Contributions of the Medical College Library to the Humanistic Education

Wei WANG*

Xi’an Medical College, Xi’an, Shaanxi, China

*Corresponding author

Keywords: Medical college library, Humanistic education, Contribution.

Abstract. Medical humanistic education is an integral part of medical education; it is the cornerstone of the medical students’ comprehensive development and the premise for building a harmonious doctor-patient relationship. Facing the reality of college education and being the second-classroom of the medical students, medical college library should do some efforts in the aspect of humanistic education. The paper uses Xi’an Medical College library as an example to share several meaningful activities to prove that library can be an auxiliary in humanistic education.

Introduction

The Importance of Humanistic Education for the Medical College Students

Medical education is not only teaching students how they can cure the patients by some modern techniques, but also an education about physicians-in-training communication skills, doctor-patient relations, and medical ethics. Medical humanistic education is an integral part of medical education, and medical colleges and universities take the unshirkable responsibility in this. As Bolton has pointed out: "do the sciences not also rely for their effectiveness on understanding, critical analysis, meaning, discernment, interpretation, visualization, and creativity, all fostered by subjects traditionally considered to be based on humanities and arts?"[1] Nowadays more and more deteriorating doctor-patient relationship are occurred and doctor bribery from patients is occurred from time to time. These phenomena are what we cannot conceal. How to make the medical students to see this phenomenon clearly and make the students have a positive attitude about this? Or how to make the medical students know the existence of this phenomenon and to find their own solution? All these must be paid attention by the medical educators. So humanistic education is an important task for medical colleges and universities in China to carry out. The physician’s role should be more like a healer and comforter and doctors should attend to the whole patient, not just the disease [2]. From this level, humanistic education is not a task of humanistic faculty, but a task of all college faculty, including the college library.

The Current Situation of Humanistic Education in Medical College

In China, medical education has been affected by traditional biomedical models for a long time. It mainly focuses on the teaching of medical theory and skills and the cultivation of humanistic qualities has been ignored. The concept of technology supremacy basically extinguishes the pursuit of humanistic quality and human education is separated from science education, which has led to a lack of humanistic spirit among young doctors. It directly causes high appeal rate and low satisfaction rate and it interferes indirectly with the personal growth of young doctors.

As a medical college or university, it is different from the comprehensive university in subject settings. Less teaching periods are allotted for the humanistic education. Teacher allocation is also uneven. The number of medical teachers is much higher than that of humanities teachers. At present, there are three types of humanistic education courses in the medical colleges and universities in China, that is historical and cultural, socio-economic and political philosophy. And most medical colleges...
make Marxist theories and ideological & moral course as the required course, while the courses such as medical ethics, health law, medical psychology, aesthetics and art appreciation are regarded as the optional courses. The teaching period is about 8%.

In Xi’an Medical College, the main lessons related to humanistic education are Marxist theories and ideological & moral course, and lessons like aesthetics and art appreciation are not available. The teaching period is under 5%.

The Role of the Library in Medical College for Humanistic Education

Standing at the heart of the information sciences in a medical college, medical library is the obvious partner for providing materials, training and programs to support the teaching of medical humanities [3]. As a second-classroom for the college students, medical college library should play the necessary and auxiliary functions in disseminating humanistic information by organizing some meaningful activities.

The Related Activities that Xi’an Medical College Library has been Held

Activity One: Seeing the Movies and Reading the Classic Originals

Film is an artistic form that can broaden and widen peoples’ life experience. The classic movie is a kind of thinking about human nature and philosophy. As a part of art and humanistic education, seeing classic movies can develop students’ imagination and creativity, strengthen students’ natural science and humanistic science knowledge, improve students’ humanistic culture and sense of social responsibility, and cultivate the compound talents who understand both the artistic aesthetic and the medical skills. So “seeing the movies and reading the classic originals” activity is launched by our library. We carefully choose some Chinese and overseas classic movies, such as To Live, Forrest Gump, A Beautiful Mind, Wolf Totem…After finishing the movie, we organize a small movie salon to give the students a chance to communicate with each other and talk freely about their feelings of the movie. Some students say that they get independence, strong and brave struggling from the movies; some say that they get suffering endurance and optimism. Some students say that they understand at last that obstacles in life sometimes cannot be avoided and what they can do is to face it and have a strong determination to conquer it. Some students show their confusions about study and future career and they feel they find a way out by communicating with the others in the salon. In order to make students better understanding the movie, the call number of the original works is supplied to provide convenience for the students to borrow the related books from the library. According to the statistics, the borrowing rate of the movie’s original goes up and the books related to movie critics also goes up. Students enjoy using one afternoon to immerse themselves in the excellent movie with wonderful story and vivid background music. They say that it is a kind of enjoyment in the busy medical study.

Activity Two: Readers’ Salon

As a secondary medical college, we don’t have enough humanistic faculty and we also don’t have enough money to invite the famous professor from outside to give our medical students a speech on humanity. So, our library tries to tap the useful resources in the college. Our own professors are chosen carefully and invited to our library to give some speeches. Although these invited professors’ major is medical, they are interested in humanity, such as photography, travel, art appreciation, film appreciation, fabric art and delicious food etc. With these speeches, medical students know how to take beautiful pictures by mobile phone and how to do a good composition of a picture; medical students know how to appreciate Da Vinci’s paintings and understand the meaning behind paintings; medical students have the chance to go to the ancient Greek to have a close contact with papyrus and uncover the secrets of the pharaohs; medical students know the stories of some delicious food and they learn to do some fabric handworks with their own hands. We expect the students to know that there are many beautiful things around them and they should have the ability to look for the beauty,
interesting and funny things besides the heavy medical lessons and experiments. With the
development of the activity, some students recommend themselves to give some speeches, such as the
poem appreciation, the self-reading of A Dream in Red Mansions, calligraphy appreciation etc. The
library is willing to supply a stage for these students to share their cognition and feelings with
different people and a humanistic atmosphere can be created in our college in some degrees. Medical
students say that they learned to slow down the rhythm of life, and willing to put down the phones to
read some books in their spare time or go out of the college to know something they are unfamiliar
with. Their daily life became meaningful and their college life is enriched. This activity has been kept
for three years and is welcomed by more and more teachers and students. To the medical college with
limited funding, it is indeed an advisable mode to add some humanistic elements into the medical
studying period.

Activity Three: Challenge Ten Hours for Reading

Liang Wendao, a literary critic, once said that reading is to make us know how complex the world is
with a merciful sight and heart. Reading does not make us realistic but make us have the power to face
everything. If we have some confusion about life, we can have a try to get solution from reading. We
planned and organized the “challenge ten hours for reading” activity. This means except one hour for
lunch, the challenger should read in the certain area and keep reading (not e-reading) for at least ten
hours. Teachers and students can carry their favorite books and we also supply the classic literature
books for them. Although the challenge upper limit is 30 people, the number of participants gets to the
limit as soon as the activity information is released. Except one student failed the challenge, rest of the
challengers are all succeed. One teacher challenger says that it has been a long time that he can’t sit
quietly to read one book, too much time is occupied by the preparing lessons and doing scientific
research. Reading gives him peace and it is important for the medical teachers to get some humanistic
knowledge. Some student challengers say that they have a meaningful Sunday, putting down the
mobile phone is not a difficult thing because they find new happiness from reading and they have a
new understanding for the reading. From this activity, we found that it is necessary and important for
the medical professor to have some humanistic knowledge. What the society need is the
superb-skilled physician with kindness and warm heart. So, when a medical professor can say
something about humanity during his teaching of medical students, the teaching effect will be better.

Activity Four: The Week of the Broadcast Exhibition of Classic Humanistic Documentary

In nowadays library, the proportion of electronic resources is increasing year by year. The electric
databases related to humanity are all kinds of. Different level of college has different fund to buy
different electric databases. Using Xi’an Medical College library as an example, there are 4
e-databases including humanistic resources. These are the necessary supplements for the humanistic
education, especially in our college. In order to make students know these databases and take full use
of them, we make the activity of “The Week for The broadcast exhibition of classic humanistic
documentary”. In the electric database of Weixiu report hall, all the reporters are coming from
Chinese most famous universities and there are many excellent humanistic lessons for the students.
We choose documentaries from these and broadcast for the medical students. Many students feedback
that since they know where these resources are and they can watch the documentary video in their
spare time freely. Besides the e-database, we also find some documentaries searched on the internet
for free, such as sohu, 163 and sina etc. In these websites, the humanistic resources are not only the
speech but also the curriculum. The videos come from Chinese famous universities and overseas
famous universities. These websites are used without any restrict so students have more choices.

Other Form that Medical College Library Can Do for Creating a Humanistic Atmosphere

The humanistic education is not a game. It cannot have a result quickly and its effect is not immediate.
So the library should use any chance to send humanity information to the students. The example is the
following:
Adding the reading promotion into the teaching of literature retrieval: Literature retrieval is a course undertaken by the library. The audience is the students of different majors. Although the scheduled teaching period is limited, the teachers can still do something in cultivating medical students’ humanistic quality by reading promotion. At the beginning of each literature retrieval lesson, teacher can use five to ten minutes to share one or two books with the students. In order not to give students too much financial burden and save students’ time, teacher can recommend the books that library has bought and show the call number of the book to the students. As a Chinese saying says: “A master teaches the trade, but the apprentice's skill is self-made”, literature retrieval teacher can open a door for the medical students and arouse the students’ interests for reading. If the medical students have the ability to read independently and autonomously, and have the habit of reading, students’ humanistic quality can be improved gradually.

WeChat public number: WeChat public number is used popularly by an organization in collecting and delivering messages. It is an effective tool for the medical library to transfer the humanity resource. The WeChat of Xi’an Medical College is composed with several fixed segments, such as New Arrivals; Best reading list; Masterpiece appreciation, Art appreciation and so on. In the era of fragmented reading, what the library can do is to provide a humanistic reading environment for students that they can immerse themselves in it at any time and at any place.

Keep contact with the students’ union and students’ clubs: library should not work behind closed doors and it is necessary to know what students’ wants and likes. So keeping close contact with the students’ union and students’ clubs is very important. On the one hand, library’s colorful activities can be broadcasted more widely and on the other hand, library can planned more popular activities with their participation.

Conclusion

Strengthening the medical humanities education is the cornerstone for the medical students’ comprehensive development and the premise of building a harmonious doctor-patient relationship. With the humanistic education, medical students can have the empathy for the patients, which means when they work in the hospital as a doctor, they can feel what patients feel, pain and stress, and they can understand patients’ mood and need and they can express their understanding and respect to the patients in a proper way.

So it is very necessary to give the medical students the humanistic education. And medical college library can be a well auxiliary in humanistic education.

References

