

# Graphic medicine used to improve soft skills of pharmacy students



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## Introduction

The importance of soft skills (such as empathy, emotional intelligence, communication, critical mind) has long been recognised for a good relationship between patients and medical staff. Specifically, there is a real need for pharmacists to develop soft skills in a patient-centered care. They are the last bridge between patients and their medication. The dialogue and relationship between pharmacists and patients impact the sustainability of the therapy, the adherence to the treatment and the compliance of patients.

While 1) simulation trainings for students in pharmacy and 2) graphic medicine for medical students, as both tools to increase soft skills have been developed and studied, the use of graphic medicine for pharmacy students has never been evaluated so far to our knowledge.

## Objectives

- To **evaluate the improvement of soft skills** (empathy, communication, understanding etc.) by better understanding pathologies or public health issues by using graphic medicine;
- To **evaluate the improvement of pathologies or public health issue's knowledge** and understanding by using graphic medicine;
- To eventually, if comics demonstrate to be effective to improve soft skills, **develop a complementary module** to the academic cursus in pharmacy to improve soft skills of future pharmacists.

## Project

A **mixed-methods study** will be set up to assess the efficacy of graphic medicine to improve empathy of students in pharmacy. The protocol will be validated by the University of Liège ethical comity.

Participants (first and last year students and professional pharmacists) will read **Goupil ou Face (Lou Lubie, 2016), a comic about bipolar disorder**. Participants' sampling (size, representability etc) will be performed with a statistician in order to be fully representative and statistically interpretable. They will complete pre-intervention and post-intervention surveys (a modified Scale of Empathy considering soft skills development, knowledge and satisfaction) and statistical analyses will be performed to assess the increase or decrease of soft skills after reading the comic (**quantitative study**). Afterwards, participants will also attend a semi-structured focus group (about 2 hours) to discuss about their feelings (**qualitative study**).

Results will be discussed to compare outcome from students of first year and last year (regarding the fact that usually empathy decreases with the curriculum) and from professionals.

