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An evaluation of a psychotherapy training skills program

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Purpose: To study the family medicine (FM) psychotherapy training program at Memorial University and determine if training increases the residents' knowledge, confidence, competence, and if it improves their attitudes when conducting interviews with patients presenting with mental health issues. **Methods:** First-year FM residents were recruited and enrolled into the study as they began their 12-week rotation. On the first day of their rotation, the residents completed a questionnaire prior to an interview with a standardized patient (SP) who role-played a patient with a mental health issue. This served as baseline data. Follow-up questionnaires were completed after the SP interview and feedback, after the SP interview had been reviewed by a clinical psychologist at the university counseling centre, at the end of the 12-week teaching sessions, and at the end of the two-year FM program. The study lasted two years. A Visual Analogue Scale (VAS) of 10 cm with word descriptors at each end was the measurement tool used in the questionnaires. The mean and standard determine if significant differences occurred. Regression analysis was used to control for different variables. **Results:** Data was collected and collated over the course of two years. **Conclusions:** After each phase of the study, residents' perceptions of their level of improvement increased significantly across all measured parameters, with the notable exceptions of time management and the importance of videotape review.