



Differences in Student and Faculty Ratings of Empathy in a Simulated Patient Encounter



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BACKGROUND

Empathy

- The ability to understand and view the world from other people's perspectives and to connect with their experiences or feelings.
- Often identified as an important component to develop to provide patient-centered care as part of the Pharmacists' Patient Care Process.
- Can be challenging to teach and assess because of subjective nature.

The Challenge

- Skills in the affective domain can be challenging to teach and assess.
- Divide between perceptions and what patients feel.
- Objective Structured Clinical Examinations (OSCEs) utilize standardized patients for students to interview, assess, and counsel.
- Students can practice empathy and become more self-aware through self-reflection and feedback from the patient and an observer.
- Faculty ratings of empathy may also be useful tools to aid students in metacognition.

KCES-R (Kiersma Chen Empathy Scale-Revised)

- Original
 - Validity evidence for assessing empathy
 - Used internationally in over 80 studies
- Revised
 - Updated after psychometric analysis (international, thousands of students) and cognitive interviewing
 - Two 7-item subscales related to global empathy and self-perceived empathy

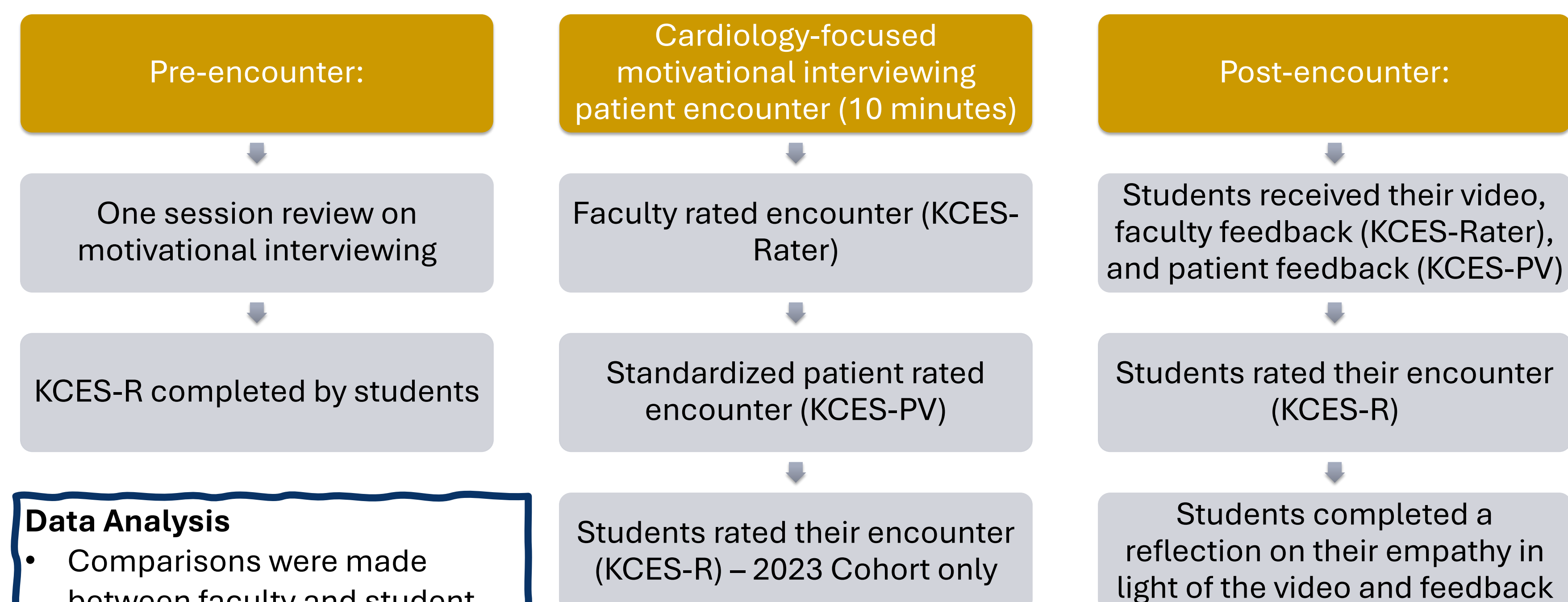
KCES-PV (Patient Version) and KCES-Rater

- Design
 - 7-item scale
 - Parallels the self-perceived empathy subscale in the KCES-R
- KCES-PV is for patient / standardized patient use
 - Validity evidence for this instrument
- KCES-Rater is for faculty use
 - Developed and piloted

OBJECTIVE

To (1) examine differences in student and faculty ratings of empathy in a simulated patient encounter and (2) explore student self-reflection after receiving faculty ratings as a tool to aid reflection.

METHODS



Data Analysis

- Comparisons were made between faculty and student ratings using a Wilcoxon Signed Ranks test.
- Thematic analysis was performed on reflections.

REFERENCES



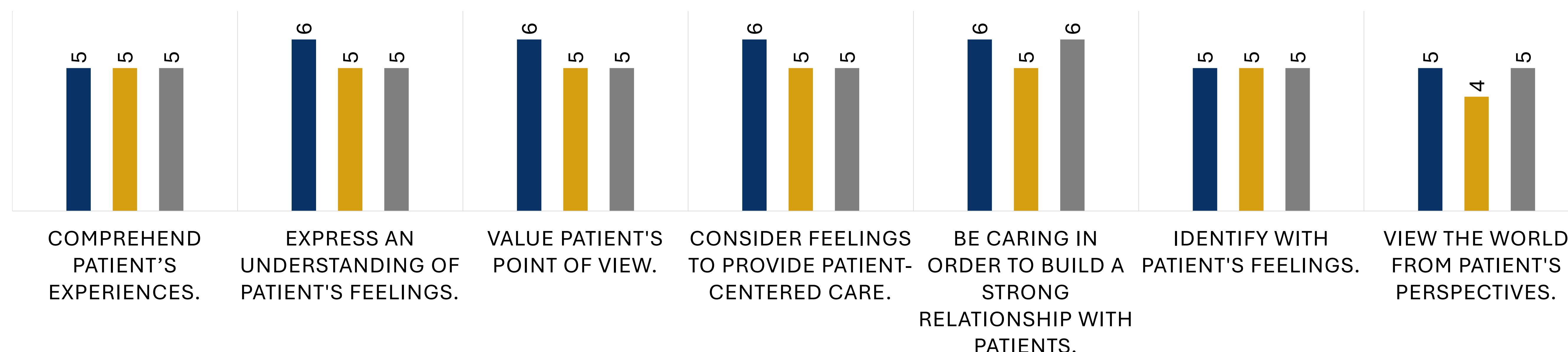
RESULTS

60 students across two cohorts (2022 and 2023)

EMPATHY COMPARISONS

■ Pre ■ Post ■ Rater

1=Does not describe me/them, 4=Describes me/them moderately well, 7=Describes me/them extremely well



Student Reflective Responses: Supporting Positive Behaviors

After my interaction with the mock-patient, I was doubting I was able to [empathize] with the patient well. Upon receiving the feedback, however, I found I had performed at or slightly above the level I expected with empathy. This helped me bolster my confidence that I can interact with my patients and colleagues in a constructive way that enables me to better serve them.

I was pleased to see in the video, and on my faculty review, my empathy came across clear and intentional. At the moment I really thought I was being too cheesy and trying too hard, but I think that was merely my beginner's mind toward the topic. I need to be more mindful that empathy is a tone and attitude to help with the overarching goal of gathering information to best help our patients.

I learned through the MI activity and watching myself on video that my personal empathy development towards others is headed in the right direction. Looking at my evaluations from my patient and faculty member, the scores I received all reflect good patient management and understanding.

I learned that deep down when I do my best to communicate with people, I do a really good job of being thorough, supporting self-efficacy, showing compassion, and listening to the patient... The evaluations by the patient and faculty member as well as the video confirmed my perceptions of what I believe that I do well with regarding empathy. However, it also showed me that there is room for improvement. I believe that the faculty member's rating of me was fair, honest, and provided good feedback for what I did well and what I could improve.

Student Reflective Responses: Identifying Areas for Growth

After watching my video and the results on the motivational interviewing skills, I was enlightened that showing empathy isn't just caring to build a strong relationship with the patient but also comprehending with the patient's experiences, expressing an understanding of the patient's feelings, and valuing the patient's point of view.

After watching my video of motivational interviewing, I definitely think that there is space to improve in how I can relay my empathy to the patient. Some of the feedback that I received was that I could work on hearing the patient's perspective first... Although I thought that I understood them, I was a little too quick to make recommendations about lifestyle changes and things that they can do.

After watching a video recording of my interaction with standardized patient, I noted that my empathy was not sufficient, and I need to practice more to ensure that I offer more empathy to both standardized and real-life patients... The evaluations from faculty, a standardized patient... were also a challenge to work more on my empathy skills.

From the faculty member's feedback, I realized that I tried to incorporate MI without the soul or compassion behind it. We learned in class that MI is a tool that reveals others' hearts and motivations and gives healthcare providers the opportunity to help transform those perceptions to gradually enable them to change their behaviors.

DISCUSSION

- The KCES-Rater is a promising measure for faculty to provide feedback.
- Student ratings of empathy decreased after completing the activity and watching the video / receiving feedback. They may have had a better concept of their empathy after those two elements, as noted by their reflections.
- Students realized that practice was needed for further development as plans were made for subsequent encounters.

Limitations

- Simulated patient care vs. actual practice
- Possibility for social desirability bias



Self-awareness is needed

- Student pharmacists need to be more self-aware of how they are perceived and practice demonstrating empathy; both students and patients recognize the importance of empathy.



More practice with feedback

- Incorporating more opportunities to practice empathy with feedback will assist student pharmacists in becoming more self-aware.