



0069

### **Different Ways of Assessing Empathy Among Dental Students in Nice**

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**Objectives** Empathy is a core element in the practitioner-patient relationship. This study examined whether there was a correlation between different ways of assessing empathy among dental students in Nice.

**Methods** Two repeated cross-sectional studies were conducted on all 4th year dental students in the faculty of dentistry in the Cote d'Azur University, before the beginning of their clinical activity, in both 2022-2023 (n=48) and 2023-2024 (n=60) academic years. After obtaining their consent, the students completed a socio-demographic questionnaire. Then they underwent two successive simulated consultations (OSCE): OSCE1 dealing with an excessive demand of antibiotics and OSCE2 dealing with an aesthetic request. The hetero-evaluation of empathy was obtained by the teacher using the OSCE grid (score out of 20) and by the simulated patient using the Consultation And Relational Empathy measure (score out of 50). Then, students filled out a self-assessment concerning their attitude on empathy (Jefferson Scale of Physician Empathy Student Version, JSPE- MS), they also submitted to Economic games (experimental tasks) aiming at revealing the “social preferences” of the participants. We used the Pearson correlation and the Student t-test.

**Results** CARE and OSCE scores were strongly correlated ( $r=0.597$ ;  $p<0.001$ ). Students in the 2023-2024 class had a higher Jefferson score ( $r=0.472$ ;  $p<0.001$ ) and OSCEs scores than those in the 2022-2023 class ( $r=0.637$ ;  $p<0.001$ ). Economic Games were correlated with each other, but not correlated with other measures of altruism (Jefferson and OSCEs). There was a significant increase in the Jefferson score between the two promotions (t-test,  $t=-3.812$ ,  $p<0.001$ ) (102.53 for 2022-2023 compared to 113.607 for 2023-2024).

**Conclusions** The different ways of assessing empathy are not necessarily correlated, which justifies multiplying approaches in order to better understand all its aspects.