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LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Response to “Education Solutions to the Medical-Dental Divide.” A Novel Approach to Creating Unifying Organizational Cultures in Medicine and Dentistry

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We appreciate the perspective presented in Rasmussen and colleagues’ “[Education Solutions to the Medical-Dental Divide](#)” and the call for “purposeful educational unity” between medicine and dentistry. In addition to educational reform, unifying the fields¹ requires changes to organizational culture (OC), which includes shared assumptions, beliefs, and values. Overcoming organizational separation also requires investment in interprofessional education (IPE), such that IPE does not become “something I did once in graduate school.”

Implementing IPE requires diverse groups of professionals to collaborate, support, contradict, and adjust in the face of omnipresent complexity and uncertainty. Successful collaboration requires competence-trust and openness-trust within organizations.² A novel solution we propose is the use of improvisational (improv) theater techniques, which have been conventionally used to create unscripted performances. *Medical improv* is the application of improv techniques to improve communication and collaboration in the health professions.³ Medical improv has been used to teach interprofessional students empathy and [develop personal and social competencies](#) in a dynamic and practical way, and students have reported its positive impact on their capacity to cultivate quality interprofessional relationships.⁴ Within the business literature, teaching agreement and [collaboration through improv games](#) has been used to foster an OC of effective communication and team building.⁵

Medical improv is a promising solution to the medical-dental educational divide, and training curricula could be developed for students, faculty, and staff as a way to start changing OC by focusing on fostering collaborations within a safe learning and working environment. If we fail to address OC, it might take another 182 years to achieve educational unity between medicine and dentistry.

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