
Making it real: Therapeutic communication with patients and carers

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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.

Making the DVD

- Differences in language and culture between academic nursing staff and medical staff became apparent very quickly
- Lack of understanding of each others roles and responsibilities
- Finding an actor to play a patient with symptoms of psychosis convincingly was a challenge
- Lengthy process relying heavily on collaborative teamwork

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/carer 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





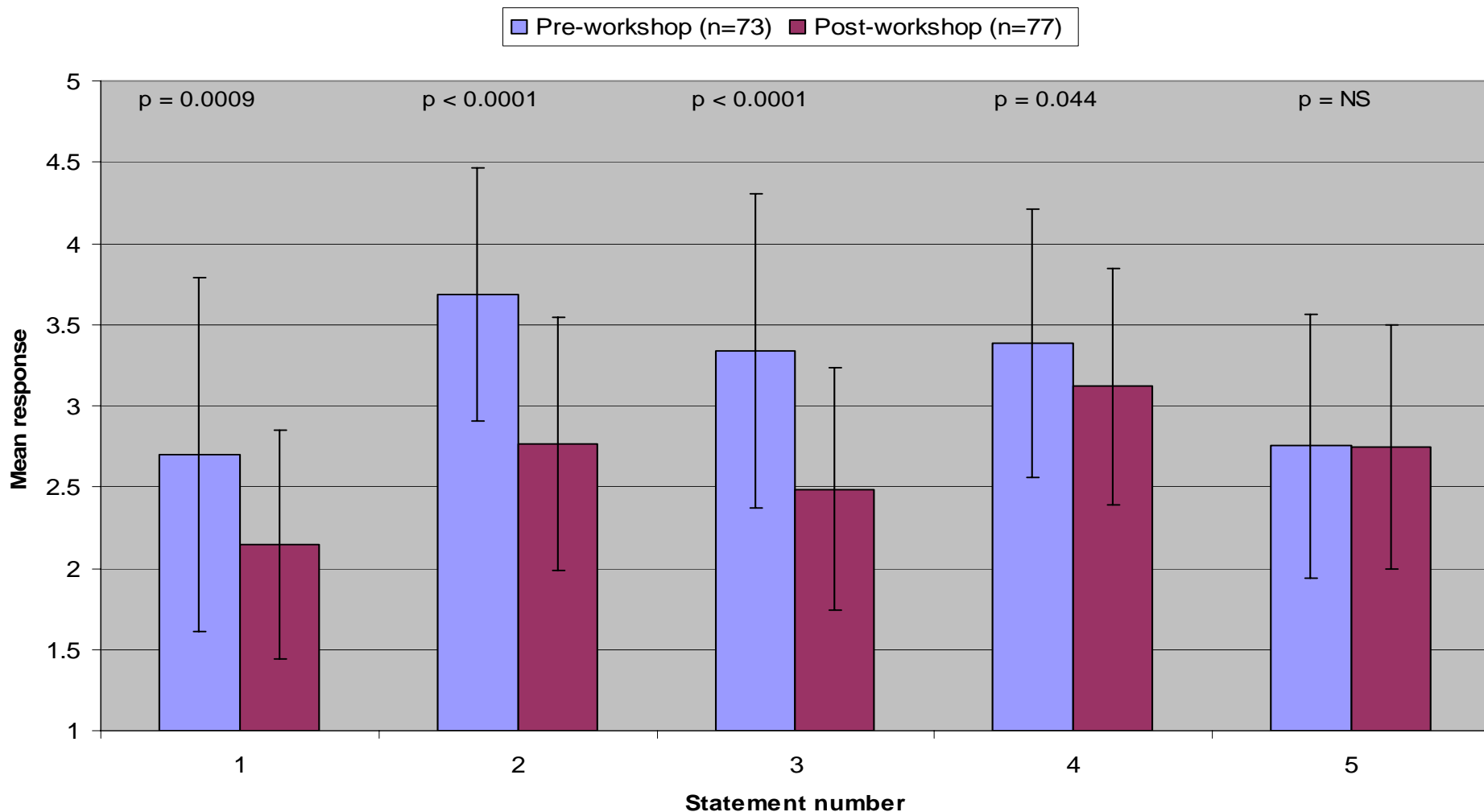




Piloting with Medical and Nursing Students

- 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

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



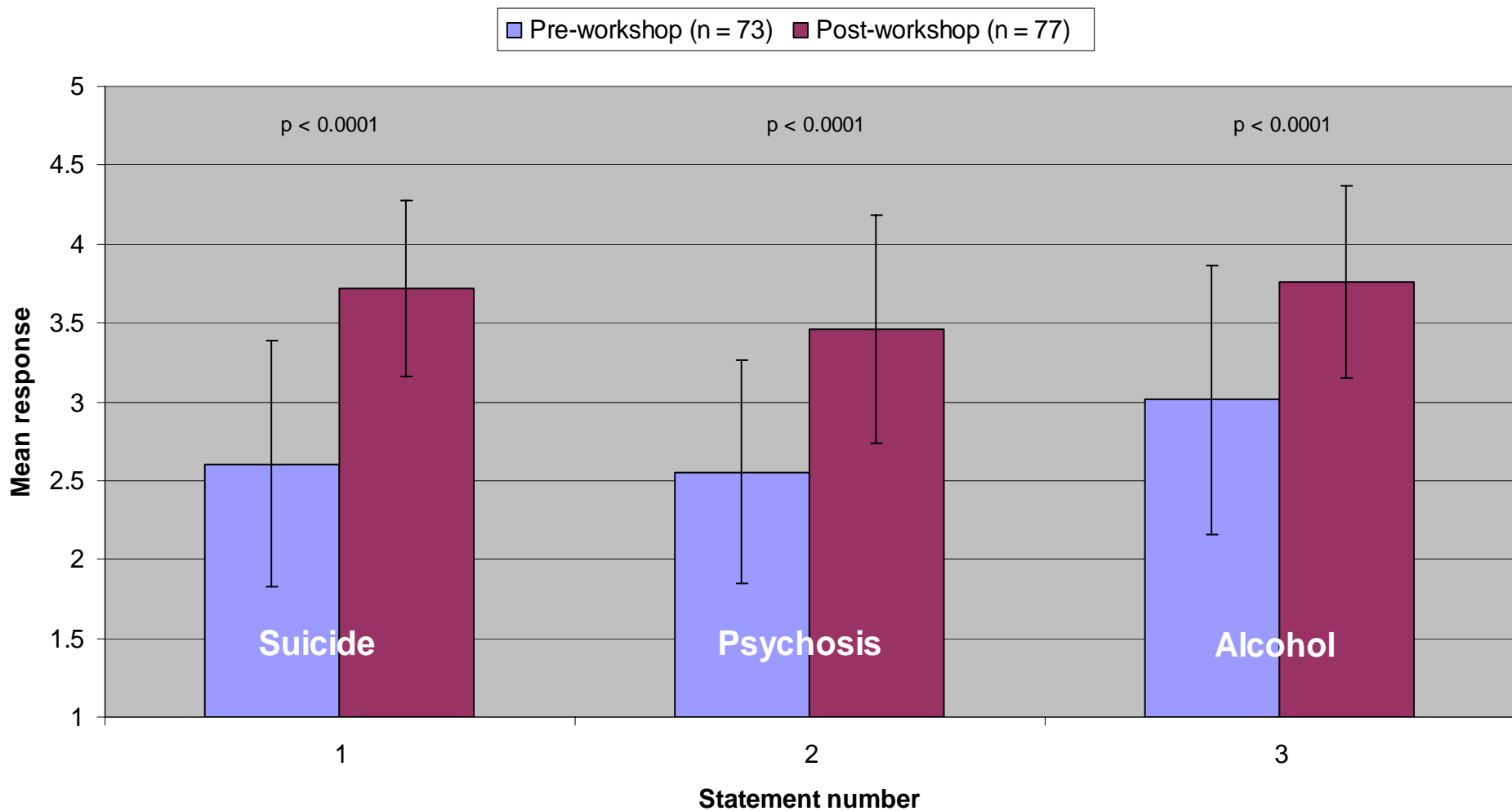
Students were asked their response to the following statements:

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:

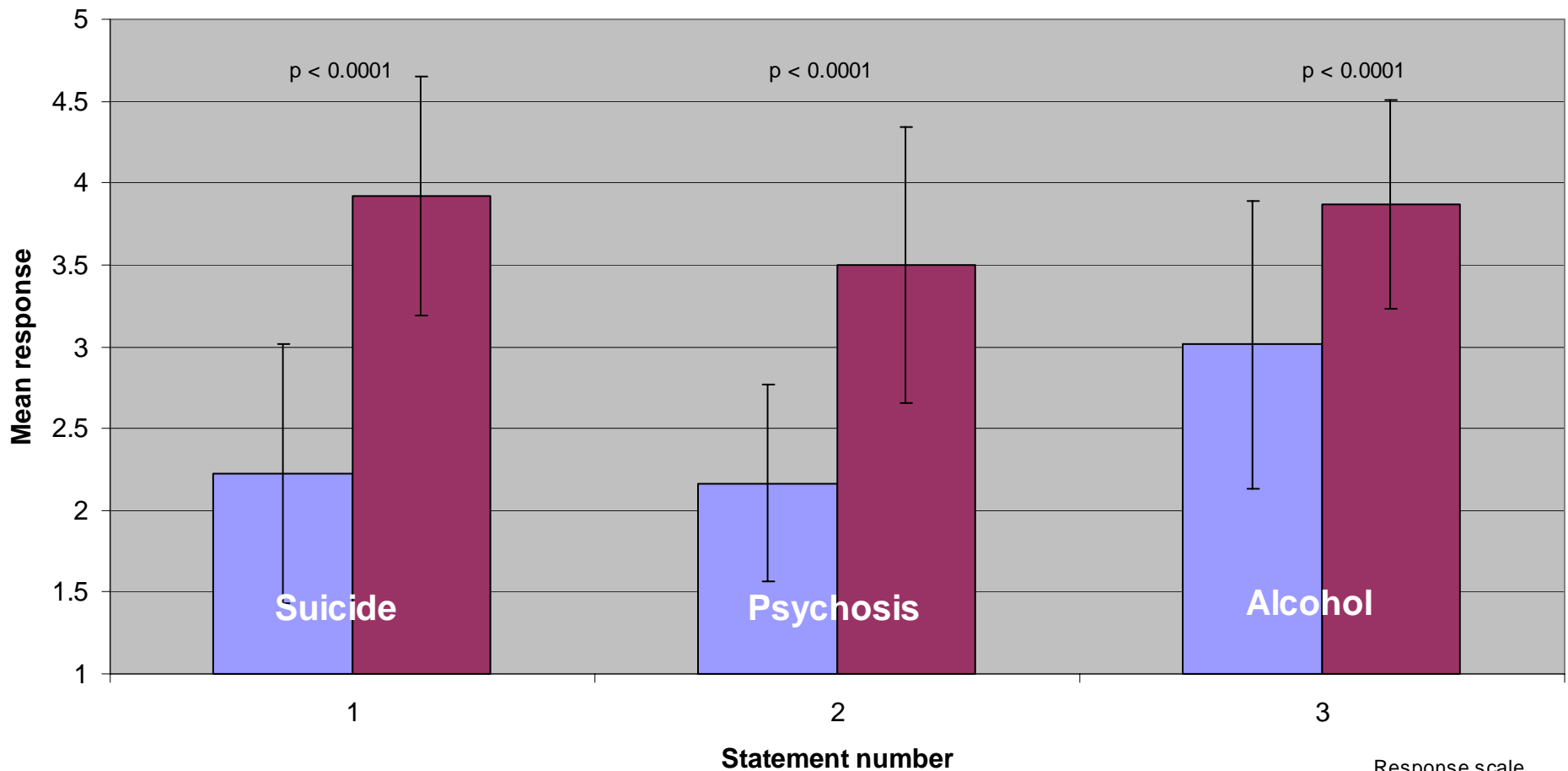
1. suicide risk"
2. symptoms of psychosis"
3. alcohol problem"

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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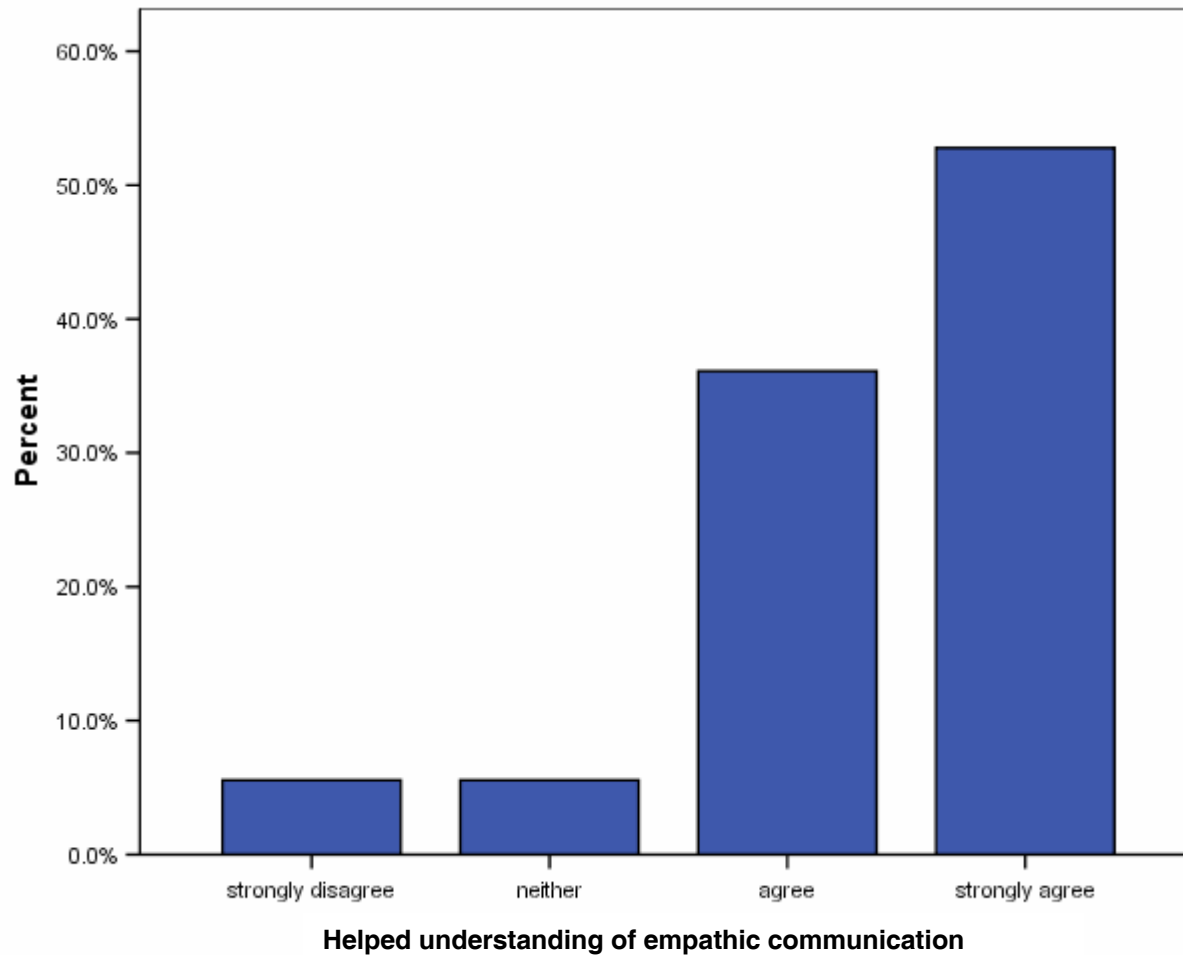
Written comments from medical students

- *“ 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.”*

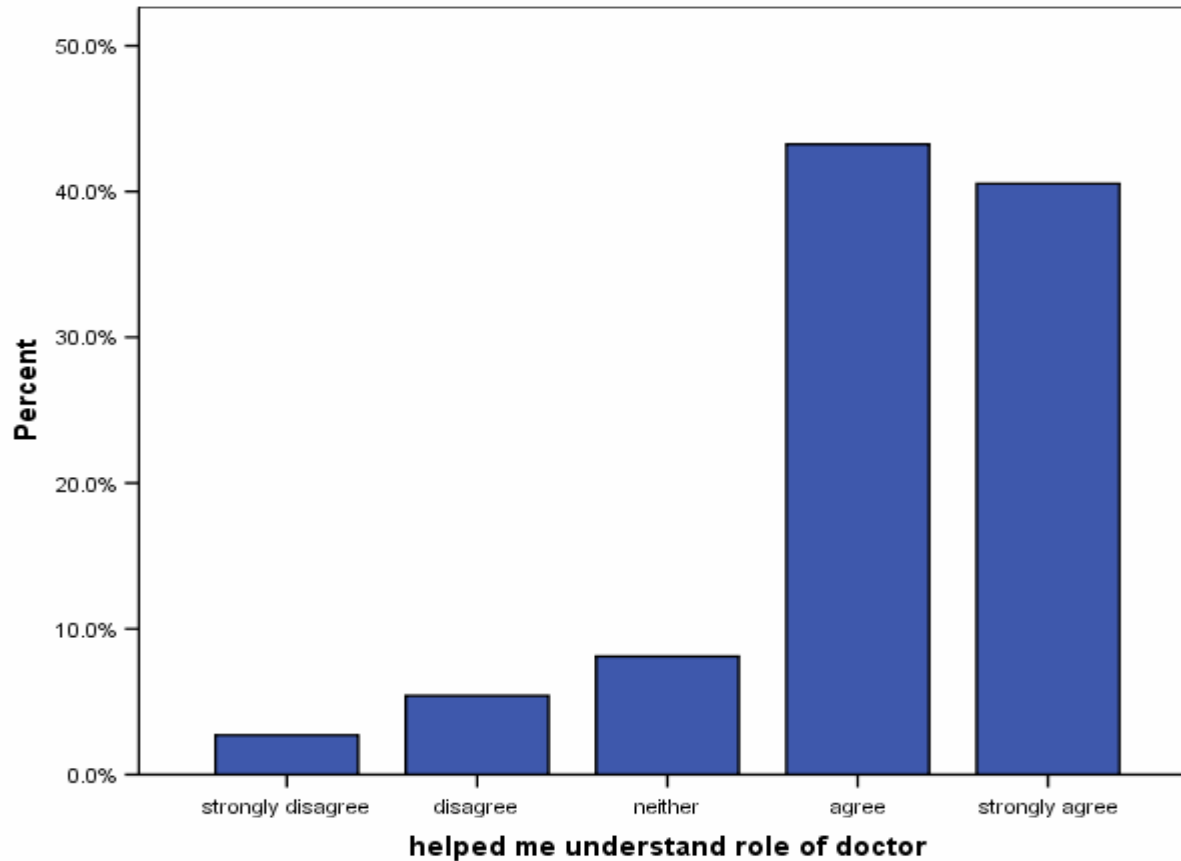
Evaluation nursing students

- Facilitated group discussion in relation to DVD content
- Open written questions about helpful and unhelpful aspects of the DVD
- 5 point Likert scale completed after watching the DVD
- Likert data- Cronbach alpha for reliability of responses.

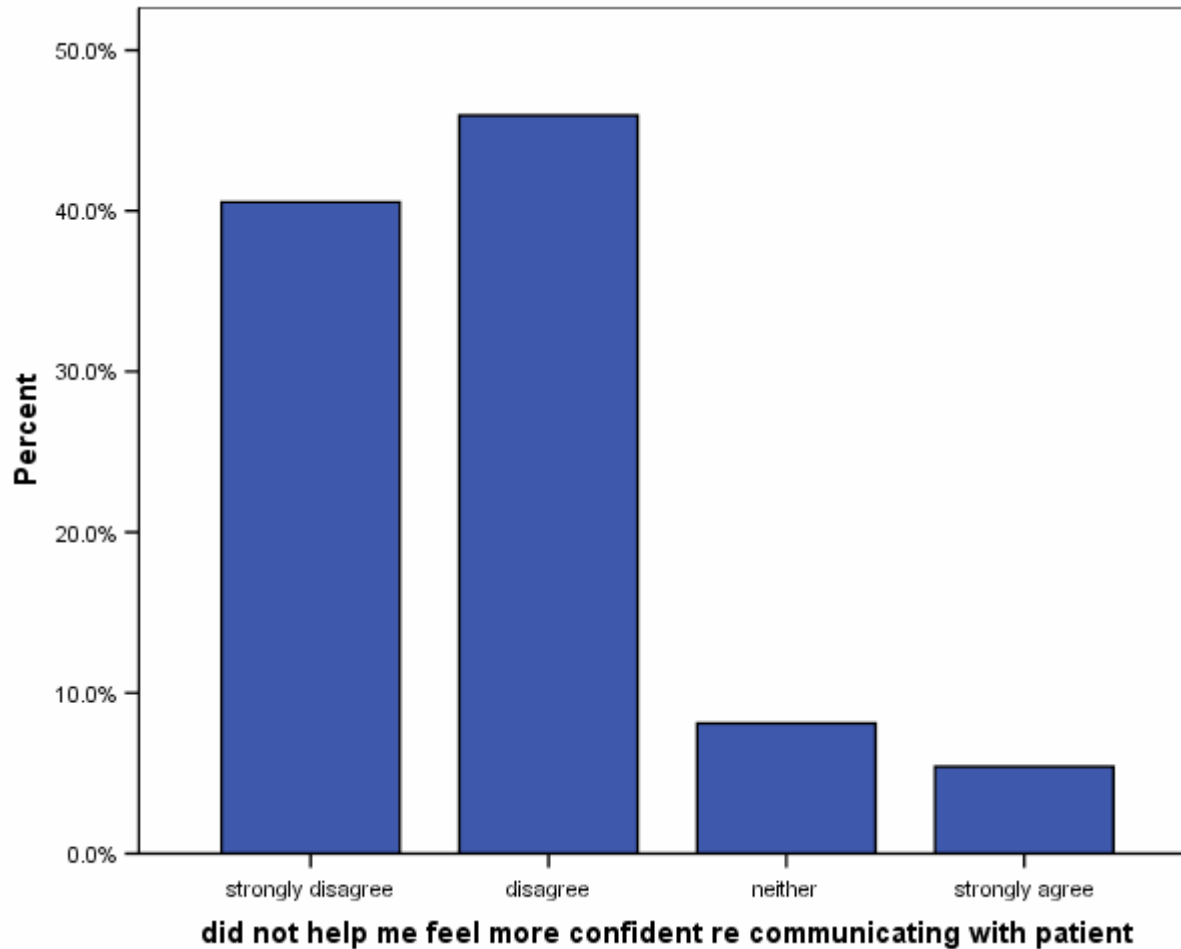
Understanding specific aspects of communication



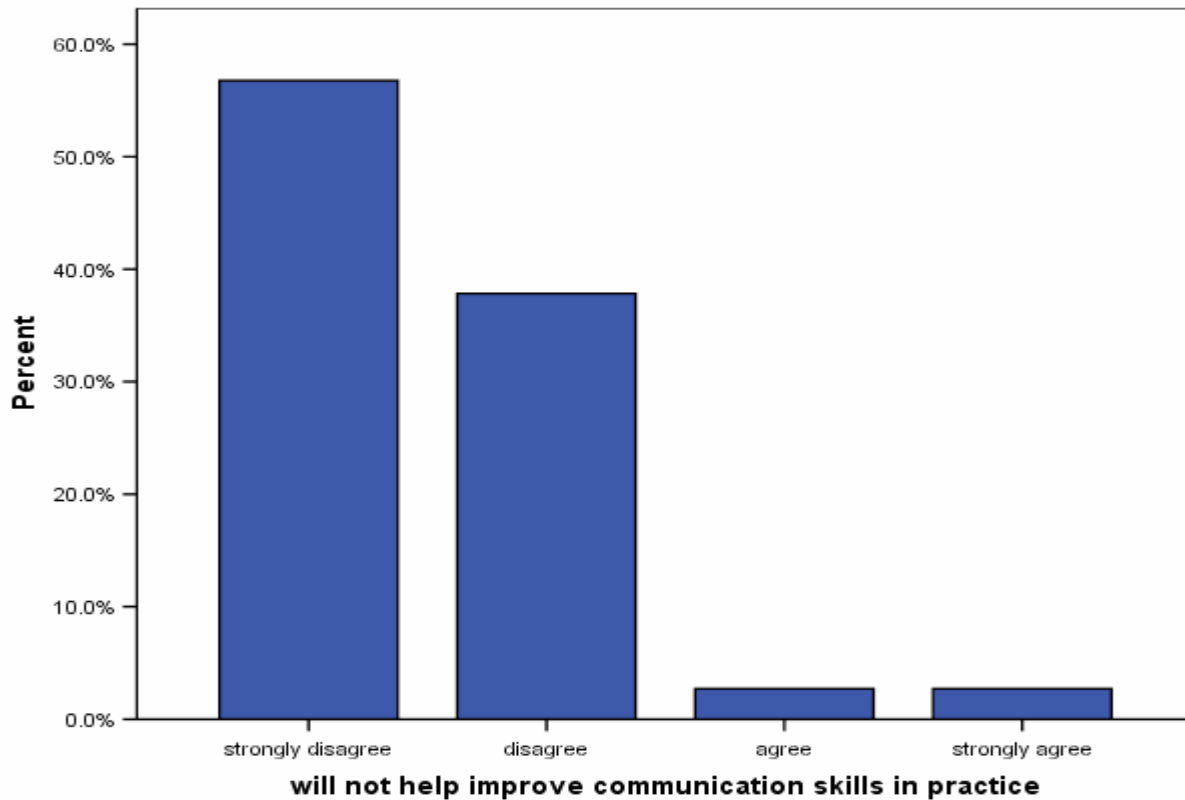
Professional roles/teamwork



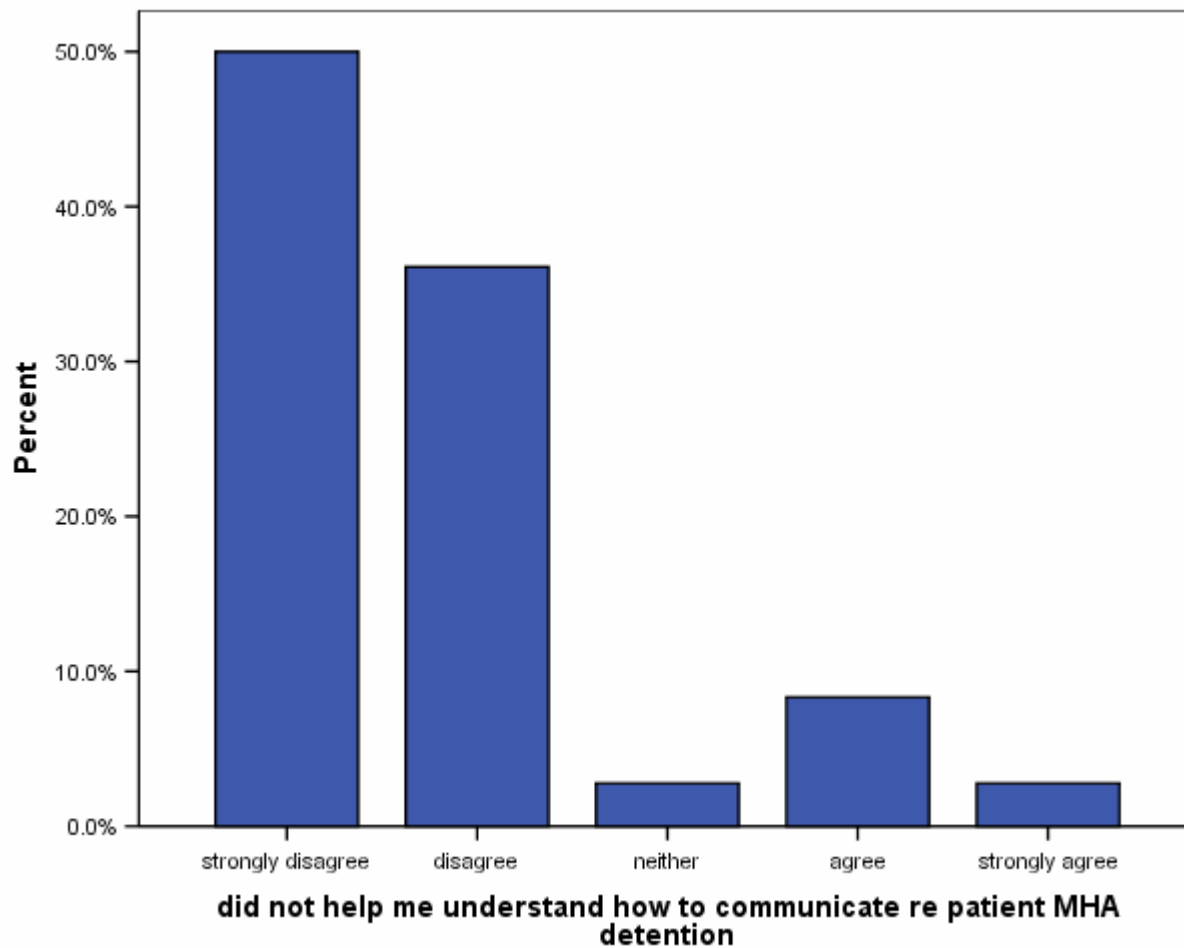
Confidence



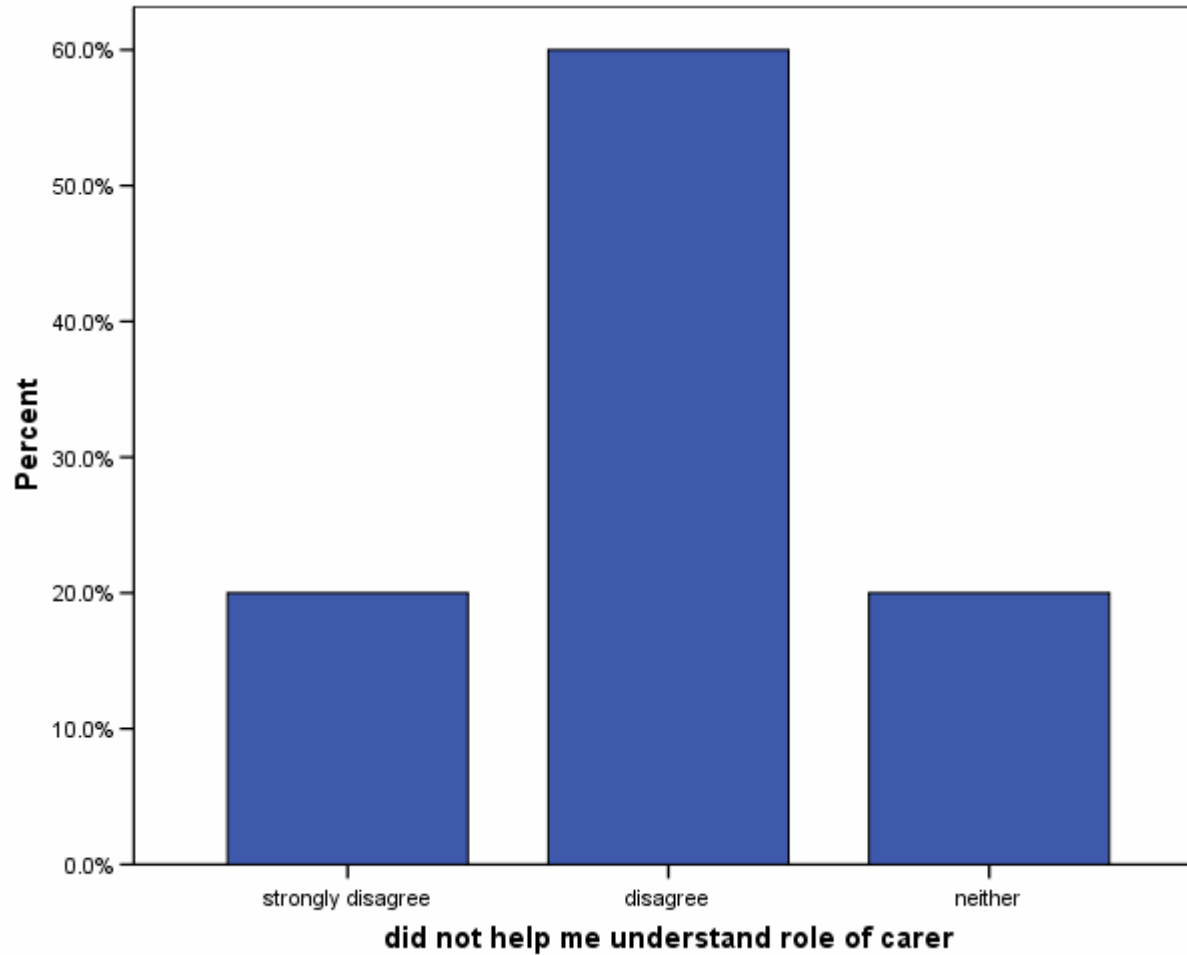
Perceived relevance/usefulness for practice



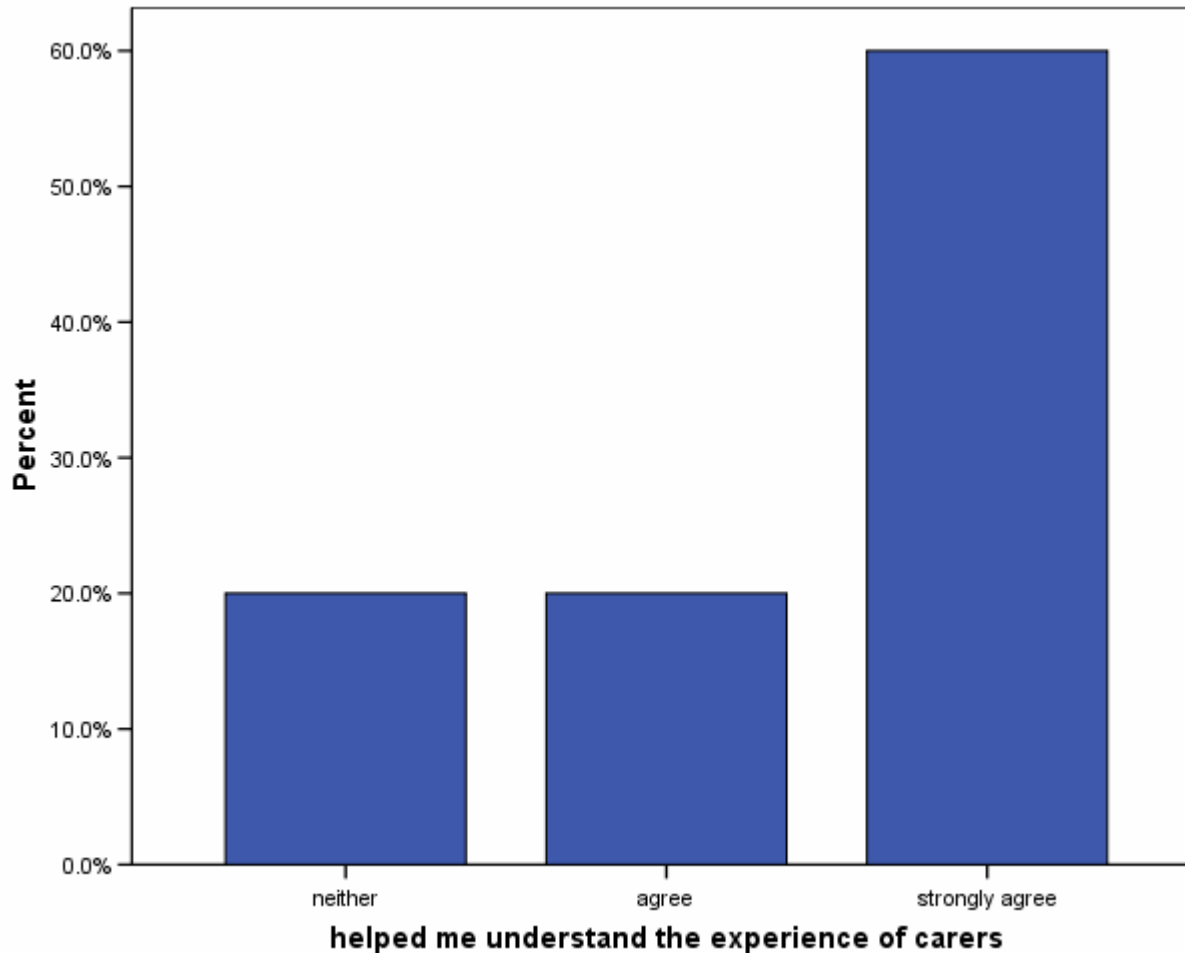
Overall understanding



Understanding the role of carers



Understanding the experience of carers



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”
- “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.”
- “It was good to see the viewpoint of the mother. It had great impact and would help me to value family more.”
- “I did not have a lot of information about the carers of patients feelings. The video enabled me to take on board carers’ feelings and emotions too.”

Future Evaluations and use?

- Pilot with interprofessional groups of medical and nursing students.
- Web streaming/publication/distribution

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