



ISSN 2450-6486

<http://ehs.eeipsy.org>DOI: <https://doi.org/10.38014/ehs-ss.2026.1.05>

This publication was made with the funds of a joint Grant of
EEIP (Ukraine - France) and ChF "Education: Future"

**Tetiana PLEKHANOVA**

Emotional intelligence as a professional success factor for pediatric interns

TETIANA PLEKHANOVA. Emotional intelligence as a professional success factor for pediatric interns. *Emotional intelligence (EI) plays an important role in effective medical practice, particularly in pediatrics, where physicians interact within the triad of child, parents, and healthcare professionals. Studies indicate that approximately 33% of pediatric interns experience difficulties in managing their own emotional states, while more than 27% report challenges in recognizing the emotions of others. These limitations may hinder the establishment of trust and reduce the effectiveness of the diagnostic and treatment process. Therefore, the development of emotional intelligence should be regarded as an essential component of postgraduate medical education. Training methodologies for pediatric interns should incorporate targeted approaches aimed at developing and strengthening EI. The integration of structured training sessions, reflective practices, and continuous feedback appears to be the most effective strategy. Such an approach enables future pediatricians not only to acquire professional competencies but also to develop essential transversal skills that support the principles of modern patient-centered medicine.*

Keywords: emotional intelligence, professional success factor, pediatric interns, communicative competencies, postgraduate education.

1. Introduction

Communication in medicine is considered to be a fundamental clinical skill for establishing rapport with the patient, paving the way for successful diagnosis and treatment [1]. The ability to communicate with patients begins to form during undergraduate medical education and is refined throughout independent professional practice [2]. The internship period is a critical stage in a physician's professional development, as it is during this time that theoretical knowledge is integrated into practical activity. For a pediatric intern, this task is further complicated by the need to possess communication skills not only for interacting with the pediatric patient, accounting for their age-related, physiological, and psychological characteristics, as well as the child's fear and anxiety during examination, but also for managing the emotional tension and heightened anxiety of parents, necessitating simultaneous communication with multiple family members [3]. The development of "soft skills" (trans-professional skills) ensures success, high efficiency, the ability to build communication, cooperate, make decisions, and engage in continuous learning and professional adaptation [4]. Emotional Intelligence (EI) is a determining factor in the formation of a pediatrician's communicative skills; it implies an individual's readiness to manage their own emotions and the emotions of others to achieve necessary goals [5]. These skills can influence not only professional success but also the productivity of the educational process, including the effectiveness of communication during training [6]. However, despite the significance of this competence for educational participants, researchers currently highlight a critical lack of "emotional competence formation within the educational system at all levels" [7]. Therefore, it is imperative to determine the levels of EI development during training and, based on the data obtained, identify the need for improving educational and developmental processes [8].

The aim of our study was to assess the level of EI in first-year pediatric interns to determine the requirements for optimizing the educational process.

2. Survey results

A survey was conducted among 18 first-year interns. The sample consisted of 16 females (88.8%) and 2 males (11.2%), with an average age of 25.9 years. Nearly one-third of the interns (27.7%) had prior work experience in the medical field as nursing staff. The majority (72.3%) were motivated to continue their career as pediatricians.

EI diagnostics were performed using N. Hall's assessment, one of the most widely used methods focused on identifying an individual's ability to understand relationships represented in emotions and to manage their emotional sphere based on decision-making. The assessment involves 30 statements, with 6 response options for each, scored via a point system. The methodology identifies 5 scales reflecting emotional awareness, managing one's own emotions (emotional resilience, emotional stability) and self-motivation (the ability to control one's emotions), empathy levels, the ability to recognize the emotions of others and influence their emotional state. This methodology allows for the determination of both partial EI (the selective development of specific components of emotional competence, where only certain abilities reach a sufficient level) and integrative EI (a comprehensive ability to combine self-awareness, self-regulation, empathy, and social skills for effective interaction).

Table 1.**Emotional Intelligence (EI) Indicators of Pediatric Interns**

EI levels	Low	Average	High
Emotional awareness	11,1%	72,3%	16,6%
Managing one's emotions	33,3%	55,6%	11,1%
Self-motivation	16,7%	66,7%	16,6%
Empathy	11,1%	77,8%	11,1%
Recognizing others' emotions	27,7%	61,2%	11,1%
Interpersonal EI	27,7%	61,2%	11,1%
Intrapersonal EI	11,1%	77,8%	11,1%
Integrative EI	27,7%	61,2%	11,1%

The survey *results* indicate that only 11.1% of respondents possess a high level of integrative EI. These interns demonstrate the capacity to remain open to communication and feelings, both pleasant and unpleasant; are able to manage their own emotions and those of others; are capable of interpreting the nuances of shifting emotions and utilizing them to prioritize cognitive focus and essential information; they have the capacity to accurately express emotions and related needs. Interns with an average level of EI (61.2%) generally exhibit a sound understanding of themselves and others emotionally. They successfully regulate their emotions through conscious effort, maintain a positive self-attitude, and experience overall psychological comfort. Conversely, nearly one-third (27.7%) demonstrate a low level of integrative EI. Similar trends were observed regarding interpersonal EI. This deficit inherently complicates

patient communication, rapport-building, and the establishment of trust, subsequently hindering the application of professional skills and clinical actions.

Analysis of partial EI components revealed a sufficient level of empathy, that was found in 88.9% of interns, characterizing a high awareness and understanding of others' feelings – a critical foundation for teamwork and communication.

Self-motivation, identified in 83.3% of respondents, indicates an emotional predisposition toward goal achievement and proactive behavior. These individuals are highly motivated, take initiative, and are receptive to new information and skills.

Emotional awareness is also inherent in the majority of interns (High: 16.6%; Average: 72.3%), enabling them to define priorities, evaluate personal strengths and weaknesses, and identify emotions during decision-making.

Despite these foundational EI strengths, 33.3% of interns struggle to manage their internal states and maintain emotional equilibrium, while 27.7% lack the skills to recognize others' emotions. These deficiencies directly impact the establishment of contact with both pediatric patients and their parents. The data suggests a significant potential for EI growth, provided that specialized educational techniques are employed. These include training sessions aimed at developing the ability to understand one's own emotions and the emotions of others, skills of practical self-discovery and emotional behavior management, as well as discussion-based methods and exercises designed to reduce tension and foster positive emotional contact within the team. The development of specific skills and abilities will also facilitate the enhancement of cognitive ability and emotional intelligence among medical interns [9].

To enhance the quality of medical internship training and improve the development of communicative competencies, the educational process must account for the state of EI, thereby facilitating targeted preparation for professional communication [10]. The platform for the effective development of EI in medical interns involves active participation in the educational process, during which interaction skills within the "child-parent-medical personnel" triad are formed. The primary instructional method is the simulation of clinical scenarios guided by an instructor [11]. The integration of self-awareness exercises into the curriculum assists interns in identifying their own "emotional triggers" (e.g., parental aggression, a child's crying, emotional instability, or lack of discipline

among medical staff). Furthermore, self-regulation techniques, such as the “pause before action” to maintain emotional equilibrium during stress and cognitive reframing, are utilized. The “Standardized Patient” methodology enables role-playing and simulation-based learning (assuming roles such as the physician, concerned parents/guardians, or the nurse). Following these simulations, a debriefing is conducted to analyze not only clinical actions but also the emotional background of the participants, involving inquiries into the feelings and emotional states of individual participants and the team as a whole [12]. Discussion-based methods, specifically group discussions, are employed to address ethical dilemmas and emotionally demanding situations, such as delivering bad news. Assessment of communicative skills by peers, instructors, and, where possible, patients, provides essential feedback. This stimulates the development of empathy, emotional self-management, the recognition of others’ emotions, and the cultivation of interpersonal relationships. In our practice of medical internship training, we have implemented the completion of course projects based on clinical cases from practice, wherein interns describe their own feelings, emotions, and the patient’s reactions. Such educational forms develop the ability to view a situation from another person’s perspective, thereby fostering decentration.

3. Conclusions

The development of EI should become an integral component of internship training. The methodology and techniques for training pediatric interns must necessarily focus on the development and continuous refinement of the intern’s EI. The most effective approach is the combination of training sessions with reflective practices and consistent feedback. This allows the future pediatrician not only to acquire professional training but also to master trans-professional skills, which form the foundation of modern human-centered medicine.

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Abstracts

ТЕТЯНА ПЛЕХАНОВА. Емоційний інтелект як фактор професійного успіху інтернів-педіатрів. Емоційний інтелект (EI) є критичним фактором успіху в медичній практиці, особливо в педіатрії, де лікар взаємодіє з триадою: дитина — батьки — медичний персонал. Проведені дослідження показують, що значна частина інтернів (близько 33%) відчуває труднощі з керуванням власним емоційним станом, а понад 27% — з розпізнаванням емоцій інших. Це може створювати бар'єри у встановленні довіри та проведенні ефективного лікування. Розвиток EI має стати невід'ємною частиною підготовки в інтернатурі. Методологія та методики підготовки лікаря-інтерна педіатричного профіля обов'язково повинні орієнтуватися на розвиток EI та сприяти його удосконаленню. При підготовці лікаря, найбільш ефективним є поєднання тренінгових занять з рефлексивними практиками та постійним зворотним зв'язком. Це дозволяє майбутньому педіатру не лише отримати професійну підготовку, а й оволодіти надпрофесійними навичками, що є основою сучасної людиноцентричної медицини.

Ключові слова: емоційний інтелект, фактор професійного успіху, інтерни-педіатри, комунікативні компетентності, післядипломне навчання.

TETIANA PLEKHANOVA. Inteligencja emocjonalna jako czynnik sukcesu zawodowego stażystów pediatricznych. Inteligencja emocjonalna (IE) jest kluczowym czynnikiem sukcesu w praktyce medycznej, zwłaszcza w pediatrii, gdzie lekarz wchodzi w interakcje z triadą: dziecko — rodzice — personel medyczny. Badania pokazują, że znaczna część stażystów (około 33%) ma trudności z zarządzaniem własnym stanem emocjonalnym, a ponad 27% — z rozpoznawaniem emocji innych. Może to stwarzać bariery w budowaniu zaufania i skutecznym leczeniu. Rozwój IE powinien stać się integralną częścią szkolenia stażystów. Metodologia i techniki szkolenia stażystów pediatricznych muszą koniecznie koncentrować się na rozwoju IE i przyczyniać się do jego doskonalenia. W kształceniu lekarzy najskuteczniejsze jest połączenie

sesji szkoleniowych z praktyką refleksyjną i stałym feedbackiem. Pozwala to przyszłemu pediatrze nie tylko na zdobycie profesjonalnego wykształcenia, ale także na opanowanie ponadprofesjonalnych umiejętności, które stanowią podstawę współczesnej medycyny skoncentrowanej na człowieku.

Słowa kluczowe: *inteligencja emocjonalna, czynnik sukcesu zawodowego, stażyści pediatryczni, kompetencje komunikacyjne, kształcenie podyplomowe.*