

## POSTER ABSTRACT

# Involving Volunteer Patients VPs in Medical Education not Only Trains the Medical Students but Also Promotes the VPs' Health

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**Introduction:** In our hospital, the family physicians offer outpatient services to the elder apartment every two weeks. The residents living in the elder apartment still have good functions but suffer from comorbidities. In the traditional medical training courses, medical students sit beside doctors in the clinics to see or join in the processes of patient care in a limit time. The patients sometimes have multiple complaints without specific physical problems. Some studies showed that volunteer patients VPs enjoy the atmosphere with young people. Hence, we expect that inviting the residents to be VPs could not only help the next generation of doctors develop their clinical skills but also let the elder patients feel contributive, pleasant and healthier.

**Methods:** From April to October 2016, we had arranged for medical students to visit the elder apartment every two weeks with the clinical staff standby. At first, we explained to the residents that we hoped they could be the medical students' teachers and make some orientation of the elder apartment; in the meantime, be VPs, sharing the personal experience to students. After the residents agreed, they guided the medical students to the public space and the rooms of the elder apartment. Then, they could choose sit in the public space or the resident's room to get into a conversation. The family physicians did some records for the time of conversation and the behavior changes of the VPs.

**Results:** 20 medical students had visited the elder apartment in the six months. Each conversation between the VPs and the medical students lasted about 1-2 hours. After six months observation, we found the intervals between the volunteer patients' medical visits prolonged and medical complaints decreased. Some residents who were shy became optimistic. Besides, several residents opened the KTV room to sing with the medical students. Moreover, one resident started to do Chinese ink painting again, even inscribed some poems to the young doctors. During our feedback with the medical students, they also expressed that this style of training let them gained much more insight about the Geriatrics and the long-term care policy.

**Conclusions:** Beyond the traditional medical training courses and visits, VPs not only improved the medical student's insight on medical history taking and empathy, but also raised their own satisfaction and delight. The most important thing was that they became healthier. Via the

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communication, we learned that the residents' desire for meaningful social participation. It seems that being volunteer patients may postpone the elder patients themselves from disabled.

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**Keywords:** volunteer patients; elder apartment; medical education

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