

Role of Drama in Oral Health Education - The Point of View of Dental Student

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Abstract

Oral health care is the most important part of person day to day life. Many methods are documented in literature so far for oral health programmes which includes interventions aiming at affecting attitudinal and behavioural change through interactive sessions such as role-play, nukkad natak, have led to self-reported reductions in risk habits in adults as well as children. Use of applied drama and theatre in oral health promotion is increasing, but knowledge about its effectiveness for health and well-being is still limited. This review is aimed to detect the role of drama in oral health care programmes.

Keywords: Nukkad natak; Role play; Behavioural change

Short Communication

Health education is the process of imparting information about health in such a way that the recipient is motivated to use that information for the protection of advancement of his own, his family's or his community's wealth. It is an active learning process which aims at favourably changing attitude and influencing behaviour in respect to health. As clearly stated by WHO "Health education comprises consciously constructed opportunities for learning involving some form of communication designed to improve health literacy, including improving knowledge, and developing skills which are conducive to individual and community health" (Figure 1).

Oral health care being a part of health promotion, is nowadays receiving attention in the field of dentistry and leading to the innovation of various approaches for oral education [1] There are many approaches for oral health education which includes regulatory or legal approach, administrative or service approach, educational approach and primary health care approach. Educational approach being the most challenging and effective way to interact with community has a long term and stable effects on its wealth. Basic constituents of this approach include visual aids, audio aids, audio-visual aids. The dramatic mode of oral health education is most accepted and popular method among community, as it has been previously studied by Asokan et al. According to this study drama as a method of oral health education can have a bigger impact on the oral health attitude and practices of the pre-schoolers [2]. These

modes can serve to reinforce as well as improve the oral health practices among pre-school children.

The educational drama approach is based on educational theories of cooperative, interactive and student-centred learning [3]. Drama can be seen as creating 'potential space' for growth and critical reflection within participatory and socio-cultural learning. Two distinct forms of educational drama are used in school settings: Theatre in Education (TIE) and Drama in Education (DIE) or classroom drama. TIE is a co-ordinated and carefully structured pattern of activities, usually devised around a topic of relevance to both the school curriculum and the children's own lives. Theatre in Health Education (THE) is one genre of TIE and involves a diverse range of theatre-related methods and health education. DIE was originally similar to drama as taught in schools, but is now more usually concerned with the exploration of themes and problems through role play and improvisation, with emphasis on developing, among other things, the child's imagination and social skills [4].

The aim of both TIE and DIE is to engage children in learning which addresses potentially sensitive matters in the field of personal, social and health education (Denman et al. 1995). In drama, learning is intended to be based on the dialogic relationship between fiction and reality, which is a kind of rehearsal for real life [5].

It is rightly said that "our mind remembers what we see" so oral education in the form of drama has the better influence among the patients as compared to others. Situation should be dramatized in such a way that it makes communication more effective and also it should involve the audience/patients to take part [6]. As a part of oral health programme, many days are being celebrated with sheer enthusiasm in our colleges and societies. For example: World No tobacco day is being celebrated on 31st May every year, one should actually frame the whole



Figure 1: Clip of awareness program on world no tobacco day.

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Received August 03, 2017; **Accepted** August 16, 2017; **Published** August 27, 2017

Citation: Tevatia S, Sharma N, Chopra R (2017) Role of Drama in Oral Health Education - The Point of View of Dental Student. J Formul Sci Bioavailab 1: 113.

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drama in such a way that it should have positive impact on patients' habit of tobacco use. Earlier this concept was not so much appreciated, but nowadays the concept of drama/play is conceptualised by the students and doctors itself.

Advantages of these role plays and drama include the patient's direct communication with the doctor and they accept the take home message easily [7]. Whole drama should be frame in such a way that it is showing clearly the ill effects/disadvantages of the chosen theme (Figure 2).

Drama helps to distract and attract everyone (children or adults) towards the message that one is trying to convey. Drama in Oral health education programme also includes the concept of dental clown, which usually plays a role model in front of children as well as adults (Figure 3).

Being a clown, person can play the role without eliciting a sense of danger in the patient, not only because his essence as a 'fool' provides him with an appropriated aesthetic distance, but also because the patient never see him as a person: the clown is always in role. This 'role protection' creates a situation in which it is very unlikely for the patient to confuse the fictional world of the clown with reality [8].

The concept of nukkad nataks are widely accepted in many small towns as a part of their enjoyment. On the contrary as a benefit to patients it also serves as stress burster to dental students.



Figure 2: Role play by dental student tells the adverse effect of smoking.



Figure 3: Interaction with school children making environment fearless before going to dental examination.

Conclusion

As a part of oral health care, educational approach in a form of role plays and nukkad nataks are important. We should not actually wait for theme based days, as recommended by WHO, rather these dramas should be held regularly for patient's awareness and education regarding maintaining proper oral hygiene, tobacco habit caesation, regular dental check every 6 months etc. Dramas directly communicate with patients and helps in their wellbeing. This concept should be popularising enough among dental students and in colleges.

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