How patient centered are we doing in communications? – a patient survey in Fanling Family Medicine Centre

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Introduction
Patient-centeredness is an essential component in good-quality healthcare. It is also an element in functional competency in the Staff Development Review (SDR). In order to achieve patient centeredness in our daily consultations, good communication skills are important, which include good listening skills, being polite, showing care, respecting patient's opinion and giving easy-to-understand information to patients. In fact, patients would be an appropriate assessor on this as they are the direct recipient of care. Fanling family medicine centre, providing 120,000 attendances a year, is a busy clinic with each consultation of <8 minutes. To enhance effective and patient-centered care, accurate assessment would be essential. This is the first patient questionnaire survey in our clinic on doctor communications. The result of survey can help identify the gaps in our communications, which can further help us plan training for doctors and reduce conflicts with patients.

Objectives
To use patient questionnaire survey to assess doctors’ communications skills.

Methodology
Based on the functional competency on patient centeredness in SDR, 5 items have been included in assessment in the patient survey: listening to patient, being polite, showing care, showing respect to patient’s opinion and information given is easy to understand. Rating is according to Likert scale from strongly disagree to strongly agree. All doctors are involved in the centre for the study and 50 questionnaires will be collected from patients on each doctor.
**Result**
The patient questionnaire survey started in 1st Dec 2014. As of 31st Jan 2015, 1620 questionnaires have been distributed and 531 are collected. The response rate is 32.8%. 14 doctors had been involved in the survey. Preliminary data shows that majority of patients agreed or strongly agreed that the doctors listened to them (87.3%), were polite (86.7%); showed care (81%); showed respect to patient’s opinion (84.7%); and the information given by doctors was easy to understand (85.7%). Doctors with less than 5 years of experience were more likely to have higher scores in listening, being polite, showing care, giving respect to patient’s opinion and giving easy-to-understand information. Overall, the results were positive. Training on communication skills should be given to all doctors at regular intervals.