

Training and research in communication skills at the School of Allied Health Technologies of Porto
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Introduction: Communication skills, often considered transversal, have recently been regarded, in the health field, as technical competencies crucial to professional practice. Nevertheless, little is known about the effects of training in communication skills to the area of health technologies, and the relation with psychological variables.

Objectives: The objective of this work is to present the ongoing research project at the School of Allied Health Technologies of Porto (ESTSP) and to debate the main results. In addition, it is also expected to map the course units which contribute, in an explicit way, to the training in this domain.

Materials and Methods: This project consisted in a longitudinal and controlled study, with a moment of evaluation in the beginning of each academic year. 703 students were recruited and gave written informed consent. The mean age was 20.58 years (SD = 2.71, range 17-38 years). The questionnaires were filled in online. The instruments administered were the Brief-COPE, the Positive and Negative Affect Schedule, the NEO Five Factor Inventory, the Communication Skills Attitude Scale, the Interpersonal Reactivity Index, and a Socio-demographic Questionnaire (Dores et al., 2014).

Results and Discussion: There seem to be differences between courses, with/without direct relation between patients, and in some courses it is possible to observe the effect of training in variables such as empathy.

Conclusion: Research in this domain may contribute to a growing awareness on the importance of communication skills and, consequently, to the development of favourable attitudes towards the integration of disciplines related to this topic in the curricula.