

Use of Balint Groups (BGs) to Support Wellbeing Amongst Medical Students in a Public Health Institution

Dr Lay Ling Tan and Ms Karen Koh

Changi General Hospital, Singapore, Singapore

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Aims: BG is named after its founder, Michael Balint, a trained therapist. BGs are reflective practice groups and have been shown to help with critical reflection, self-discovery and deep connection to others. It can enhance empathic understanding of the doctor-patient therapeutic relationship and has been used to facilitate reflections amongst doctors and other healthcare professionals. Its application in medical students have not been widely studied.

Loss of empathy and burnout as they began clinical training have been widely reported amongst medical students. As part of our hospital's initiative to support their wellbeing, our Education Office offered medical students the experience of BGs by trained facilitators. We aim to understand students' experiences of attending BGs and its impact on their wellbeing.

Methods: Students were invited via an email detailing the purpose and structure of BG. A non-random purposive sample of medical students with clinical postings of at least 6 weeks were included. BGs were conducted based on the students' clinical groupings. Data was collected through self-reported questionnaires and qualitative feedback to capture the students' experience with BGs in the clinical setting.

Results: 58 medical students participated in 6 sessions of BG conducted in groups of 8 to 10 with 1 or 2 facilitators. About 70% of the students were better able to appreciate the psychological aspects of patient encounters and endorsed that they benefited from facilitation of reflections during BGs. Content analysis of qualitative feedback supported the following themes: 1. Safe space to reflect on difficult clinical encounters; 2. Improved self-awareness; 3. Appreciation of different perspectives.

Conclusion: Providing the students with a safe therapeutic space to share their thoughts about difficult clinical encounters supported critical reflection and develop others' awareness as they consider different perspectives. The sense of camaraderie and togetherness provided by the group may help to build empathy amongst our students and address burnout and compassion fatigue. BGs can also foster a sense of belonging and support during medical students' stressful clinical years with the provision of a safe and secure space to explore emotions and attitudes. There are ongoing efforts to incorporate such reflective groups systematically into the undergraduate medical education clinical curriculum.

Abstracts were reviewed by the RCPsych Academic Faculty rather than by the standard *BJPsych Open* peer review process and should not be quoted as peer-reviewed by *BJPsych Open* in any subsequent publication.

A Critical Review of Psychological Safety in Psychoeducation for Patients with Anxiety Disorders and Implications for Medical Education in Psychiatry

Dr Chao Tian Tang, Dr Palanivelu Sendhil Kumar, Dr Ho Teck Tan, Dr Siew Fai Liew and Dr Shian Ming Tan

Sengkang General Hospital, Singapore, Singapore

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Aims: Psychoeducation for patients with anxiety disorders has been associated with reduced symptoms, improved quality of life, and

increased response to treatment. However, there is much heterogeneity in such interventions. Patients with anxiety disorders can have maladaptive cognitive patterns such as catastrophic thinking, attentional biases toward threat, and cognitive avoidance. These patterns can interfere with the processing and assimilation of psychoeducational content, potentially reducing its effectiveness. Our hypothesis is that psychological safety plays a key role in increasing the effectiveness of psychoeducational interventions for patients with anxiety disorders. We aim to critically review the role of psychological safety in such interventions and to explore its impact on medical education in psychiatry.

Methods: Sources were identified through searches via databases including PubMed, PsycINFO, Scopus, Cochrane Library, and Google Scholar. Results were then critically analysed with key themes extracted to evaluate the role of psychological safety in psychoeducation. A narrative synthesis was then performed, exploring the influence of this on medical education in psychiatry.

Results: Several key themes were identified. Psychological safety has a mediating role between the quality of doctor-patient communication and patients' self-disclosure, which can be limited by various fears, including a fear of negative judgment in this population. Patient engagement, which has a multidimensional construct, is also impacted by the presence of psychological safety which increases patient openness and comfort. Psychological safety also aids collaborative efforts within the healthcare ecosystem, positively impacting the outcomes of psychoeducational processes. The influence of psychological safety on the concept of the therapeutic interpersonal relationship in psychoeducation was also explored, with implications for open communication and the perception of threats. Proposed enhancements to assessments and curriculum for educational efforts in anxiety disorders and corresponding psychoeducational interventions through the active provision of psychological safety concepts were discussed.

Conclusion: This critical review highlights the pivotal role of psychological safety in enhancing the effectiveness of psychoeducational interventions for patients with anxiety disorders. By equipping clinicians to create safe environments, these efforts can optimize psychoeducational interventions and ultimately improve care for patients with anxiety disorders. Targeted studies on specific subgroups of patients with anxiety disorders should be performed to better qualify and quantify the impact of psychological safety in psychoeducational interventions in these subgroups.

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Evaluating Core Psychiatry Training Provisions in Cwm Taf Morgannwg University Health Board Using a Mock GMC Survey

Dr Tyler Thomas¹, Dr Timothy Chan², Dr Kok Keong Leong³, Dr Daniel De Silva³ and Dr Siddhartha Bajju¹

¹CTMUHB, Cardiff, United Kingdom; ²CTMUHB, Bridgend, United Kingdom. and ³CTMUHB, Llantrisant, United Kingdom

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Aims: This survey aimed to assess the training conditions of psychiatry resident doctors, within Cwm Taf Morgannwg University Health Board (CTMUHB). The survey provided an opportunity for trainees to share their experiences, highlight challenges, and contribute to improving training. Participation was anonymous to ensure confidentiality for sensitive topics such as discrimination.