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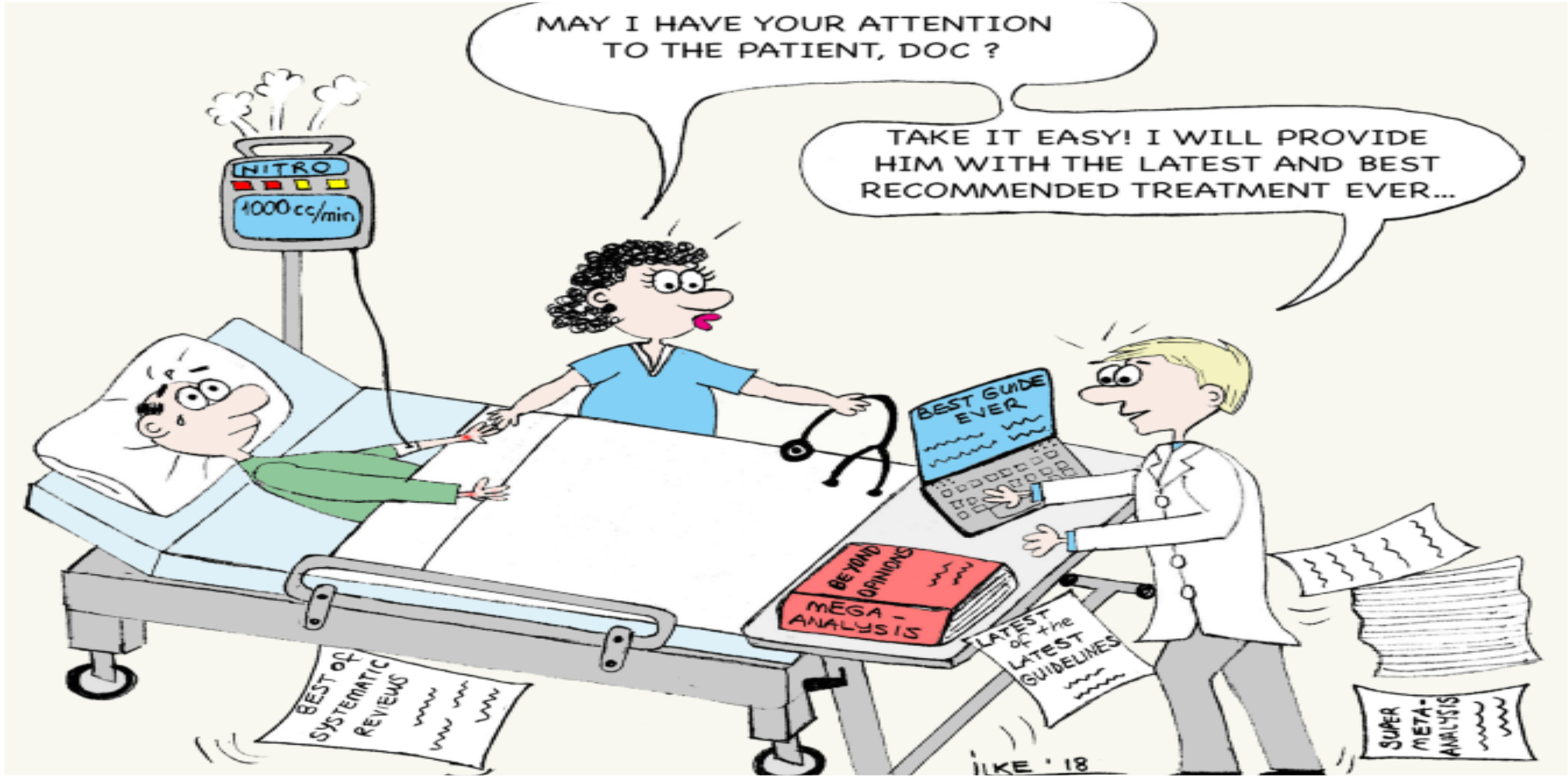
Debate as a Cognitive Training Strategy to Promote Evidence-Based Practice Competencies among Healthcare Providers:

A Case Study From the Royal Hospital, Oman

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30th 1996-2026 GIMBE EVIDENCE FOR HEALTH

Background



https://doi.org/10.1007/s00296-018-4172-4

Background: The Royal Hospital

وزارة الصحة
Ministry of Health

Royal Hospital Debate Activities



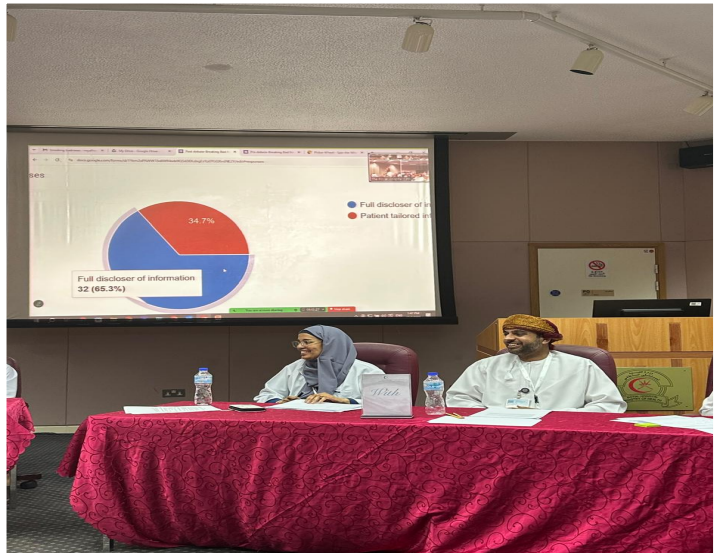




Aims

- To explore health professionals' perception about using debate as an educational method to **develop and strengthen core EBP competencies**

Methods: Design & Setting



- A survey based, qualitative study.
- Online, self reporting.
- Open ended questions survey
- Health professionals affiliated to Royal Hospital
- ✓ *Healthcare providers – debaters.*
- ✓ *Medical education experts.*
- Purposive sampling

Methods: Study Outcome

- **Healthcare providers (debaters) Experiences of** using debate as a learning tool to develop core EBP competencies.

- **Medical educators' perception** of debate as an effectiveness strategy for developing core EBP competencies.

Methods: Online questionnaire

Albarqouni L, et al. (2018)

Healthcare providers (debaters)

- "In what ways has debating helped **you identify, critique, and evaluate evidence,** particularly when it challenges your prior beliefs?"
- "How has participating in debates influenced your ability to **communicate evidence clearly and persuasively** to your peers?"
- "How do you think the skills gained from debating will impact your **confidence and understanding of evidence-based healthcare**?"

Medical educators

- "How do you perceive the use of debate in enhancing participants' skills in **acquiring, critically appraising, understanding, and communicating evidence**?"

Reflexive Thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke)

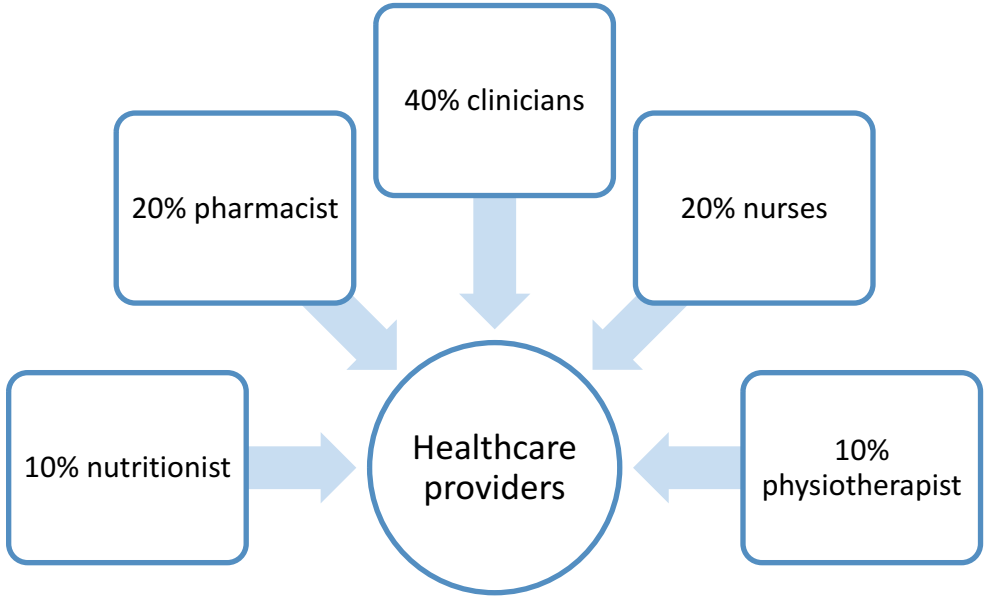
Results

Total of 20 participants

10 healthcare providers

10 medical educators

55% females



Results: Healthcare Providers (Debaters)

1 Evidence Search and Balanced Argument Construction



"Going through an extensive search from different perspective was certainly helpful to understand more about different opinions worldwide".

2 Strengthening Critical Appraisal and Analytical Rigor



"It has taught me to question assumptions, analyze sources critically, and weigh the strength and relevance of evidence".

3 Broadening Intellectual Horizons



"It allowed me to see different perspectives, including opposing viewpoints, which greatly helped in developing my knowledge and deepening my understanding of the subject".

4 Contextualizing Evidence Within Real-World Healthcare



"Debating the safety of AI in healthcare and judging a debate on breaking bad news exposed how evidence can overlook real-world impacts. For example, while patient portals improve access, they can unintentionally automate the delivery of bad news without clinical or emotional support, prompting me to question evidence that focuses only on efficiency or outcomes and not patient experience".

5 Development of Persuasive Communication and Constructive Dialogue



"".....These experiences have helped demonstrate my ability to persuasively engage and convince fellow healthcare professionals, particularly on sensitive and complex issues".

6 Professional Confidence and Identity Formation



"Debating reinforces that evidence-based healthcare is not static. It builds confidence in revisiting assumptions, recognizing blind spots, and adapting decisions as new perspectives emerge, an essential skill in everyday healthcare decision-making".

7 Tension Between Competition and Educational Value



"Not much as I concentrated on winning the game rather than delivering the needed information".

Results: Medical Education Experts

Theme 1

Debate as a Catalyst for Deep Evidence Engagement

> *.... I have noticed that when individuals know they must defend a position publicly, they tend to invest more effort in identifying high-quality studies, understanding levels of evidence, and ensuring that their sources are credible. This process, in itself, strengthens their skills in acquiring evidence".*

Theme 2

Debate as a Structured Arena for Critical Appraisal Under Intellectual Challenge

> *For critically appraising the evidence, debates may be effective among debaters who received training or frequently practicing EBM and critical appraisal".*

Theme 3

Debate as a Platform for Professional Evidence Communication

> *In regard to debate specifically, having two teams with opposing positions, each tasked with conducting the literature review and data interpretation, is potentially a good and effective approach, as it mimics real-world clinical dilemmas and negotiations that take place during patient care among healthcare providers".*

Theme 4

Debate as Experiential, Engaging, and Authentic Learning

> *Rather than learning about critical appraisal in theory, learners experience it in action. They formulate arguments, encounter counterarguments, reflect on their performance, and adapt their thinking accordingly".*

Theme 5

The Conditional Nature of Debate Effectiveness

> *To truly enhance EBP competencies, debates must be designed with predefined outcomes, clear expectations, and equal opportunities for participants to engage, search, and express their perspectives".*

Limits

- Single center study
- Self reporting open-ended questionnaire
- Debate audience were not included in the survey

Conclusions

- Debate is a valuable educational strategy for developing and practicing key EBP competencies.
- Debate strengthens cognitive flexibility by challenging participants to critically evaluate conflicting evidence while maintaining objectivity.
- Further refinement of debate design is recommended to reduce the influence of competitive dynamics and maximize audience engagement