

# Hospital Medical Student Care Program and Student Growth

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**Abstract:** This study aimed to explore the impact of a hospital-based medical student care program on student growth. Through a systematic analysis of four modules—"Hospital Welcomes You", "Hospital Congratulates You", "Hospital Thanks You", and "Hospital Cares for You"—implemented at the Third Affiliated Hospital of Sun Yat-sen University, the study evaluated their effectiveness in enhancing students' sense of belonging, professional identity, and professional competence. The results, derived from a mixed-methods approach (questionnaires + interviews), demonstrated that the program significantly improved students' sense of belonging, career commitment, and mental health. This study validates the practical value of structured humanistic care in medical student education, provides a tangible case for fulfilling the "professional competence cultivation" requirements in medical education standards, and offers a replicable model for broader medical education practices.

**Keywords:** Care program; Student growth; Medical education; Professional competence; Humanistic care

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## 1. Introduction

During their clinical training and practice in hospitals, medical students face high-intensity academic demands and complex professional environments, posing challenges to their physical and mental well-being as well as career development <sup>[1-2]</sup>. Therefore, hospitals must not only prioritize the transfer of professional knowledge but also address students' psychological needs and cultivate their professional competence during medical education <sup>[3]</sup>. Humanistic care holds significant value in medical education, as it not only supports students' mental health but also strengthens their professional identity and sense of belonging <sup>[4]</sup>. The Third Affiliated Hospital of Sun Yat-sen University has implemented a series of care programs aimed at creating a supportive and stimulating learning environment for medical students, fostering their holistic development.

## **2. Research background and significance**

### **2.1. Research background**

During clinical training in hospitals, medical students undergo a transformative journey from theoretical knowledge to practical application, requiring not only the accumulation of professional expertise but also strong psychological resilience and professional competence. However, research indicates that students frequently experience significant psychological stress during internships and clinical rotations, leading to higher rates of anxiety and depression <sup>[4]</sup>. Additionally, professional identity and a sense of belonging profoundly impact their career development trajectory. Consequently, hospitals must implement systematic care programs to provide comprehensive support for medical students.

### **2.2. Research significance**

This study examines the effectiveness of the medical student care program at the Third Affiliated Hospital of Sun Yat-sen University in enhancing students' sense of belonging, identity, and professional competence. The findings aim to provide a replicable model for other hospitals, fostering the holistic development of medical students.

## **3. Research methods**

This study employed a mixed-methods research design that integrated both quantitative and qualitative research approaches. Quantitative data were collected through questionnaires administered to medical students, faculty members, and employers. The survey content encompassed students' satisfaction with the caring program, enhancement of professional competencies, and improvements in mental health. Qualitative data were gathered through interviews and focus group discussions involving medical students, faculty members, and hospital administrators. The questionnaire survey was conducted from May to July 2024, yielding 120 valid responses (from medical students). Interviews and focus group discussions took place between August and September 2024, involving 10 medical students, 5 faculty members, and 5 hospital administrators.

## **4. Implementation of the care plan for medical students in the hospital**

### **4.1. Hospital Welcomes You**

Through the opening ceremony, to create a strong opening atmosphere for new medical students, enhance their sense of belonging and identity. The activities include students signing in, receiving admission gifts, watching promotional videos, speeches by tutors, and other links. The results showed that more than 90 percent of medical students were satisfied with the module, believing that the opening welcome ceremony enhanced their "sense of ritual" and "identity."

### **4.2. Hospital Congratulates You**

Through the graduation ceremony and the discharge ceremony, the graduating medical students are provided with a sentimental farewell ceremony. The activities include graduation precepts, graduation yearbook, student representatives' speeches, and so on. The results showed that more than 85 per cent of medical students and employers were satisfied with the module, believing that the graduation ceremony enhanced their "sense of ritual" and professional identity.

### **4.3. Hospital Thanks You**

Through teachers' day activities, to recognize and thank educators for their contributions and enhance their sense of professional honor. Activities include a teacher's day promotional video, an excellent recognition conference, and small activities. The results showed that more than 80 percent of teachers were satisfied with the module, believing that teachers' day activities enhanced their sense of professional honor and belonging.

### **4.4. Hospital Cares for You**

A full range of psychological support is provided for medical students through traditional Chinese festival celebrations, mental health concerns, and student symposia. Through a series of "tiny care" activities (including the issuance of food tickets for the Mid-Autumn Festival, the broadcast of videos of Spring Festival greeting activities) and mental health lectures, the hospital has provided all-around psychological support for medical students. The results showed that more than 90 percent of medical students were satisfied with the module, believing that the activities enhanced their mental health and professionalism. Playing the long-term value of "tiny care" has played an important role in the growth of medical students.

## **5. Humanistic care and students' growth**

Humanistic care plays a significant role in medical education, as it not only contributes to students' mental health but also enhances their professional identity and sense of belonging. Through the implementation of four modules—"Hospital Welcomes You", "Hospital Congratulates You", "Hospital Thanks You", and "Hospital Cares for You"—the Third Affiliated Hospital of Sun Yat-sen University provides comprehensive support for medical students. These initiatives not only strengthen students' sense of belonging and identity but also foster their professional competence and psychological well-being.

## **6. Research results**

### **6.1. Feedback from students**

The questionnaire survey showed that more than 90 percent of medical students were satisfied with the "Hospital Welcomes You" and "Hospital Cares for You" modules, believing that these activities enhanced their sense of belonging and mental health. More than 85 percent of medical students were satisfied with the "Hospital Congratulates You" module, believing that the graduation ceremony enhanced their sense of professional identity. More than 80 percent of teachers were satisfied with the "Hospital Thanks You" module, believing that the Teachers' Day activities enhanced their sense of professional honor. "When I received the commemorative album at the graduation ceremony, I suddenly understood the significance of the white robe" (Zhang, a student of Clinical Medicine class 2018), "the monthly symposium made it difficult for us to have channels to give feedback, and this sense of being valued was very precious."

### **6.2. Feedback from teachers and management departments**

Interview results indicate that faculty members generally believe the care program helps enhance students' sense of belonging and professional competence (Tables 1 and 2). Through opening welcome ceremonies and graduation rituals, students can better adapt to the hospital's learning environment and strengthen their professional identity<sup>[5]</sup>. Additionally, mental health lectures and student symposiums provide effective psychological support, contributing

to their comprehensive development, while the ceremonies reinforce their professional identity <sup>[6]</sup>.

**Table 1.** Evaluation of the influence of medical students on different aspects of CCPS (*n*=120)

| Evaluation items                                    | Very satisfied | Fairly satisfied | Average  | Less satisfied | Very dissatisfied |
|---|----------------|------------------|----------|----------------|-------------------|
| Increased sense of belonging                        | 90 (75%)       | 20 (20.8%)       | 5 (4.2%) | 0              | 0                 |
| Increased professional identity                     | 85 (70.8%)     | 29 (24%)         | 6 (5%)   | 0              | 0                 |
| Improved mental health                              | 85 (70.8%)     | 30 (25.0%)       | 5 (4.2%) | 0              | 0                 |
| Improved professionalism                            | 75 (62.5%)     | 40 (33.3%)       | 5 (4.2%) | 0              | 0                 |
| Helps to adapt to the hospital learning environment | 88 (73.3%)     | 30 (25.0%)       | 2 (1.7%) | 0              | 0                 |
| Helps relieve study stress                          | 80 (66.7%)     | 35 (29.2%)       | 5 (4.2%) | 0              | 0                 |
| Helps increase motivation to learn                  | 82 (68.3%)     | 33 (27.5%)       | 5 (4.2%) | 0              | 0                 |

**Table 2.** Evaluation of specific activities in each module of the care programme by medical students (*n*=120)

| Evaluation items   | Very satisfied    | Fairly satisfied | Average  | Less satisfied | Very dissatisfied |
|--|-------------------|------------------|----------|----------------|-------------------|
| The hospital welcomes you   for the opening ceremony                   | 90 (75%)          | 25 (20.8%)       | 5 (4.2%) | 0              | 0                 |
| The hospital congratulates you on your graduation                      | 85 (70.8%)        | 30 (25%)         | 5 (4.2%) | 0              | 0                 |
| The hospital thanks you for the   Teachers' Day activity               | 80 (66.7%)        | 35 (29.2%)       | 5 (4.2%) | 0              | 0                 |
| The hospital cares about you   holiday wishes and welfare distribution | 75 (62.5%)        | 40 (33.3%)       | 5 (4.2%) | 0              | 0                 |
| The hospital cares about you   Chinese New Year greeting activities    | 70 (58.3 percent) | 45 (37.7%)       | 5 (4.2%) | 0              | 0                 |
| The hospital cares about you   mental health talk                      | 85 (70.8%)        | 30 (25%)         | 5 (4.2%) | 0              | 0                 |

## 7. Discussion

This study confirms that the hospital's medical student care program, through its "Welcome-Cultivate-Farewell" phased intervention model, has significantly enhanced students' sense of belonging, professional identity, and mental health levels. Specifically, educational rituals such as opening ceremonies and graduation events serve as crucial "liminal experiences", effectively facilitating medical students' professional identity transition <sup>[7-8]</sup>. Meanwhile, "micro-intervention" measures, including mental health lectures, symposiums, and Mid-Autumn Festival meal vouchers, have generated notable cumulative effects through sustained organizational support <sup>[9]</sup>. This model provides an operational practice solution that aligns with the support service requirements outlined in WFME standards <sup>[10]</sup>.

Regarding practical implementation and promotion, the standardized operational procedures and evaluation system established in this research demonstrate strong transferability. Other hospitals can adapt the program's modular design according to local cultural contexts, such as integrating opening ceremonies with regional medical



traditions or developing more distinctive care initiatives <sup>[11]</sup>. This combination of flexibility and standardization offers valuable insights for the innovative development of medical humanities education.

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The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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