
Teaching Communication Skills in Mental Health: An Inter-professional Teaching Resource

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Background

- Adjunct to workshops for 4th year medical students providing frameworks for interviewing patients with mental health problems.
- Teaching resource for communication skills training Registered Mental Health Nurses (diploma and degree)
- Response to both medical and mental health nursing students desire to see communication between health professionals and service users prior to clinical placements.

Aims: To demonstrate

Communication skills in clinical practice

Patient centred assessment and care

Inter-professional communication and team working

Support for carers and their crucial role in patient care

The DVD

- The DVD covers two scenarios:
 - Suicide:** depressed patient at risk of suicide
 - Psychosis:** patient with psychotic symptoms
- Professionals (Psychiatrists and Mental Health Nurses) acting in role with patients played by actors
- DVD is divided into sections but can also be seen as a whole
- Accompanying workbook has been developed for students to work on independently.

Scenario One: Depressed patient at risk of suicide

- Clinical assessment: Psychiatrist
- Compulsory admission under Mental Health Act (1983)
- Doctor-nurse communication and teamwork
- Developing a therapeutic relationship and explaining care
- Checking therapeutically for safety and explaining patients rights: Mental Health Nurse



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Scenario Two: Patient with psychotic symptoms

- Establishing a relationship and making an initial assessment: Psychiatrist
- Negotiating the patient's concerns about medication: Mental Health Nurse
- Doctor-Nurse communication and reviewing progress
- Communication with a relative: Mental Health Nurse

Piloting with Medical and Nursing Students

- Medical students – 2 cohort groups of 4th years, N=77
Suicide Risk assessment by psychiatrist
- Mental health nursing students – 4 cohort groups of 2nd and 3rd years, N= 37 . Sampling was opportunistic

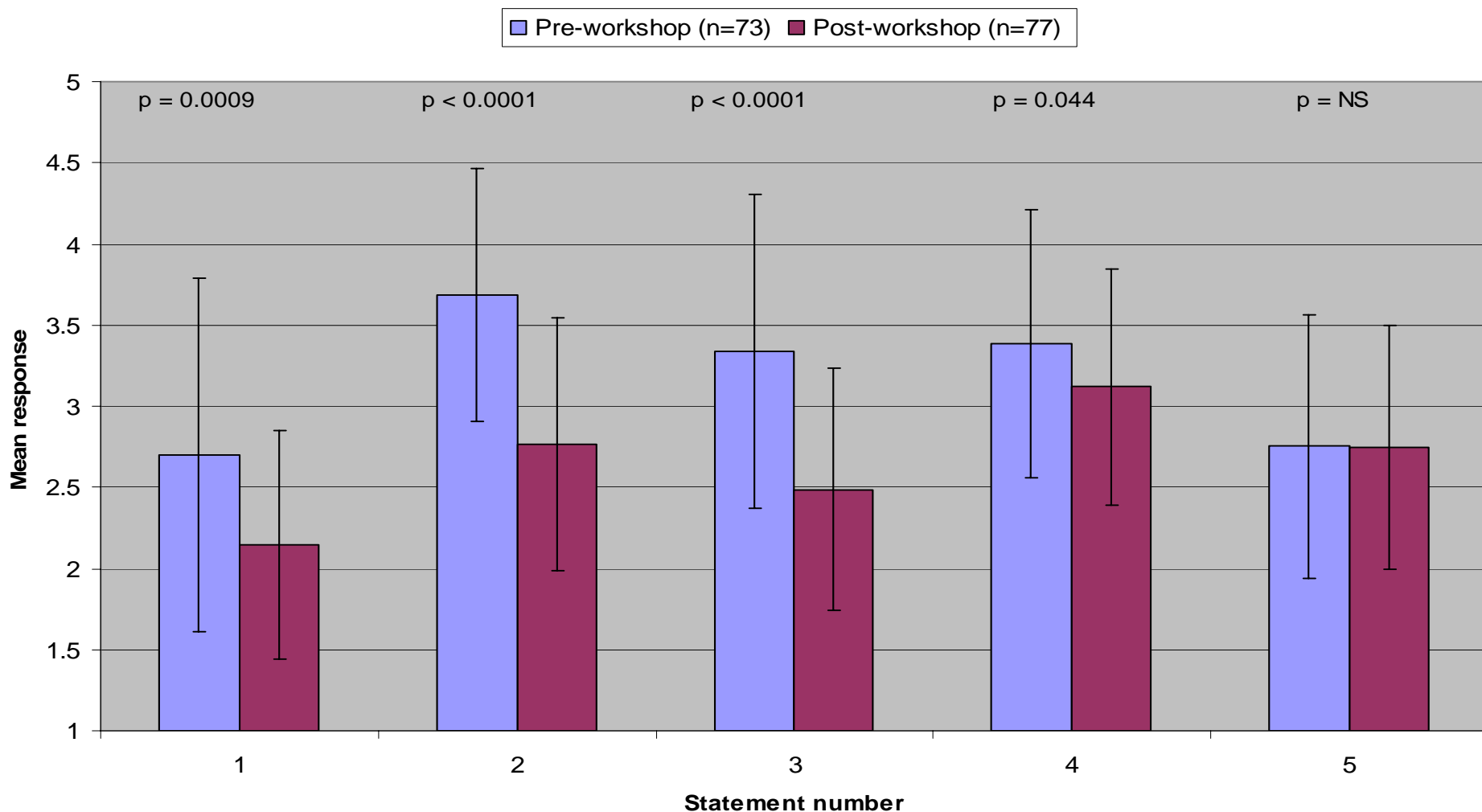
Evaluation: medical students

- DVD used with 2 cohort groups 4th year medical students (N = 77).
- Half saw DVD before role-play practice and half after.

Before group almost unanimously preferred to see it before.

After group were split 50/50 on seeing it before or after.

Medical Students' Views on Talking to Patients with Mental Health Problems



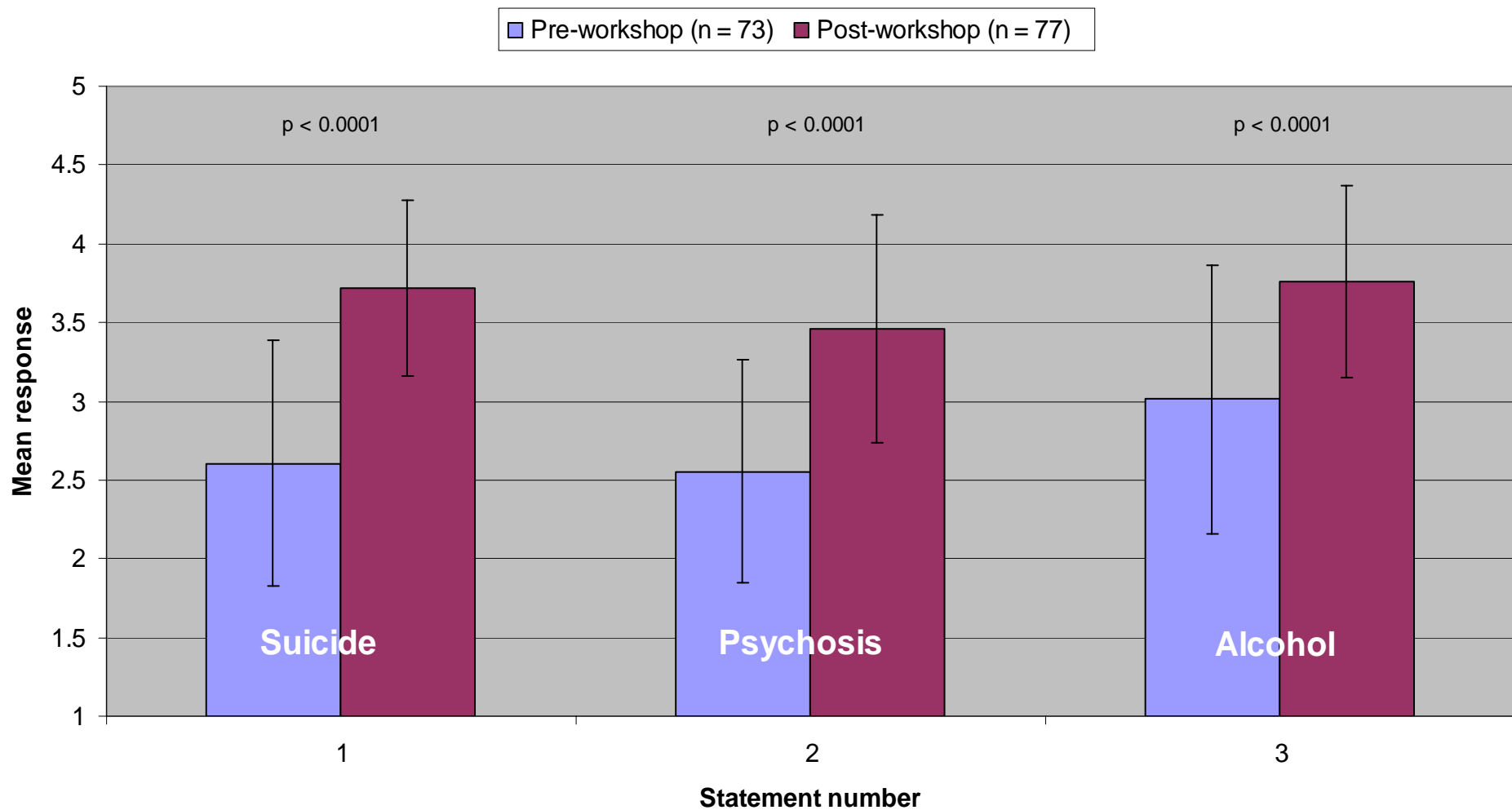
Students were asked their response to the following statements:

1. "I find it hard to empathise with people who have mental health problems"
2. "I worry I won't know how to phrase questions"
3. "I feel anxious about talking to a patient with mental health problems"
4. "Patients with mental health problems are unpredictable"
5. "Patients with mental health problems are dangerous"

Response scale

- 1 = Strongly disagree
- 2 = Disagree
- 3 = Neutral
- 4 = Agree
- 5 = Strongly agree

Medical Students' Confidence Communicating with Patients with Mental Health Problems



Response to statements:

"I feel confident to communicate well with a patient when undertaking an assessment of:

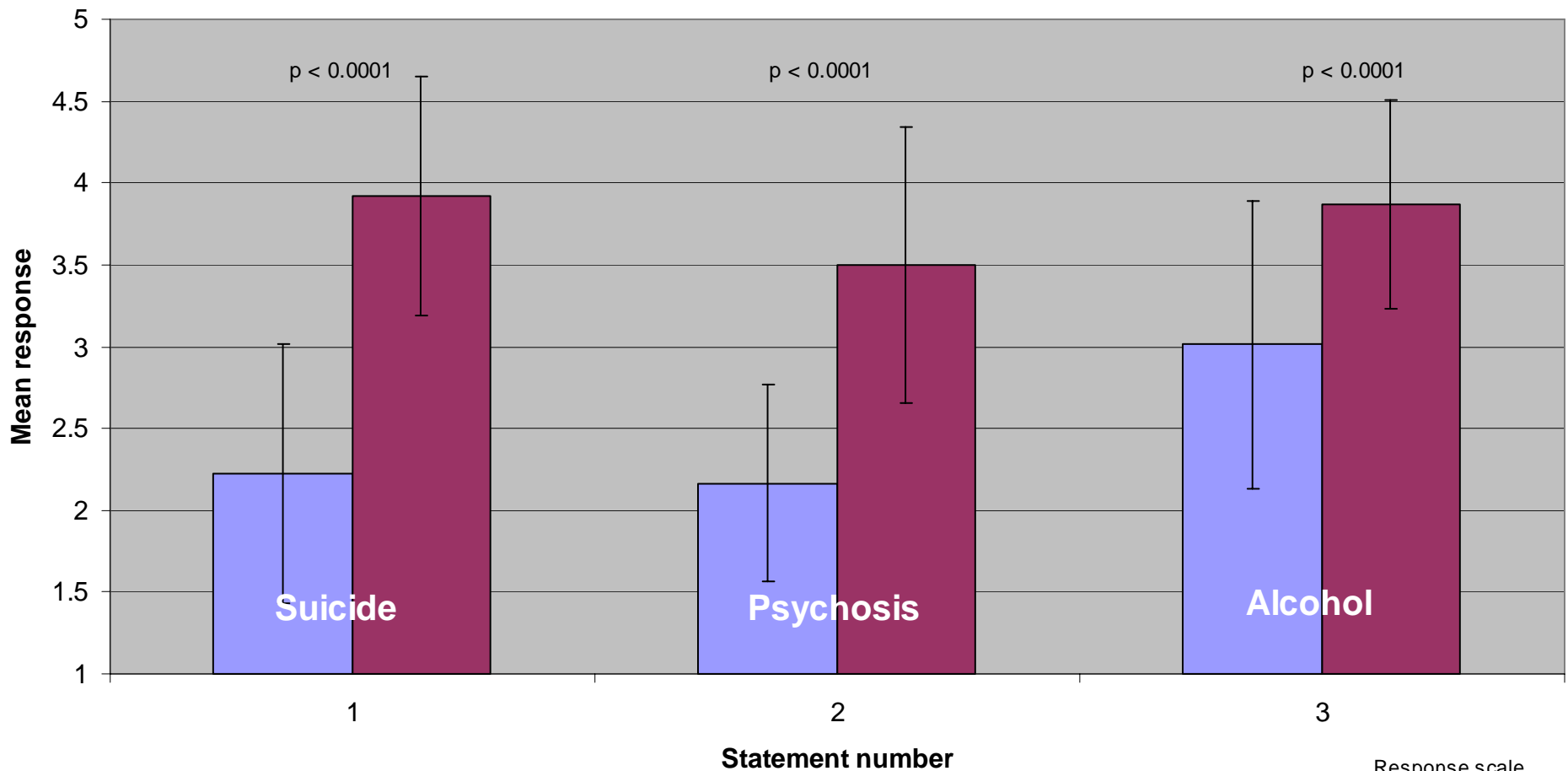
1. suicide risk"
2. symptoms of psychosis"
3. alcohol problem"

Response scale

- 1 = Strongly disagree
- 2 = Disagree
- 3 = Neutral
- 4 = Agree
- 5 = Strongly agree

Medical Students' Confidence in 'What to Ask'

Pre-workshop (n=73) Post-workshop (n=77)



Response to statements

"I feel confident to communicate well when undertaking an assessment of:

1. suicide risk"
2. psychotic symptoms"
3. alcohol problem"

Response scale

- 1 = Strongly disagree
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- 4 = Agree
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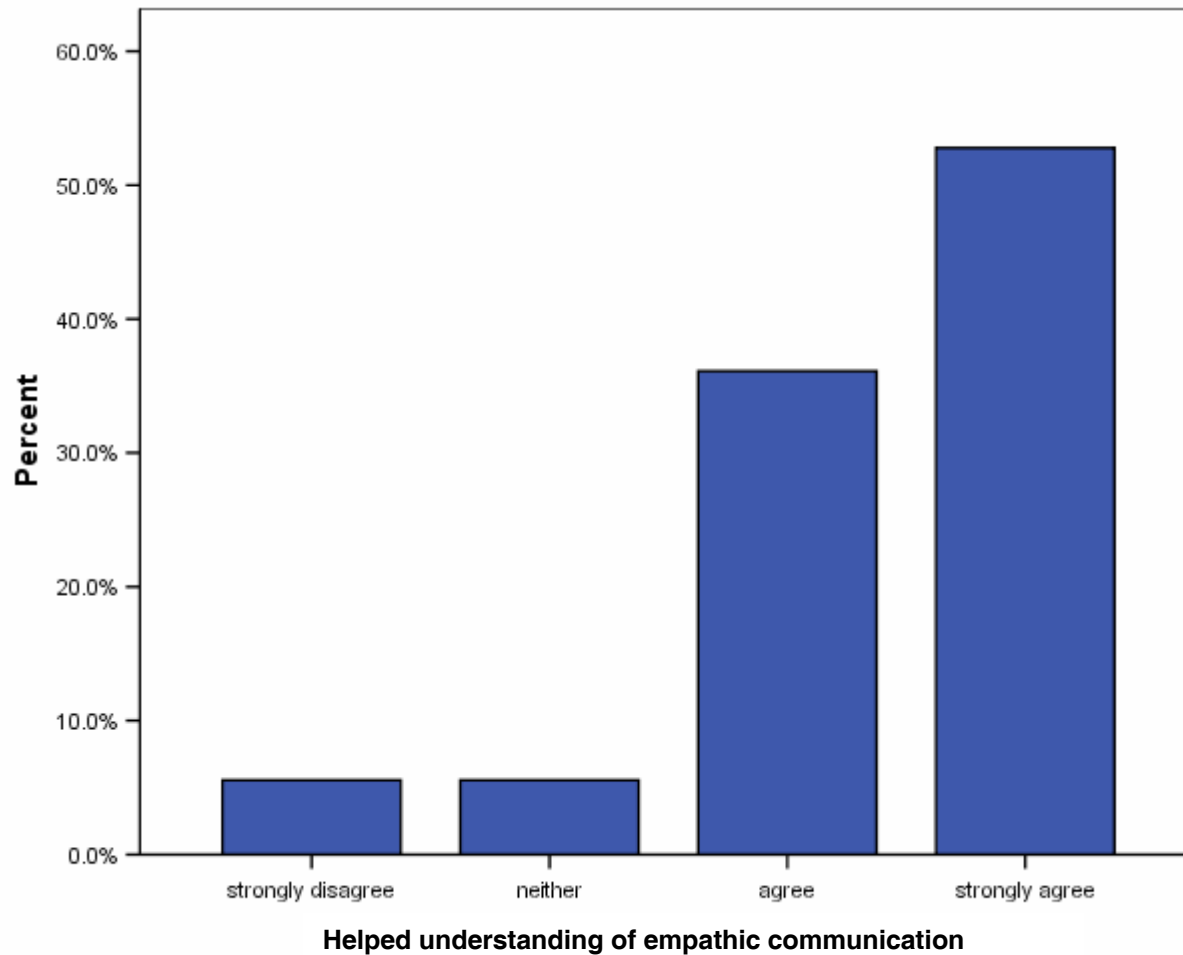
Written comments from medical students

- *“ Very helpful. Would have been lost without it because I’ve never seen what a clinically depressed person might act like.”*
- *“ It helped me to understand- left me feeling like I desperately wanted to help this very distressed young woman.”*
- *“ The video fails as a stand alone teaching method...it needs to be discussed”*
- *“ The DVD was very helpful and the feedback from tutors and actors”*

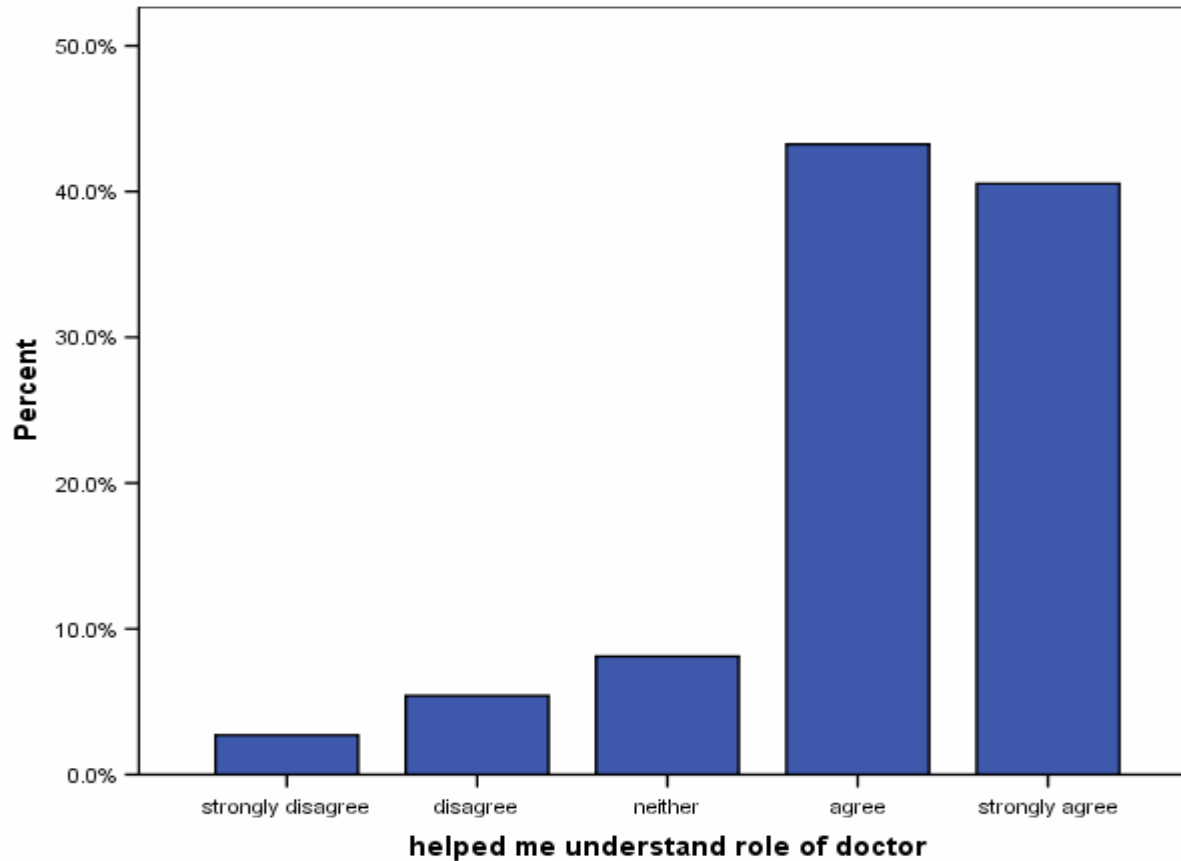
Evaluation nursing students

- Open written questions about helpful and unhelpful aspects of the DVD
- Facilitated group discussion in relation to DVD content.
- 5 point likert scale completed after watching the video, and as part of a communication skills session.
- All evaluation data collected after watching the DVD

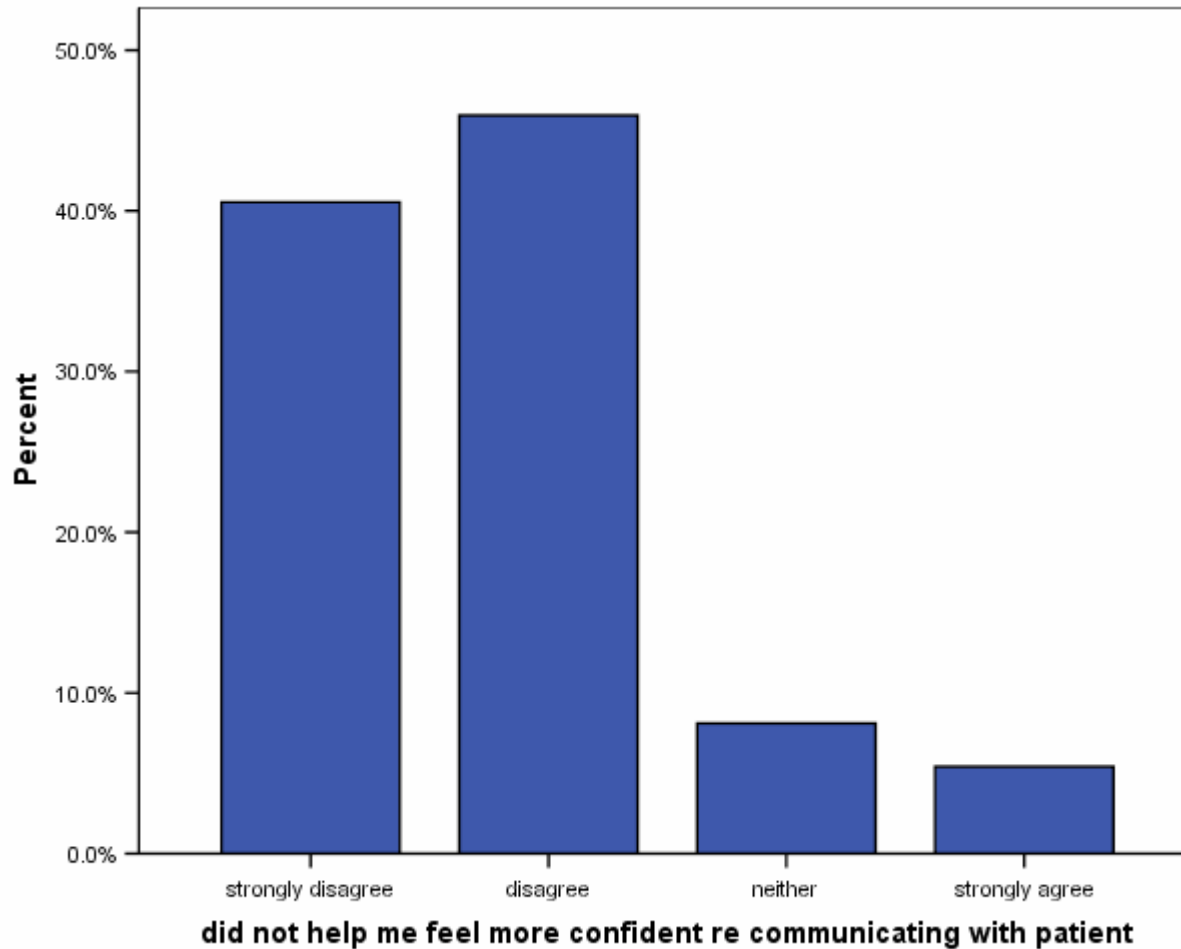
Understanding specific aspects of communication



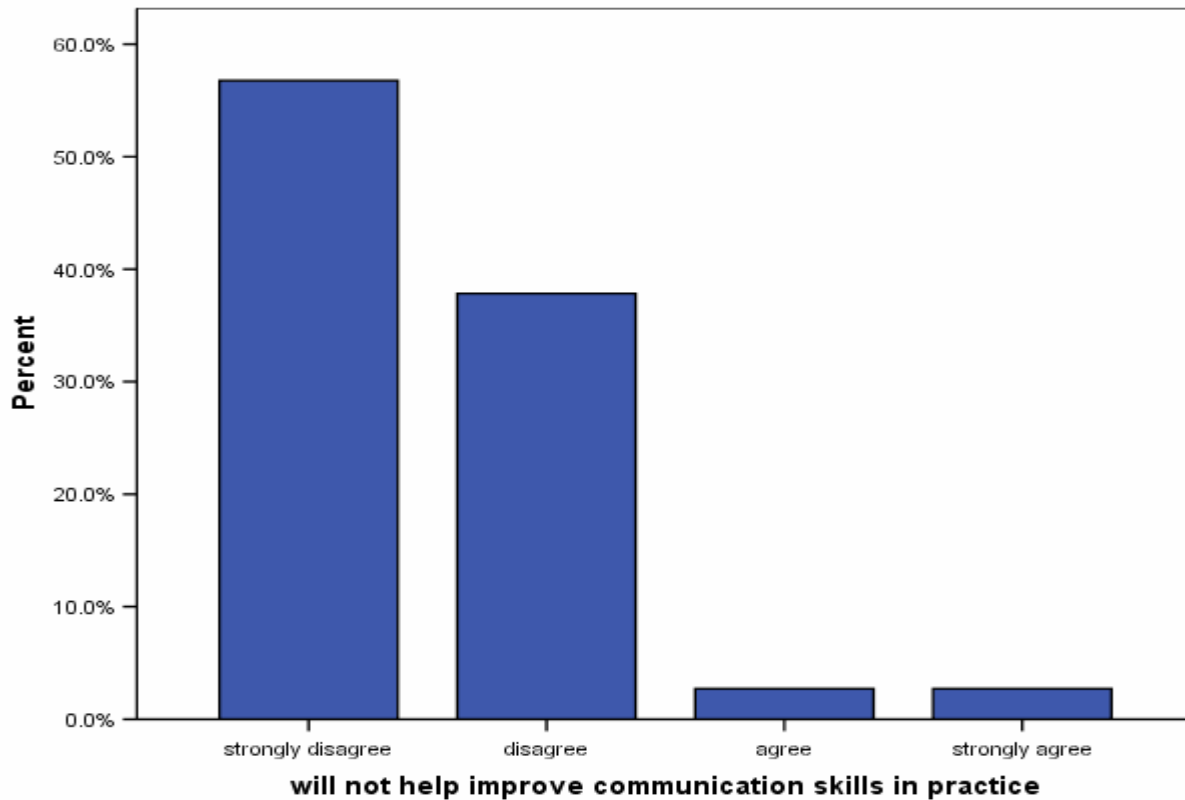
Professional roles/teamwork



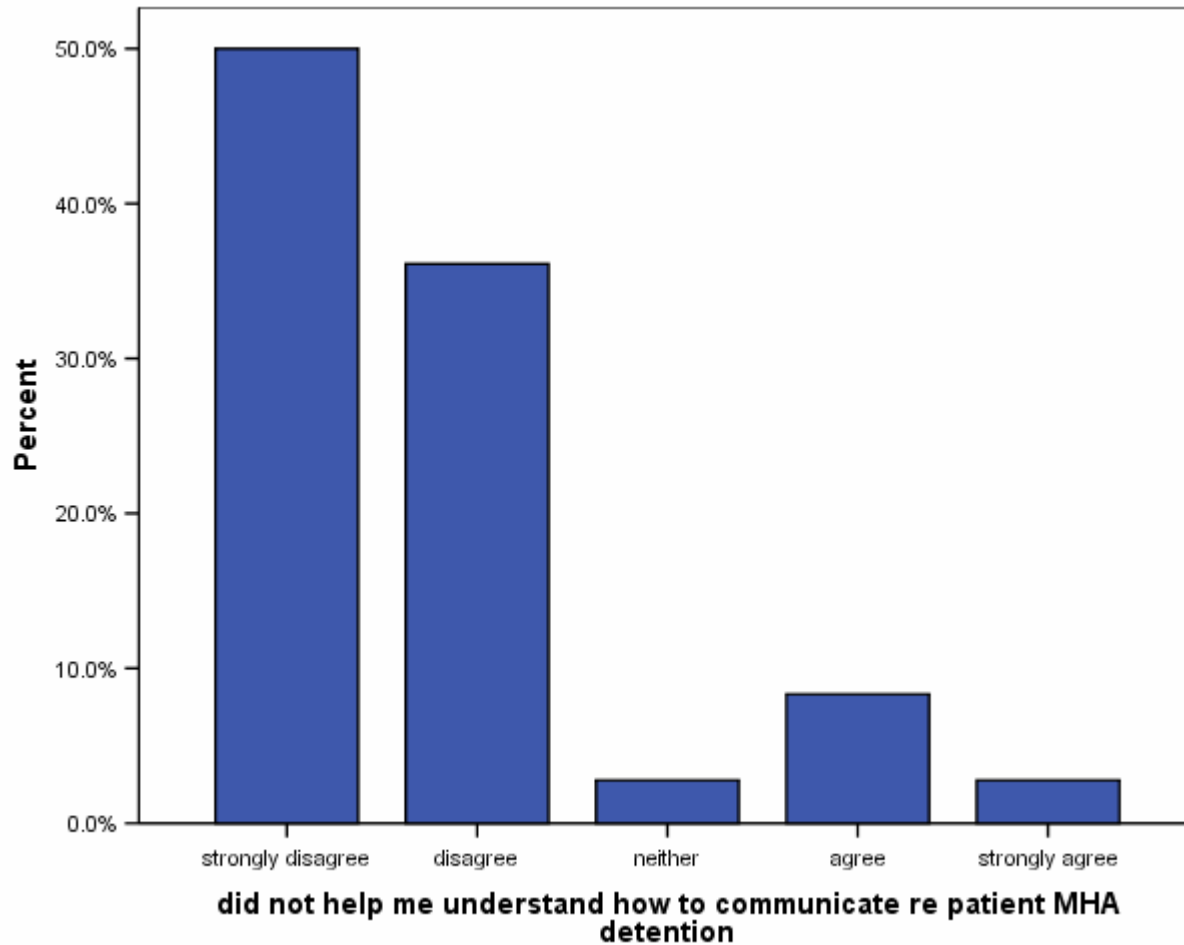
Confidence



Perceived relevance/usefulness for practice



Overall understanding



Written comments of nursing students

- “It made me understand it- the importance of the roles of the doctor and the nurse, how they need to work together and the importance of team work”
- The scenarios were very convincing- the doctors often don't tell the patients what close obs are- they don't know they will be followed into the toilet- you have to communicate that to them and the DVD demonstrated how to do that”
- I wish I had been shown this DVD before I went on my first clinical placement, it would have helped me so much because I was scared.”

Future Evaluations?

1. Medical Students – Does watching DVD improve competence?

Correlate with OSCE results?

2. Nursing Students – Amendments to DVD and questionnaire based on feedback to be used with all mental health students, using both scenarios on the DVD.
3. Pilot with interprofessional groups of medical and nursing students.

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