this study was to explore the comparison of credentialed and non-credentialed clinical instructors' report of importance and frequency of professional behaviors during clinical education affiliations.

Number of Subjects: The number of subjects taken for this study is 60.

Materials & Methods: Using the clinical instructor characteristics statements developed by Emery et al., a survey was developed on SurveyMonkey®. It contained the 43 statements about professional behaviors. The survey was sent to 142 clinical instructors (CIs) actively serving as CIs. The CI was asked to self-report the importance of each behavior and the frequency with which she/he demonstrated the behavior using a 5 point Likert scale. The CI was also asked to report whether or not she/he was a credentialed clinical instructor (CCI) through the APTA credentialed clinical instructor program (CCIP).

Results: 60 CIs completed and returned the survey (42% return rate). 30 were credentialed CIs (CCI) and 30 were non-credentialed (NCCI). According to all the CIs, the most important characteristics were teaching behaviors and professional skills behaviors. Using Mann Whitney U comparison, we identified possible differences between the CCIs and NCCIs. In 8 questions, the CCIs rated themselves as more frequently demonstrating the following skills. The CCIs were more available to their students, provided a greater variety of patients, provided useful feedback, communicated in a non-threatening manner, were open in discussing issues with students, provided feedback in private, provided appropriate support for student concerns, and were more empathetic. The CCIs also seemed to find it more important to make themselves understand, observe student performance in a discreet manner, and provide appropriate support for student concerns. However, if corrected for multiple comparisons none of the differences remained significant.

Conclusion: The data provided in this study compares the self-reported importance and frequency of professional behaviors of CCIs and NCCIs to better understand professional behavioral characteristics and their role in maximizing the effectiveness of clinical education. It further begins to explore any differences between CCI and NCCI behaviors.

Clinical Relevance: Exploring the differences in importance and frequency of credentialed versus non-credentialed clinical instructors professional behaviors will provide our field with insight into what areas CIs need to improve to better prepare students to practice as physical therapists.

Biography

T Jackman is an Assistant Professor in the Physical Therapy Program at Idaho State University, Pocatello, Idaho. He is an Academic Coordinator of Clinical Education. His clinical expertise is in the area of Clinical Education, Professionalism, Ethics, and Ergonomics.

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