

Current Situation and Countermeasures of Death Attitudes among Chinese Medical Students

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Abstract: With the increasing pressure on Chinese medical students to study in school and facing real patient situations during internships, it is necessary to conduct research on the current situation and countermeasures of Chinese medical students' attitudes towards death in order to effectively maintain their correct attitudes towards death. How to analyze the influencing factors and explore the relationship between social support and the attitude towards death among Chinese medical students is a key issue that urgently needs to be addressed in the entire strategy research. This article was based on relevant research on the main pressures faced by Chinese medical students. By analyzing the important factors that affect the attitude towards death of medical students, a formula was used to calculate the weight ratio of personal beliefs and psychological health influencing factors. Based on the data results, the following conclusions can be drawn through discussion. Seven samples of medical students were selected through a questionnaire survey experiment, and the overall average score of death attitudes among medical students was around 5.1 points. However, the C and F scores of medical students with religious beliefs in Buddhism and Christian medicine were 8.2 points and 6.3 points, respectively. This indicates that most medical students hold an evasive attitude towards death, while those with religious beliefs are more receptive to death. Finally, four strategies for cultivating professional attitudes towards death among medical students, including curriculum education, practical experience, psychological support, and ethical education, were proposed, which can help medical students establish a positive attitude towards death.

1. Introduction

There are many research theories on the attitudes of different medical students or other groups towards death. Under the background that professional identity reduces the risk of nurses' job burnout, Xie L assumed that the attitude towards death might be a factor affecting nurses' professional identity, so as to explore the attitude of nursing students in Chinese Mainland towards death, and the relationship between death attitude and professional identity. The final result showed that the professional identity of nursing students in mainland China is above the average level, and their attitude towards death is generally positive [1]. Zhao L L was based on the complex and diverse influencing factors of the attitude towards death among the elderly in China. The full text mainly reviewed the factors that affect the background of the elderly. The personal background factors of the elderly's attitude towards death include age, gender, educational level, religious belief and devout level, and conscious physical and mental health status [2]. Li Y Q used a convenient sampling method to randomly select nursing undergraduate students from a medical college in Tianjin to understand the current situation of emotional intelligence and death attitudes among nursing undergraduate students, as well as the relationship between the two. He used the emotional intelligence scale and analyzed the data, and the results showed that the emotional intelligence of nursing undergraduate students was negatively correlated with fear of death, approaching acceptance, and avoiding acceptance [3]. Huang L Q introduced the use of the "four steps" Death education model to carry out Death education for medical students, and verified the impact of this model on medical students' attitude towards death. The results showed that the "four steps" Death education model can significantly reduce the death anxiety of intervention objects, significantly improve the attitude of death avoidance, and significantly promote the acceptance of neutral death of intervention objects [4]. Yang X Y proposed a survey questionnaire based on death attitude research to understand the level of cognition of medical students towards death, which includes basic information about medical students and whether they have been exposed to death. At the same time, he used rank sum test to analyze the influencing factors of the degree of death cognition among medical students. The results showed that the attitude towards death of medical students was related to their religious beliefs, whether they had received Death education and other influencing factors [5]. The increasing pressure on Chinese medical students' academic careers in school has led to a need for re optimization research in relevant fields on the current situation and strategies of Chinese medical students' attitudes towards death [6]. The above has effectively discussed the influencing factors of medical students' cognitive level of death using various research theories and methods, but there is a lack of specific experiments and analysis of countermeasures.

The specific analysis of the factors that affect the attitude towards death among medical students is a major focus of this paper. In this article, based on the current research on the attitude towards death among Chinese medical students, combined with questionnaire survey and experimental analysis, the aim is to obtain professional attitude training strategies for medical students towards death. The final results indicate that most medical students hold an avoidance attitude towards death, while those with religious beliefs are more receptive to death. Curriculum education, practical experience, psychological support, and ethical education training strategies can help medical students establish a positive attitude towards death.

2. Current Situation and Impact of Death Attitudes among Medical Students

2.1 Current Situation of Death Attitudes among Chinese Medical Students

The attitude of Chinese medical students towards death is a complex issue that is influenced by multiple factors. Current research shows that Chinese medical students generally have fear and

anxiety about death, and they may face profound thinking about life and death, as well as concerns about the possible death situations they may face in their future medical practice [7-8]. Some studies have found that the attitude of Chinese medical students towards death may be influenced by cultural background, and traditional Chinese culture has unique views and ways of handling death, which may have an impact on the attitude of medical students [9-10]. In addition, the pressure faced by medical students during their university years is likely to change their attitude towards death. According to relevant knowledge and theories, relevant research on the main pressures faced by Chinese medical students and the specific content are shown in Table 1:

Table 1. Related research on the main pressures faced by Chinese medical students

| Type | Specifics |
|-------------------|---|
| Academic pressure | Need to learn a lot of knowledge, master complex clinical skills, and cope with various exams |
| Career prospects | The fierce competition in the job market and the reform and adjustment of the healthcare system have brought greater job uncertainty |
| Internship work | It is necessary to face real patient and disease situations in clinical internships and assume a significant responsibility for the patient's life and health |

From the above table, it can be seen that the pressure faced by Chinese medical students mainly includes academic pressure, uncertainty in career prospects, and high-intensity internship work. In the college education career, medical students need to learn a lot of knowledge and master complex clinical skills, and deal with various examinations and time management anxiety. At the same time, the sense of responsibility in clinical internships and the competitive pressure of employment may both lead to negative emotions towards death [11-12]. For another group of medical students who come into contact with patients, this exposure and pressure may also prompt them to gradually accept death as a part of the medical field and face it with a calm and rational attitude. Overall, the current attitude towards death among Chinese medical students is complex and diverse, influenced by various factors such as culture, personal experience, and educational environment.

2.2 Factors Affecting Attitudes towards Death among Medical Students

Attitude towards death refers to the level of recognition and acceptance of death, which is a profound and complex topic that involves multiple aspects such as personal values, beliefs, and life experiences. For medical students, their professional background and experience may have an impact on their attitude towards death [13-14]. At the same time, the influence of some factors is complex and diverse, and the attitude towards death of each medical student may be influenced by multiple interactive factors. Therefore, understanding and paying attention to these factors, providing appropriate support and assistance to medical students, is very important for promoting them to establish a positive attitude towards death and cope with work pressure [15-16]. The analysis of factors affecting the attitude towards death among medical students is shown in Figure 1:

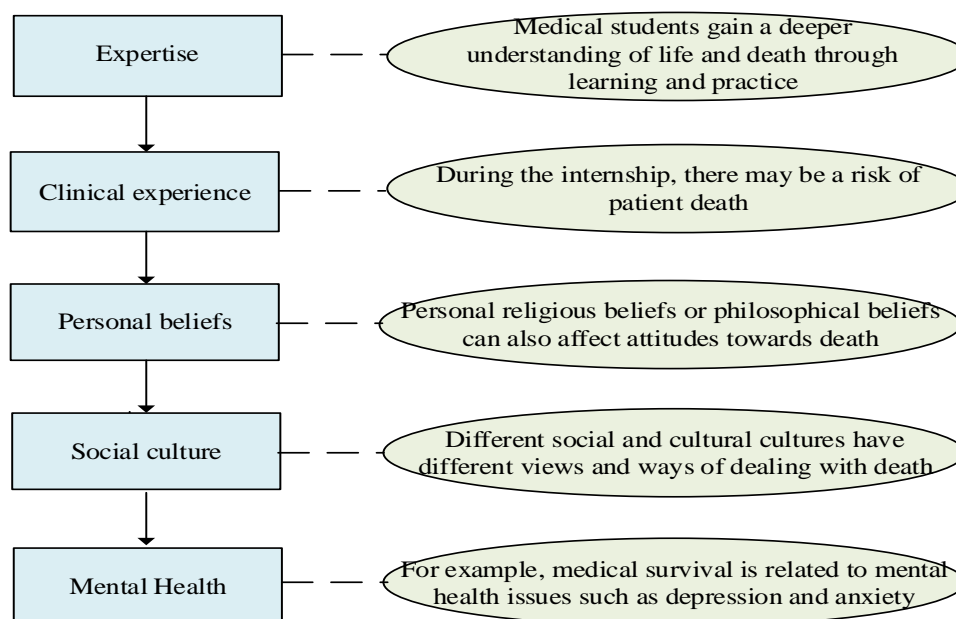


Figure 1. Analysis of factors influencing medical students' attitude towards death

In summary, from the perspective of subjective factors, medical students may better understand that death is a part of the life process through learning and practicing professional knowledge. During the internship, they may have experienced direct experiences of patient death, as well as their own psychological health problems such as depression and anxiety, which all affect their attitude towards death [17-18]. From the perspective of objective factors, different social and cultural environments have different ways of handling death, as well as regional or family religious beliefs or philosophical concepts, which also affect their views and feelings about death [19-20].

Subsequently, the calculation of the proportion and weight of personal beliefs and mental health factors in the overall impact of death attitudes is carried out. Firstly, the weight ratio of personal beliefs to all influencing factors is calculated, as shown in formula 1:

$$p = T_3 \div (T_1 + T_2 + T_3 + T_4 + T_5) \quad (1)$$

Among them, T1, T2, T3, T4, and T5 represent the composition of professional knowledge, clinical experience, personal beliefs, social culture, and mental health in the overall impact of death attitudes. The weight ratio of mental health to all influencing factors is calculated as follows in formula 2:

$$q = T_5 \div (T_1 + T_2 + T_3 + T_4 + T_5) \quad (2)$$

3. Experimental Results of the Questionnaire on Attitudes towards Death among Medical Students

After discussing the main pressures faced by Chinese medical students and analyzing the factors affecting their attitudes towards death, a questionnaire survey experiment was conducted to investigate the strategies for cultivating attitudes towards death among medical students.

Before conducting the questionnaire survey experiment, in order to ensure the accuracy of the survey results, seven college students from a medical college in South China were randomly selected from April 2022 to September 2022 and numbered A to G as survey samples. The inclusion

criteria are: medical school students; voluntary participation in the investigation; understanding the purpose and significance of the investigation. The basic information of the survey subjects is shown in Table 2:

Table 2. List of basic information of survey subjects

| Member | A | B | C | D | E | F | G |
|----------------------------|----------|-----------|-----------|-----------------------|---------|--------------|-----------|
| Gender | male | female | male | male | female | female | male |
| Grade | freshman | sophomore | freshman | fifth year of college | junior | senior | freshman |
| Is it an only child or not | yes | no | yes | yes | yes | no | no |
| Physical health status | average | very good | very good | good | average | good | very good |
| Religious belief | nothing | nothing | Buddhism | nothing | nothing | Christianity | nothing |

It can be seen that all college students participating in the questionnaire survey vary based on gender, grade, whether they are an only child, physical health status, and religious beliefs. In terms of self-evaluation of physical health status, the majority of medical students are in good health or above, while in terms of religious beliefs, medical students without religious beliefs account for the vast majority. Subsequently, specific experimental investigations are conducted. Medical students' attitudes towards death are divided into three dimensions: fear, avoidance, and acceptance. Among them, fear scores 0; avoidance scores 5, and acceptance scores 10. The calmer they view death, the closer their score is to 10. The overall score of death attitudes among medical students surveyed is shown in Figure 2:

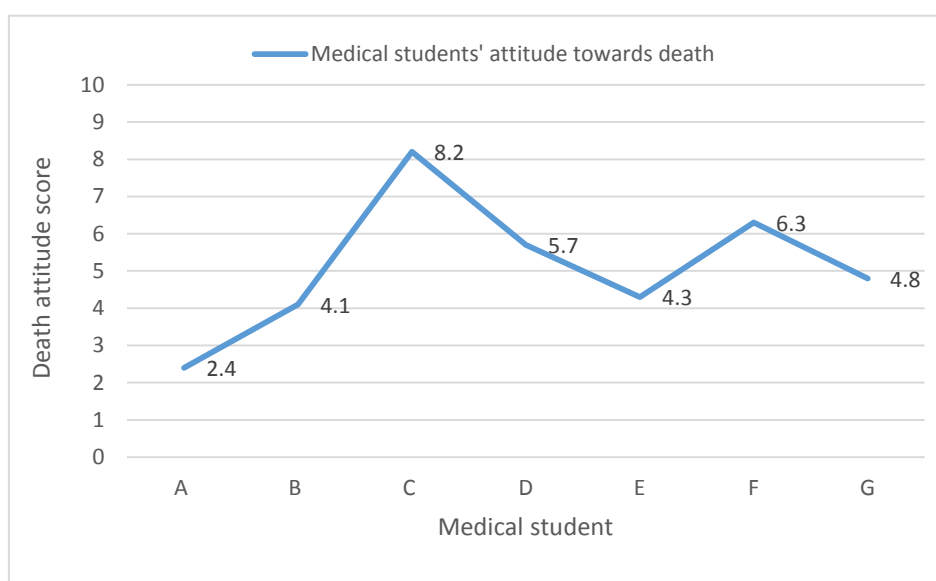


Figure 2. Overall score of death attitudes among medical students

Among them, the blue line represents the scores of the seven medical students interviewed regarding their attitudes towards death. It can be seen that medical students C and Christian medical students F with a religious belief in Buddhism are more able to face and accept death calmly compared to other students, with scores of 8.2 and 6.3; However, medical student A, who has no Irreligion belief, only child family environment, general physical health and is a freshman, is more afraid of death, with a score of 2.4 points. In addition, the scores of medical students' attitudes towards death from left to right are 4.1, 5.7, 4.3, 6.3, and 4.8, respectively. It can be concluded that the overall average score of medical students' attitudes towards death is around 5.1. This indicates that most medical students hold an evasive attitude towards death, while those with religious beliefs are more receptive to death.

4. Countermeasures for Medical Students' Attitudes towards Death

4.1 Relationship between Social Support and Attitudes towards Death among Chinese Medical Students

After completing the experiment of investigating the attitudes towards death among Chinese medical students, research on strategies for their attitudes towards death has continued. Prior to this, the relationship between social support and the attitude towards death among Chinese medical students is first analyzed. Social support refers to the various resources, information, emotions, and substantive assistance that individuals receive in social relationships, which has a significant impact on their mental health and adaptability. There is a certain relationship between social support and the attitude towards death among Chinese medical students, and the following are some possible situations:

(1) Emotional support: Medical students can help alleviate stress and negative emotions when facing serious illnesses and deaths of patients. The understanding, encouragement, and comfort of family, friends, and classmates, as well as the support and guidance of mentors and medical teachers, can have a positive impact on the attitude of medical students towards death.

(2) Information support: When medical students face death, knowledge and information support for Palliative care and patient peace is very important. Medical students can acquire knowledge and skills about death and Palliative care care through school education courses, professional training and guidance, so as to better cope with these situations.

(3) Career support: Medical students need support and guidance from the medical team and higher-level doctors during clinical internships and work. This kind of professional support can help medical students better cope with the challenges of death and Palliative care care, and improve their professional ability and self-confidence.

(4) Institutional support: The medical system and work environment in which medical students live also have an impact on their attitude towards death. A good medical system and working environment, including reasonable allocation of resources, harmonious Doctor–patient relationship, and relief of work pressure, can provide better support and security for medical students and help them better cope with the challenges of death and Palliative care.

In summary, social support has a significant impact on the attitude towards death among Chinese medical students. Providing emotional support, information support, career support, and institutional support can help medical students establish a positive attitude towards death and better cope with work pressure and challenges.

4.2 Strategies for Cultivating Professional Attitudes towards Death among Medical Students

After discussing the relationship between social support and the attitude towards death among

Chinese medical students, it can be found that in order to maintain the correct attitude towards death among medical students, it is necessary to cultivate it from three levels: society, school, and oneself. The cultivation of a professional attitude towards death among medical students is very important, as they can inevitably face the death of patients in their future careers. Therefore, the analysis of strategies for cultivating professional attitudes towards death among Chinese medical students is shown in Table 3:

Table 3. Strategies for cultivating professional attitudes towards death among medical students

| Countermeasure | Content |
|-----------------------|---|
| curriculum design | In medical education, courses can help students understand that death is a part of the life process |
| practical experience | Provide more clinical practice opportunities for students to directly face the death of patients |
| psychological support | Provide psychological counseling and support to help students handle their emotional reactions when facing patient death |
| ethical education | Emphasis on medical ethics education to enable students to understand their ethical responsibilities in handling patient deaths |

In addition to the aforementioned curriculum education, practical experience, psychological support, and ethical education training strategies, interdisciplinary learning and simulation training are also effective strategies in some special situations. The former encourages students to learn philosophy, religion, sociology and other related subjects so that they can understand death from a broader perspective. The latter allows students to learn how to deal with these situations in a safe environment by simulating the death of patients.

5. Conclusions

Against the backdrop of increasing pressure on medical students in schools in China, studying the current situation and countermeasures of Chinese medical students' attitudes towards death can effectively maintain their correct attitudes towards death. This article was based on relevant research on the main pressures faced by Chinese medical students. By analyzing the important factors that affect the attitude towards death of medical students, and using the formula for calculating the weight ratio of personal beliefs and mental health influencing factors, and conducting a questionnaire survey experiment on them, it is concluded that most medical students hold an evasive attitude towards death. People with religious beliefs are more receptive to death, and proposing curriculum education, practical experience, psychological support, and ethical education training strategies can help medical students establish a positive attitude towards death. This article aimed to provide research results on the current status and strategies of Chinese medical students' attitudes towards death through theoretical and empirical research. Due to the small sample size of the selected medical students for the survey, there are still many shortcomings and deficiencies in the questionnaire experiment on death attitudes in this article. Further improvements and improvements would be made in future research.

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Data Availability

Data sharing is not applicable to this article as no new data were created or analysed in this study.

Conflict of Interest

The author states that this article has no conflict of interest.

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