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MEDICAL SLANG: WHY IS IT WORTH STUDYING?
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Background. Medical slang is the informal, often unethical language used by healthcare professionals to efficiently communicate and cope with workplace stress.

Aim: analyze the use of medical slang (MS) in oral communication of medical staff in English, explore the types of MS, differentiate between medical professionalisms and MS, justify the key reasons to study MS.

Materials and methods. For the study, we used more than 170 MS words and phrases. The primary criteria for inclusion were as follows: vocabulary denoting medical concepts, used in informal situations, stylistically marked (humorous, ironical, derogatory, pejorative). The corpus under study was obtained from the MS Internet glossaries, TV series, books, clinical chats and analyzed in various doctor-to-doctor contexts. The use of MS was compared to that of medical professionalisms.

Results and their discussion. MS refers to medical vocabulary used by healthcare professionals in informal situations. We categorized it into four types depending on the concepts denoted: slangy words and phrases to talk about colleagues (doctors, nurses, pharmacists, medical students), patients, medical situations, medical equipment. MS denoting medical professionals tends to be used to talk about different specialties (vagina squad), show hierarchy and status (scut monkey), express attitude -- respect or familiarity (work wife/husband). MS denoting patients are often used to quickly convey a patient's history or behavior (dirtball, frequent flyer) but can cause ethical issues or even lead to diagnostic errors and undertreatment. MS denoting situations is used to speed up communication in emergencies (load and go) or reveal systemic frustrations, like bureaucratic burdens or inter-departmental relationships (charting party). Mostly used in emergencies, MS denoting equipment and instruments is sometimes used to humorously "humanize" the equipment (gossip).

We differentiated between medical professionalisms and slang that are generally used interchangeably in English-language studies. Medical professionalisms are defined as semi-formal words and phrases (often abbreviated) that can be used both in peer communication and to interact with patients. MS is highly emotional and metaphorical. It is limited to communication between colleagues, because a lot of MS vocabulary sounds rude and unethical, although a large part of it is humorous and ironical.

Answering the question why we must study MS, we can say that it helps decode real-world clinical communication and understand medical subculture better. Knowing MS, we can act more efficiently in time-sensitive situations. Moreover, we can accelerate workplace integration. The key reason to know about MS is that we can learn to recognize ethical boundaries when slang is appropriate (in peer discussions) and when it is unethical (patient interactions).

Conclusion. MS is a mirror of healthcare culture: it reflects its challenges, humor, and humanity. Studying MS offers insights into healthcare culture, improves clinical teamwork, and highlights the balance between professional efficiency and compassionate care.