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Evaluating Interprofessional Contributions to Small Group Learning during Pre-Clerkship Medical Education

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There is increasing recognition of the value in expanding recruitment to integrate non-physician educators into the medical education curriculum, but there is a little research demonstrating the impact of such integration. To make a small contribution to this gap, the current study is a preliminary evaluation of the differences in students' perceptions of physician (MD) and non-physician (non-MD) facilitators during small group teaching. In particular, students evaluated the facilitators' ability to contribute to students growth for three CanMEDS roles addressed in PCCIA (Medical Expert, Communicator, Collaborator), as well as the facilitators' social congruence and cognitive congruence.

Fifty-six medical students responded to the survey, 28 who had recently completed first year, and 28 who had completed their second year of their undergraduate medical education. Overall, students reported positive perceptions of the facilitator attributes evaluated and did not report great differences between physicians and non-physicians. No significant difference in overall experience with the non-MD and MD facilitators in cognitive congruence, or abilities to contribute to students' development as collaborators and communicators were reported. Respondents did perceive that physicians' ability to assist students in the development of competencies related to medical expert was greater than non-physicians' ability. Additionally, in the year one respondents only, non-MD facilitators scored higher in social congruence. Social congruence refers to an openness to students' points of view and a genuine and personal interest in the students' learning and well-being. Overall, the students' rated their experiences with both non-physicians and physicians favorably, supporting the use of non-physicians into medical curricula, especially in areas that do not focus on medical and clinical knowledge.