

Perceived readiness and needs of Thai medical students in order to become an English proficient doctor.

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Abstract

Background

At present, Thai medical doctors are required to be proficient in English language, partly due to globalization. Perceived readiness and needs of medical students are necessary to be evaluated upon graduation in order to improve English competencies for their medical practice.

Summary of Work

The questionnaires were sent to 144 final-year medical students at Naresuan University, Phitsanulok, Thailand. General information, a Likert scale(1-5) for both self-evaluation of perceived readiness and individual needs to improve English language skills(listening-speaking-reading-writing) were analyzed.

Summary of Result

Of all completed questionnaires (n=135), there are 61 males (45.19%) and 74 females (54.81%) with the average age of 25.5 years old. Most of them are Thai-monolinguals (97.78%). And, 128 medical students have a prior knowledge of English at primarily basic to intermediate level.

Most of the students consider that listening (49.33%), writing (46.30%), and speaking (44.94%) skills can be performed at level 3. Reading skills can be performed better at level 4 (52.10%).

Training to improve speaking skills is utmost needed (94.07%), followed by listening (93.33%), writing (92.91%), and reading (79.53%) skills respectively.

Better performance in reading skills may result from a continuous practicing during the medical program. Inadequate training of speaking skills may cause student's discouragement for English communication.

Conclusion

It is quite difficult, but possible, to prepare our non-native English medical students to become a proficient in English communication. Reading skills are considered to perform better than others. Needs for training of speaking and listening skills should be fulfilled during the medical program.

Take home message

For non-English medical program, more trainings to improve speaking and listening skills are urgently needed to strengthen our medical students.