

Letter to the Editor

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The need for integration of emotional intelligence and spirituality training in medical and nursing education curriculum

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Dear Editor,

I recently had the opportunity to read an enlightening study entitled “Do spirituality and emotional intelligence improve the perception of the ability to provide care at the end of life? The role of knowledge and self-efficacy” by Martins et al. (2024), which explores the complex interactions between spirituality, emotional intelligence, palliative care knowledge, and self-efficacy in the provision of end-of-life care by health-care workers (Martins et al. 2024).

In the modern era of medicine and nursing, high technical competence is often considered the key to delivering effective health care. However, as understanding of the complexity of human interactions in medical contexts increases, emotional intelligence and spirituality are emerging as transformative components that cannot be ignored (Shuck and Herd 2012). These 2 aspects have the potential to significantly enhance the quality of care provided to patients, especially in challenging situations such as end-of-life care (Virdun et al. 2015).

Emotional intelligence, defined as the ability to identify, understand, and manage one's own and others' emotions, is a critical component often overlooked in medical education. Health professionals with high emotional intelligence can better deal with stress, communicate effectively with patients and medical teams, and make more informed decisions in stressful situations (Ndawo 2021). Integrating this training into the curriculum can be done through workshops, real-life scenario simulations, and reflection sessions that help students practically develop these skills (Howard et al. 2011).

Meanwhile, spirituality, often defined as how individuals seek more profound meaning, purpose, and connection, also has a vital role in medical practice. In the context of health care, spirituality is not just about religion but also about how a health-care professional can provide holistic support to patients who may be facing end-of-life or struggling with chronic illness (Richardson 2014). This training can include teaching how to honor and respond to the diverse spiritual needs of patients, which can ultimately improve the quality of care provided (Puchalski 2001).

Integrating emotional intelligence and spirituality into medical and nursing education supports the development of doctors and nurses who focus not only on physical healing but also on meeting the emotional and spiritual needs of patients. This approach aligns with a more patient-centric model of care, where care is not only measured by clinical outcomes but also by patient satisfaction and comfort, thereby reassuring the audience of the positive impact of this training on patient care (Rathert et al. 2013).

Recent studies have shown that education involving aspects of emotional and spiritual intelligence prepares medical and nursing students better for the complex and often challenging world of work (Baldacchino 2015). For example, a study published in the “Journal of Clinical Nursing” found that nurses trained in aspects of emotional intelligence and spirituality showed higher levels of empathy, greater job satisfaction, and lower burnout tendencies (Beauvais et al. 2017).

This integrated education can also bring benefits to the educational institution itself. Graduates who are both technically skilled and emotionally and spiritually strong are more likely to become leaders in their fields, enhance the institution's reputation, and attract talented prospective students (Muyia et al. 2018). To achieve this integration, colleges and universities need to emphasize the importance of collaboration with experts in psychology and religion. Their insights and expertise are crucial in developing relevant and impactful modules. This collaborative approach ensures that the curriculum remains responsive to the changing needs of the labor market, making the audience feel valued and integral to the process (Tedesco et al. 2014).

By introducing emotional intelligence and spirituality training into medical and nursing education curricula, we are not only training a new generation of more competent



and empathic health-care professionals but also placing the holistic well-being of patients as a top priority in health care.

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