Changes of Medical Professionalism after One Year in Internal Medicine Residency Training

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Background: Medical professionalism is one important aspect during residency training and also medical practice. This skill may develop over time of clinical practice and training.

Objective: This study aimed to evaluate the changes of medical professionalism in internal medicine residents after one year of training.

Methods: We enrolled residents in 2017 internal medicine residency program, Faculty of Medicine, Khon Kaen University, Thailand. Self reported questionnaire was used to evaluate the medical professionalism at the beginning and at one year after training. There were three parts of the questionnaire, including ideal medical professionalism, medical professionalism in real life, and factors affecting medical professionalism during the residency training. The first two parts comprised of 11 items, while the last part had ten items. Each item had a score from 0-10; 10 were the highest score. There were two types of residents at Khon Kaen University; normal residents and special track residents. The special track residents were those entering the residency training right after receiving medical degree, while normal residents were those who spent three years of clinical practice after receiving medical degree and then entered the residency training. All scores of each medical professionalism items were compared by using paired t test. Subgroup analysis was performed by types of residents.

Results: In 2017, there were 22 residents in internal medicine and categorized as 10 normal residents and 12 special track residents. The special track resident group had younger age (25 vs 27 years) and more residents with GPA over 3.50 (100% vs 40%) than the normal residents. The overall professionalism level of all residents after one year of training was slightly increased from 7.27 to 7.36. There was no statistical difference in all items (p-value > 0.05). Subgroup analyses found two statistical significant items. The special track residents reported that the ideal medical professionalism on the encouraging patients to ask questions significantly after one year of training (7.17 to 9.25; p value < 0.01). The normal residents had significant lower score on the same items above (8.50 to 6.80; p-value = 0.01).

Conclusion: After one year of training in internal medicine, there is no significant change in medical professionalism. The item on encouraging patients to ask questions is a significant item in subgroup analysis by type of residents.

Keywords : Internal medicine resident, Training, medical professionalism, Communication skill