What Can We Learn About Psycho-social Functioning of Individuals Diagnosed with Schizophrenia From Standardized Patients?

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Treatment of patients with schizophrenia can be improved by precise administration of rating scales. The Positive and Negative Syndrome Scale (PANSS) is a commonly used tool to assess symptoms of schizophrenia. In order to develop a participatory learning program that aims to enhance raters training and increase inter-rater reliability we trained five actors to serve as standardized patients (SP). A training program for SPs was constructed using a narrative analysis scheme in the following manner: 1) Seven transcripts of SCI-PANSS interviews were analyzed and subdivided into thematic chapters including: symptom frequency, intensity, complexity, interference and impairment; 2) Script/story analysis of transcribed interviews were conducted where we identified *scripted* elements common among all seven interviews and *storied* elements that deviate from the script and have a function to individuate each of the interviews ; 3) Linguistic markers (words, phrases, or discursive patterns indicative of symptoms and their severity) that are often seen as hallmarks of aetiology of schizophrenia were identified; 4) Symptoms were divided into two severity levels, moderate and severe, and three full SCI-PANSS interview scripts were built; 5) A workshop for five professional actors was conducted under the supervision of an expert PANSS interviewer. By studying the development of this program knowledge can be gained about a number of aspects related overall psycho-social functioning of individuals diagnosed with schizophrenia, such as the impact of semantic and discursive practices on interpersonal interactions and their further effect on the progress of the illness.