

Investigation on the Current Situation of Life Education and Reflection on the General Goal of Life Education for Contemporary Chinese Medical Students

Qian Zhao, Dongming Wang, Yunlong Chen, Haosen Sun

School of Basic Medical Sciences, Shandong University, Jinan 250012, China

Abstract: Life education is an important subject of contemporary college education. The responsibility and pressure of contemporary college students are increasing rapidly, but the overall construction of psychological consultation and mental health courses in China is not mature, there still remaining the difficulty to solve psychological problems of college students from the source. At present, the importance of life education has been generally recognized all over the world, and amounts of increasingly perfect life education systems in schools, families, society and other aspects have been established, so as to effectively and permanently protect the mental health of college students.

This article conducts an overall investigation on the current situation of life education in China and other countries, and discusses the overall goal of life education for contemporary Chinese medical students for reference.

Keywords: Life Education; College Education; Mental Health; Medical Education

1. Background and Significance of Life Education

From a macro point of view of social development, with the progress of science and technology, society and economy, as well as the great changes of people's lives at the same time, various kinds of social pressures are also growing rapidly. For college students, these pressures can be huge competitive pressure, tension of interpersonal relationship, uncontrollable emotion management and even serious mental diseases, which severely restrict the healthy growth of them. At present, the construction of psychological consultation cause in China is not mature, as well as the mental health curricula are not perfect, so it is still difficult to solve psychological problems of college students from the source.

For medical students, acquiring perfect life education is more important. From the micro level of personal development, medical students are shouldering the heavy responsibility of health and life, so they are supposed to not only have excellent medical skills but also a mature mind and required humanistic quality. However, the overall quality of medical students in China is not perfect at present, sometimes they even falling into difficulties, which is closely related to their immature psychological development, biased cognition, lack of knowledge and poor skills.

Combined with overall environment of social development and individual development of medical students, carrying out effective life education for medical students is a favorable judgment of the development direction of medical education under new development pattern in China; it is a powerful measure to further implement Healthy China Initiative and play an essential part in the moral cultivation of students in universities; it is the inevitable choice of cultivating sound personality and medical talents of Five Skills^[8]. For the whole higher education cause of all fields, it is incumbent on every educator to correctly grasp the development opportunity of life education through the combination of theory and practice, so as to correctly guide college students to re-examine the responsibility, significance and value of life, enhance their life consciousness, reduce the incidence of psychological crisis, promote the physical and mental health of college students and the harmony and stability of campus.

2. Research Status in Chinese Mainland

2.1 The connotation and significance of life education

From the view of the current situation of countries and regions that implement life education, the connotation of life education is mainly to teach people to know, protect, cherish and appreciate life, as well as explore the meaning of life and realize the value of life. In other words, it is to cultivate life consciousness, develop survival ability and sublimate life value in a purposeful, planned and organized way in the whole process from birth to death, in order to promote the value of life onto a magnificent stage. The core of this activity is to cherish life, pay attention to life quality and highlight the value of life. Life education involves a wide range of contents, which can be summarized as education of life consciousness, education of life value and education of survival ability. Life consciousness is the individual's understanding of life itself, including four parts as knowledge and understanding of life, love and cherishing of life, respect and reverence for life, creation and transcendence of life. Life education is one of the most important contents of college students' ideological and political education. It is an inevitable requirement of cultivating students with integrated development of morality, intelligence, sports, esthetics and labor in the new era. It is also an important way to help college students form correct outlook on the world, life and values^[1].

The essence of life education is the expansion, refinement and deepening of the education of outlook on the world and values, especially outlook on the life. At present, carrying out life education is helpful for college students to recognize the sanctity of life and enhance their ability to resist various setbacks, difficulties and the passive influence of pessimism and boredom. In medical education,

it is also helpful for medical students to cultivate medical spirit of reverence for life, sincere humanistic feelings and responsibility of selfless dedication.

As China has entered a new development stage, phenomena on college students such as suicide, depression and other mental diseases emerge endlessly in recent years. It is a major issue that we should think deeply to find how to help college students establish positive and healthy outlook on the life, remove intention of suicide and cultivate respect for life. But under the current traditional educational situation, college students' lack of life education cannot be ignored. Therefore, universities should actively carry out life education and response The Concept of Education in Three Aspects^[9]. Meanwhile, through the process of life education, college students can be taught how to respect and care for their life, and be cultivated to respect and care for all the life in nature. It can also reduce probability of suicide and attacking incidents, and enhance awareness of life safety among college students.

Death is a natural phenomenon that everyone cannot escape. Death education is to help people acquire relevant knowledge of death and near-death and understand the essence and significance of death. Its purpose is not to let people know the biological process of death, but to treat life correctly and seek for the meaning of life from exploration to death. Death education not only conforms to the needs of ideological and political education, but also helps people to improve their awareness of life, reduce the incidence of suicide, and alleviate the social problems faced by modern medicine^{[2][3]}.

2.2 The implementation method of life education

It is a widely accepted method by contemporary college students to establish special courses focusing on life education. These courses designed for college students concentrate on spreading knowledge of life, understanding the meaning of life and promote the value of life, with a goal to lead college students in correctly understanding the essence of life, building up the correct value of life and improving their ability to resist frustrations and meet challenges^[4]. According to the academic research, life education courses can be carried out through narrative, simulation and practice. After receiving life education courses, students' happiness is significantly improved, and their confidence and hope for life are more positive. This effect persists in the subsequent follow-up studies towards them. Group counseling and life education are consistent in goals, functions and meanings. Some scholars have found that students who receive group counseling have better enthusiasm for life, goals of life and hope for the future than those who do not receive group counseling. Group counseling is beneficial to alleviate the passive influence derived from bad emotions^[5].

Based on the existing research results, the implementation method of life education for college students in China can be summarized into three aspects: school, family and society. But in fact, school undertakes the main task of life education. From the perspective of present studies, researchers have explored the methods of life education in universities from different theoretical aspects. There are many theoretical studies on the implementation methods of life education for college students, but few empirical studies. The practice of life education in universities is mainly carried out in the form of course establishment and group counseling, and there is a lack of interaction between in-class and outside-class.

3. Research Status in Taiwan Region and Abroad

The Taiwan region has realized the importance of life education for a long time. According to a study in Taiwan, it is concluded that life education not only focuses on the development process of life, but also deepens the public's understanding of the essence of death and emphasizes the uniqueness of individual life. Also, life education is the premise for individual development and realization of life quality (such as a person's satisfaction state)^[6]. In addition, relevant articles and reports abroad show that modern western society also affirm the importance of the transmission of life and death culture. Traditional death ritual culture can help the public overcome the fear of death, realize that life is limited and establish respect for life, which can guide the public to face death directly and revere life^[7]. At present, the United Kingdom, the United States, Japan and many other countries have established life education systems with rich contents and various methods, including death education, health education, frustration education, etc. Families, communities and media have also adopted different ways to cooperate with schools to carry out life education, forming developed life education systems with the common attention and active participation of the public.

4. The General Goal of Life Education for Contemporary Chinese Medical Students

Carry out life education is the inevitable demand to cultivate high-quality medical talents with integrated development of morality, intelligence, sports, esthetics and labor. In the new development stage of China, it is important to implement the new development concept, construct a new development pattern of ideological and political education for medical students, implement the spirit of the 19th National Congress of the Communist Party of China, all the plenary sessions of the 19th Central Committee of the Communist Party of China and National Education Conference, and arm college students with Xi Jinping Thought on Socialism with Chinese Characteristics for a New Era. Guide medical students to correctly understand life itself, set up correct attitude to life as well as correct outlook on the world, life and values, form a sound personality, and better adapt to the modern life. At the same time, cultivate students' spirit of humanistic caring and belief system, guide them to form a correct occupational concept, set up lofty goals, and achieve the value of life. When carrying out life education for medical students, it is significant to solve the following key problems in practice:

(1) Break the stereotype of boring materials, contents and forms of traditional humanistic education. With the combination of theory and practice as well as with practical education as the main contents, maximizing the mobilization of students' participation rate and initiative, it can become an important way to improve medical students' moral accomplishment and humanistic quality.

(2) Fully implement The Concept of Education in Three Aspects and mobilize the enthusiasm of all teachers and students. Attract excellent professional teachers, administrators, postgraduates and doctoral students to become the designers and participants of the activity, and achieve the goal that mobilization, participation, learning and improvement for everyone.

(3) Achieve long-term operation mode of sustainable developing ability. Establish and perfect life education systems in constant practice, explore the method of life education, formulate work plans, and form replicable education cases.

References:

- [1] Friedlander L J, Reid G J, Shupak N, et al. Social support, self-esteem, and stress as predictors of adjustment to university among first-year undergraduates[J]. *Coll Stud Dev*, 2007, 48(3): 259-274
- [2] Corr C A, Nabe C M, Corr D M. *Death & Dying: Life & Living*[M]. 2nd. Brooks: Cole Publishing Co, 1997: 17-18.
- [3] Testoni Ines, Piol Silvia, De Leo Diego. Suicide Prevention: University Students' Narratives on Their Reasons for Living and for Dying[J]. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, 2021, 18(15).
- [4] Donald Walters J. *Education for life: Preparing Children to Meet the Challenges*[M]. Nevada City, CA: Ananda Publications, 1986.
- [5] Zhang Wen, Zhang Risheng, Haslam DR, et al. The effects of restricted group sandplay therapy on interpersonal issues of college students in China. *Arts in Psychotherapy*, 2011, 38: 281-289.
- [6] Life, death, and spirituality: A conceptual analysis for educational research development[J]. *Heliyon*, 2021, 7(5):e06971.
- [7] O' Gorman S M. Death and dying in contemporary society: an evaluation of current attitudes and the rituals associated with death and dying and their relevance to recent understandings of health and healing[J]. *Journal of Advanced Nursing*, 2010, 27(6).
- [8] Five Skills: the ability to heal and rescue the dying, a benevolent heart, well acquainted knowledge, high level of skills, scientific method to deal with any cases (Guidelines on Accelerating the Innovative Development of Medical Education, 2020, General Office of the State Council)
- [9] The Concept of Education in Three Aspects: the education and cultivation of college students should: 1) involve all of the staff in university, including teachers, administrative and logistic personnel, etc. 2) be throughout the whole process from entrance to graduation. 3) reflect in all aspects of students' all-round development. (Opinions on Strengthening and Improving Ideological and Political Work in Colleges and Universities under the New Situation, 2017, General Office of the State Council)