

A Brief Interprofessional “Guess My Role” Game Improves Residents’ Knowledge About Team Roles

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Setting and Problem

Physicians must work effectively in teams, and the Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education requires that residency programs teach trainees team skills. To successfully participate in well-functioning teams, physicians first need to understand the roles of other team members. We developed a highly engaging “Guess My Role” game to teach our internal medicine residents about the roles of nonphysician health care professionals with whom they work, and we conducted a preliminary study of the game’s impact on residents’ knowledge about these professional roles.

Intervention

Study team members used a modified Delphi method to identify the 15 nonphysician professionals who most commonly interact with residents and whose roles are poorly understood by the residents. The professions identified included pharmacists, respiratory, occupational, and physical therapists, chaplains, risk managers, nurses (charge and floor), social workers, case managers, sitters (nonmedical personnel who supervise patients for safety), patient care technicians, dietitians, unit secretaries, patient relations professionals, and care coordinators. Leaders from each profession were invited to list the top 5 things they wished physicians knew about their given profession’s role. We used the lists to create a true/false knowledge test about each of the 15 professional roles. The knowledge test was generated by adding 1 false statement to each submitted list and inverting 1 submitted item to make it false, thereby yielding 6 possible correct answers for the 12 professions that submitted 5 items, and 5 possible correct answers for 1 profession that submitted 4 items. This resulted in a knowledge test with 76 possible correct answers/points. The knowledge test and scoring is available from the authors.

The Guess My Role game occurred during a regularly scheduled 1-hour conference and included residents, teaching service faculty, medical students, and nonphysician professionals. Upon arrival, residents, faculty, and student participants completed the knowledge pretest. Afterward, a name tag designating the role of 1 nonphysician team

member (eg, “social worker”) was placed on each participant’s back in a position that did not allow him or her to read the assigned profession. Each participant was instructed to ask other participants up to 10 yes/no questions in order to guess their assigned profession. Once they were confident in identifying their assigned profession, participants sat at a table with the nonphysician professional that best matched their “guessed” role, joining other participants who also believed they were assigned the same role.

At each table, participants discussed questions they used to identify their “guessed” profession. Each nonphysician professional leader then addressed the larger group with a 1-minute summary detailing their actual role and clarified common misperceptions identified in the small group discussions. At the conclusion of the session, participants completed a repeat knowledge test identical to the pre-intervention test. The intervention was conducted under Institutional Review Board approval.

Outcomes to Date

The game intervention engendered enthusiastic participation and positive comments from all participants. Thirty-three participants (medical students, residents, and faculty) completed the pretest, and 25 participants completed the posttest. There was statistically significant improvement in both the residents’ and the participants’ knowledge of nonphysician roles after the Guess My Role intervention (mean score of 56 points versus mean score of 52 points; $P = .014$; TABLE). For both tests, there were nonsignificant trends favoring higher scores with higher levels of training.

Our highly engaging Guess My Role game improved participants’ knowledge of nonphysician team member roles. Given the ease of implementing this game, it may serve as a readily available tool for other residency programs to teach trainees about interprofessional roles. We have not determined whether correctly identifying nonphysician professional roles leads to more effective collaboration or patient care, and we do not know if the knowledge gain is sustained over time. Despite these limitations, we successfully engaged participants in an interactive activity aimed to improve the awareness, understanding of, and

TABLE PREINTERVENTION AND POSTINTERVENTION SCORES ON ROLES KNOWLEDGE TEST			
Participants	Pretest Average Score (n)	Posttest Average Score (n)	P Value
Medical students	48.6 (7)	55.2 (9)	.07
Residents	53.0 (23)	56.5 (15)	.04
PGY-1	51.6 (14)	54.9 (7)	
PGY-2	55.7 (3)	57.5 (4)	
PGY-3	55.2 (6)	58.5 (4)	
Faculty	56.0 (3)	57.0 (1)	N/A
Total	52.4 (33)	56.1 (25)	.01

Abbreviations: PGY, postgraduate year; N/A, not applicable.

participation in team-based care, an increasingly important component of physician training. Future interventions may solidify knowledge of nonphysician roles by including case-based conferences that further highlight the specific roles various professionals have in patient care.

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