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## Research and Exploration of Medical Humanities Education

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### Abstract

*The essence of medical education rooted in humanity. Medical humanities education is not only the starting point but also the end point of medical education. It is proposed to optimize the path of medical humanities education, then form a stable joint force about classroom teaching, campus culture, and clinical practice. This develops a comprehensive mode to provide ideas for medical humanities education to train clinical talents.*

**Keywords:** *medical humanities ; education ; research ; exploration*

### 1. Introduction

The world is in the new era. The new era has put forward new requirements for medical education. We must realize the fact that people urgently need talents with medical ethics and superb skills because people are more and more concerned about life and health with the development of society. In China, the goal of medical education is to train a large number of clinical talents who have professional skills and rich humanistic knowledge. People have higher and higher demands for clinical talents, so, it's our task how to do humanities education for medical students.

#### 1.1. Essence of Medicine

#### 1.2. Combination of Science and Humanities

Medicine is the combination of science and humanities. The attribute of medicine is to face people, which not only studies people, but also serves people. In fact, medicine is human science, which focuses on the people struggling in pain and in need of care and help, so it is considered as the subject with the most traditional humanistic spirit. Due to the lack of effective means of treatment and relief of pain, ancient doctors tried their best to seek ways of

treatment and relief for patients, at the same time, they gave patients emotional care. Hippocrates, father of Western medicine, believed that "medical art is the most beautiful and noble art of all techniques" and pointed out that "doctors should have all the qualities of good philosophers: altruism, enthusiasm, modesty, calm judgment and so on" [1]. Therefore, medicine is a science directly related to human life. Medical technology is an art to promote health and reduce disease. Health care is the cause related to human happiness.

#### 1.3. Mutual Promotion between Medical technology and medical humanities

The development of medical technology provides guarantee to meet people's needs, on the other hand, it constantly challenges the spiritual life of human beings and traditional moral norms. During a long period, we are always faced with the constant conflict between technology and humanistic spirit, and new technology promotes the formation of high-level humanistic care. In the 20th century,

new technologies had a profound impact on doctors' behavior. Modern therapy has drawn the doctor's attention from patients to search for the cause of diseases, the analysis of deviant data and the detection of changes in cells or molecules. Specialisation has led to the breakdown of healthcare while patients' suffering is being transformed into signs and symptoms of disease. The patient is thus gradually dissolved in the process of modern medical diagnosis and treatment. In the 21st century, because physical problems could be measured but emotional problems could not, doctors had paid more attention to physical problems and less attention to patients' emotions. With integration of traditional medicine, robots, artificial intelligence and so on, medical technology has been promoted. Difficult diseases can be effectively controlled, and even can be cured or prevented. However, with the deeper research on life science, people clearly realized the limitation of biomechanics. Meanwhile they placed more emphasis on people-oriented purpose which is not only treatment of diseases, but also care of patients <sup>[2]</sup>. In brief, the rapid development of medical technology brings new demands on the quality of medical service, especially about the quality of medical humanities, meanwhile, doctor-patient relationship urgently calls for high-level medical humanities <sup>[3]</sup>.

## 2. Humanities Education in Medical Education

### 2.1. Importance of Humanities Education

Humanities education is an important part of medical education, which aims to cultivate comprehensive qualities of medical students, such as humanistic quality, professional quality, clinical competence and doctor-patient communication skill. It makes adjustment with the development of medical education. Recently, more and more attention has been paid to humanities education in the process of medical students' training. Wang Chen, academician, Chinese Academy of Engineering, said, "Cultivation of humanistic literacy should run through all stages of medical education, including medical education in medical colleges and universities" <sup>[4]</sup>. Martha Craven Nussbaum, American philosopher, noted, "Humanistic education is indispensable for cultivating and shaping the ability of critical authority, the ability of cross-cultural understanding, and the ability to deal with complex problems occurred in the world", which gives humanistic education a "core position" in all education <sup>[5]</sup>. In 2001, International Special Committee on Medical Education issued "Global Minimum Standards for Medical education" that advocated the cultivation of medical composite talents with humanistic spirit, scientific literacy, innovative spirit and ability. The government issued "Healthy China 2030 Plan" in 2016, in which the government emphasized the importance of medical humanistic education, in China. All showed that humanistic education has become an inevitable requirement to improve the quality of medical talent.

### 2.2. Subject of Humanities

The humanities is an important way to understand the world. It has received extensive attention in western universities and research institutions. The status of the humanities in the education system and scientific research system has risen. As Sara Guyer, chairman of arts and humanities department of University of California, said, "Students are turning to the arts and humanities as

an important way to make sense of the world. The most important task facing universities is to further improve the practicability of humanities. With rapid development of modern medicine, it is necessary to strengthen the construction of medical humanities in order to make medical humanities play more positive role <sup>[6]</sup>. The modern medical model of the perfect combination of medicine and humanity will promote the civilization of human society.

### 2.3. Development of Medical Humanities

After the 1970s, many medical colleges of universities in the world set up teaching and research institutions about medical humanities, and the education of medical humanities has developed rapidly. The teaching and research of medical humanities in China began in the 1980s, then some medical humanities research institutions were established successively, such as Dalian International Humanities Research Center and Medical History Research Center of Peking University. There has been some development in the construction of medical humanities in China <sup>[7]</sup>. In 2022, Wenzhou Medical University, with local medical colleges, initiated the establishment of national Medical Humanities Education Alliance of local medical colleges, and issued the initiative of "sharing the responsibility of medical humanities education and cultivating outstanding medical talents in the new era". Since the implementation of medical humanities education, it has gradually completed the practical change from value demonstration and meaning interpretation to in-depth promotion.

## 3. Exploration of Implementation of Medical Humanistic Education

### 3.1. Reserve about Humanistic Knowledge

Classroom teaching is an important way to store medical humanistic knowledge. We should make full use of classroom teaching guided by core values to strengthen the reserve of humanistic medical knowledge for medical students <sup>[8]</sup>. Firstly, the curriculum system should be constructed, such as operation and management of doctor-patient relationship, career development of medical students, statistical science, clinical thinking, philosophy, and offered medical aesthetics. According to theoretical guidance, humanistic teachers actively cultivate and practice medical humanistic spirit from the cultural level, then focus on cultivating students' spirit of saving lives and healing the wounded, and cultivate profound humanistic quality and noble moral sentiment. Aiming at the education of life and health concepts, humanitarianism, medical ethics, respect for patients' rights and interests. They integrate medical humanistic concepts into the humanistic curriculum construction to form a joint force in educating <sup>[9]</sup>. Secondly, we should focus on the main position of classroom education and integrate traditional culture, artistic quality and other elements into the classroom. Finally, we should make use of Internet to offer online and offline courses so as to enrich and expand the second classroom teaching, and cultivate the humanistic feelings of medical students <sup>[10]</sup>.

### 3.2. Characteristic Construction of Campus Culture

Building campus cultural characteristics to stimulate students to protect life, forms unique spiritual culture of medical colleges. The key to build humanistic atmosphere lies in management and its own culture. By organizing students to participate in cultural salons, holding medical humanities lectures, inviting famous doctors to make presentations, humanistic quality of students is enhanced <sup>[11]</sup>. Through online and offline, wechat, Douyin and other network platforms, we publicize positive people and things,

to pass on positive values, and nurture students with influence and imperceptibly.

### 3.3. Combination of Theory and Practice

Without practice, the theory of medical humanities loses its foundation. The complexity of clinical practice puts forward higher requirements for medical humanities. Theoretical cognition and clinical practice are implemented in coordination, then, medical students' ability to humanistic care is forged through practical experience. In the clinical practice stage, clinical teachers implement standardized medical humanities education in teaching activities. They use constructivism learning theory with CBL and PBL methods to effectively integrate the "medical humanities", then, students have learned into clinical practice through personal experience<sup>[12]</sup>, so that they can properly communicate with patients. During diagnosis and treatment, patients should understand the disease and believe in the doctor's treatment strategy, effectively solve the doubts and worries of patients and their families as well. These enhance the trust between doctors and patients so as to help patients build confidence and actively face the disease<sup>[13]</sup>. Meanwhile, we do a good job in the social practice by the ways of health promotion, social research, clinical services, humanistic practice courses, etc. Altogether, students can master humanistic literacy and skills in practice to realize medical humanities into medical treatment.

## 4. Prospect for Medical Humanities Education

The penetration and integration of science technology and humanistic spirit is the ideal goal of modern medicine. In fact, there is still a long way to realize the ideal integration. The main responsibility and significance of medical colleges is to train medical students to have professional skills, good sense of social responsibility and professional ethics. In the future, we will promote the construction of new medical science to establish a new system of medical education with humanistic characteristics.

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