

GRAND ROUNDS

Tuesday, November 1, 2016

HSC, LH 1 ([directions](#))

4:30-6:00pm

EMPATHY IN HEALTH PROFESSION EDUCATION: What Have We Learned and Where Do We Go from Here?

Mohammadreza Hojat, PhD

In medical education we use many methods to produce physician humanists who are empathically attentive to the patient as he or she experiences an illness. We expose students to literature, film, the creative arts, poetry, and narrative medicine; we reflect on the virtues of the “good doctor” who is an attentive listener, empathic, and a reassuring communicator with patients and in healthcare teams; we develop opportunities for students to write and reflect on their clinical role models both good and bad, and on what they learn from them about how or how not to practice medicine; we develop clinical simulation center interactions between students and actor patients to allow for feedback on the clarity and the effectiveness of empathic skill sets; we have reflection rounds in the clinical clerkships that allow students to discuss on the human side of their clinical interactions and the preservation of their empathic integrity. We practice empathic communication skills. By being encouraged to closely observe the subjective illness experience can students begin to connect with patients as persons, replete with narratives of hope, anxiety, fear, love, loss, meaning, goals, culture, and treatment preferences. This awareness of patients as “persons” and not just as “puzzles” is at the very center of the art of medicine and of healing. There are empirical questions: Can empathy be taught, or at least can we help to sustain it so that our students can flourish and go on to practice medicine in ways that are gratifying? What can be learned from the Jefferson scale for the measurement of empathy and how can it be applied?

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*Dr. Mohammadreza Hojat is a Research Professor, Department of Psychiatry and Human Behavior and Director of the Jefferson Longitudinal Study of Medical Education at Sidney Kimmel (formerly Jefferson) Medical College at Thomas Jefferson University in Philadelphia. He received his bachelor degree in educational psychology from Pahlavi University (currently University of Shiraz), his master's degree in psychology from the University of Tehran in Iran, and his doctoral degree in psychological services from the University of Pennsylvania. Dr. Hojat is a licensed psychologist, and has published more than 200 articles in peer-reviewed journals and 13 book chapters on educational, psychological, and social issues. Dr. Hojat is a manuscript referee for a number of American and European professional journals, and has served as a co-editor of three books: *Loneliness: Theory, Research, and Applications* (Sage, 1987), *Assessment Measures in Medical School, Residency, and Practice: The Connections* (Springer, 1993), and *Applied Psychology of Well-Being* (in Persian, published in Iran, Niktab, 2007). The original edition of his book *Empathy in Patient Care: Antecedents, Development, Measurement, and Outcomes* was published in 2007 (Springer Science). An expanded and updated version of the book under a new title: *Empathy in Health Professions Education and Patient Care* was released in 2016.*

