

Psychometry and empathy levels and its dimensions in postgraduate students of dental specialties

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Abstract

Background: Empathy is an attribute that has an important role in the dentist-patient therapeutic relationship, clinical care and adherence to treatment, amongst other benefits. The aim of this research was to determine empathy in dentists in the process of specialisation. Materials and Methods: Through an observational and cross-sectional study, all postgraduate students of Dentistry Faculty of Universidad Andrés Bello (Chile) were analysed (N = 195). The Jefferson Scale of Physician Empathy Scale was applied. Results: The results show an adequate reliability of the empathy measure ($\alpha = 0.819$, $\omega = 0.928$). A three-factor structure is evidenced by confirmatory factor analysis ($\chi^2/df = 1.445$, GFI = 0.952, RMSEA = 0.047) and adequate factor invariance between men and women. Women showed greater empathy on the global scale and in the perspective adoption dimension, with no gender differences found in the dimension Compassionate care and putting oneself in the other's shoes (POOS). The median empathy reaches 120 points. Below, are placed, the specialty of oral rehabilitation (Med = 114.5), surgery (Med = 117) and periodontics (Med. = 117.5). With superior scores, temporomandibular disorder (Med. = 121), endodontics (Med. = 121), Orthodontics and dentofacial orthopedics Med. = 122), Implantology (Med. = 125) and Pediatric dentistry (Med. = 127.5) are located. Conclusion: Women were more empathetic than men. In general, empathy levels are relatively high, but the common feature in which all students examined in different specialties have low levels in dimension POOS.

Author keywords

Dental

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graduate