

# Fostering Global Health Literacy: Infusing Vitality into Medical English Education

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## 1. Introduction

There is an increasing interest in Global Health in the context of increased globalization and the rise of global-scale pandemics and diseases (Bentley, 2021). In Japan, various aspects of global health, such as public health, epidemiology, social medicine, and cross-cultural awareness, are taught in different medical subjects (Sato, 2002). Meanwhile, Medical English Education in Japan is an evolving field that has gained increasing attention in recent years (Kuroda, 2022). The integration of Medical English (ME) into the medical curriculum has become more prevalent, reflecting the recognition of the importance of English proficiency in the medical profession.

Tokushima University (TU) has made significant efforts to provide medical students with a variety of opportunities to study medical English within the context of specific medical disciplines (Hoshina, 2022; Rodis, 2019; Tran, 2023) or in the form of international exchange and learning groups. This presentation aims to explore the intersection of medical English education and Global Health in the context of medical education in Japan, looking at students' interest in the concept of global health as a component of medical English education.

## 2. Method

The spot checks for interest, knowledge, terminology, and motivation conducted in-class during the Medical English sessions for regular students were analyzed. The questions, which were prepared in English, have been anonymously administered from time to time using an on-screen QR code that links to a test question. Quantitative data were analyzed using Excel/SPSS.

## 3. Results

### (1) Familiarity with vocabulary

The students, who had English proficiency from intermediate to advanced level showed a fair familiarity with the health-related vocabulary. Figure 1 shows that two third of the participants scored correctly in the spot check to the question “What do you think is Health?” .

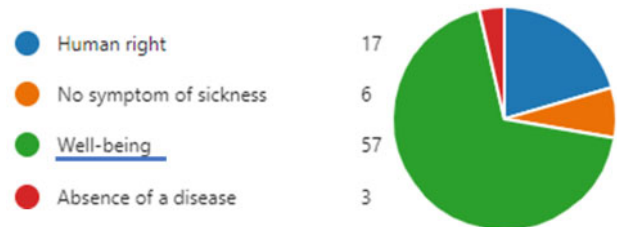


Figure 1. What is Health

Figure 2 shows the familiarity of students with some basic vocabulary of global health. While many students know the terms such as “public health” or “primary health care”, few students were well familiar with fundamental concepts such as “non-communicable diseases”, which indicates the need of focusing medical English education into these concepts.

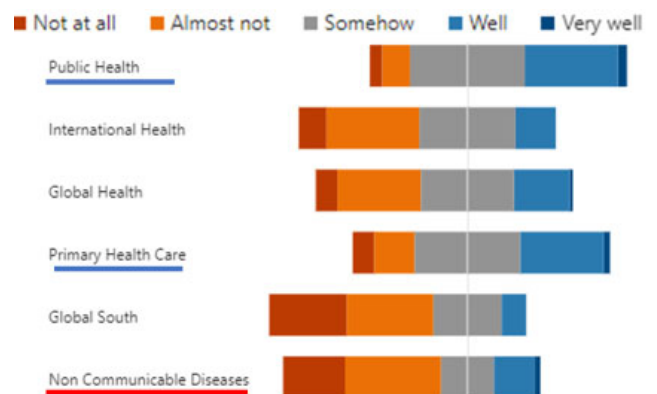


Figure 2. Do you know this term?

(2) Knowledge in health issues

Figure 3 shows a half of students could score correctly on basic questions immediately, implying that they have sound knowledge fundamentals in public health and ability to think in English.

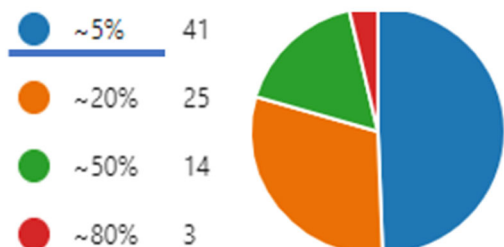


Figure 3. % people without health problems?

(3) Role of motivation

Table 1 shows the association between vocabulary level and knowledge on health issues (Spearman correlation,  $p < 0.005$  (2-tailed)).

Table 1. Association of vocab and knowledge

		Knowledge on health issues	Love to study English
Vocabulary level	Correlation coefficient	0.228**	0.242*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.004	0.028

Students shared their motivations for study Medical English are mainly for enriching their knowledge, for dealing with foreign patients in the future, and for travelling. Quite a few students showed intention to study or work abroad or doing a research career. Table 1 also shows love to study English as the factor associated with vocabulary level and knowledge on health issues (Spearman correlation,  $p < 0.05$  (2-tailed)).

(4) Future directions

This is a very preliminary attempt to identify the need and measure motivation among the students. To foster a more meaningful connection between Medical English and Global Health topics, a revision

of the course content is needed. Creating a question and quiz pool with a more diversified content will aid in better assessing the students' grasp of the material, ensuring a comprehensive learning experience.

4. Conclusion

The favorable results observed upon incorporating Global Health in medical English demonstrate the keen enthusiasm of students for delving further into these subjects. The integration of Medical English and Global Health within university programs can nurture global proficiency among students and equip healthcare practitioners to tackle the complexities of global health issues. These results imply a need for further elaborating the teaching-learning materials for effective assessment and better educational outcomes.

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