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Assessment of Study Skills and Requirements in Learning Medical Curricula among Medical Students in Gadag District, Karnataka

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ABSTRACT

Background: Sudden drift from the schooling and college life to medical profession professional environment makes students difficult to cope up with the study concepts. Study skills are those strategies or skills like making notes, using mnemonics, group discussions and various retention and relaxation techniques for effective learning.

Methods: Cross sectional study was conducted among all medical students to elicit the information regarding the various study skills and strategies like preferable factors, environmental factors, innovative techniques and requirements for effective learning.

Results: Majority of the students think that following time table, breaking study time into bits, finishing the work on the day, reading in morning and library, use of posters, charts and internet for difficult topics will help in better learning. Teacher should be interactive, loud, clear and use innovative techniques while teaching

Conclusion: Student's perspective thinking about the factors like following time schedule, use of innovative and relaxation techniques and requirements from teachers are all important factors in better learning of the medical curricula.

Key words: Study skills, Strategies, Learning, Medical curricula

INTRODUCTION

During the transition from the formal schooling, students enter to professional education. Medical education considered as the toughest of all other professions, medical students need to possess some strategies and skills which are required for their academic excellence. During this transition and learning phase, students undergo lot of stress and often depressed because of lack of study skills and learning strategies.[1,2,3,4]

Each student is different in thinking and collecting information or understanding the subject. Other factors like motivation, attitude, study environment and requirements like teaching styles are also subjective in nature.[5] Johnston and Anderson describe study strategies or skills as "conscious and deliberate use of the processes of learning to achieve effective study practices".[6]

Study skills includes strategies like different techniques in retrieving information, making notes, studying late in the night, using mnemonics, group discussions and various retention techniques for effective learning. Apart from these, many students use relaxation techniques like watching movies, listening to music and playing sports of their interest. There are many requirements other than student's perspective for better learning like, preferences of teaching methods from teachers viz voice modulation, use of audiovisual aids, using innovative techniques in teaching, all these plays an important role in determining the effective academic learning and also improving the quality of life during the entire course of their study period.[7,8,9,10,11] Hence the proposed study addresses the knowledge on various study skills or strategies adopted by the students and different requirements for better learning.

METHODOLOGY

This cross-sectional study was conducted after obtaining permission from institutional ethics committee among medical students at Gadag Institute of Medical Sciences, Gadag over a period of 1month (June 1st to June 30th 2017). 289 medical students were interviewed after taking written consent using pretested semi structured questionnaire regarding the various study skills and requirements for better learning. Questionnaire was divided into 4 parts which consisted of preferred study skills, environmental factors, Habits and relaxation technique and requirements from teachers for better learning.

Medical Students consented to participate in the study were included in the study and those who were not available during study period were excluded.

RESULTS

289 consented to participate in the study of which 125(43.3%) of them were females and 164(56.7%) of them were males. Of the 289 students 141(48.8%) belong to second year, and 148(51.2%) belong to first year MBBS. Majority of them (65.8%) belong to urban areas. Mean age of the study participants was 19.2+ 1.151 years.

Table1: factors preferred for better learning (n=289)

Factors	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
Breaking study time into small bits	20 (6.9)	41 (14.2)	48 (16.6)	127 (43.9)	53 (18.4)
Switching subjects after long hours of reading	26 (8.9)	55 (19.1)	71 (24.6)	90 (31.2)	47 (16.2)
Making notes of class	19 (6.6)	43 (14.9)	109 (37.7)	71 (24.5)	47 (16.3)
Rush through previous covered topics before class	80 (27.6)	70 (24.3)	68 (23.6)	55 (19.0)	16 (5.5)
Prefer reading loud to understand	49 (16.9)	66 (22.9)	81 (28.1)	54 (18.6)	39 (13.5)
Prefer asking doubts	29 (10.0)	55 (19.0)	88 (30.4)	73 (25.3)	44 (15.3)
Prefer notes over textbook	30 (10.4)	62 (21.5)	115 (39.8)	50 (17.3)	32 (11)
Prefer to finish the that days work on the same day	16 (5.6)	21 (7.3)	48 (16.6)	127 (43.9)	77 (26.6)
Prefer reading only for exam and during exam times	11 (3.9)	27 (9.4)	48 (16.7)	91 (31.3)	112 (38.7)

Figure in parenthesis indicate percentage

Table 2: Environmental factors influencing the learning and study skills (n=289)

Factors	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
Morning hours will be better and preferred compared late night reading	53 (18.3)	60 (20.8)	58 (20.0)	67 (23.2)	51 (17.7)
Learning in classroom better than studying in the room	58 (20.1)	69 (23.9)	79 (27.4)	58 (20.0)	25 (8.6))
Reading in library is better	24 (8.4)	29 (10.0)	49 (16.9)	87 (30.2)	100 (34.5)

Figure in parenthesis indicate percentage

Table 3: Innovative or creative study skills preferred for learning (n=289)

Factors	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
Use of flash cards instead of notes	63 (21.9)	79 (27.4)	78 (26.9)	51 (17.9)	18 (5.9)
Group discussions preferred	37 (12.8)	58 (20.1)	80 (27.7)	75 (25.9)	39 (13.5)
Preferred diagrams and flow charts in learning	12 (4.1)	20 (6.9)	45 (15.5)	92 (31.9)	120 (41.6)
Prefer learning by teaching	8 (2.7)	25 (8.7)	62 (21.5)	109 (37.7)	85 (29.4)
Prefer using posters of difficult topics	29 (10.0)	22 (7.6)	87 (30.1)	100 (34.6)	51 (17.7)
Internet use learning	29 (10.0)	43 (14.9)	70 (24.3)	102 (35.3)	45 (15.5)
Use of time table for scheduling the academics	51 (17.7)	52 (17.8)	54 (18.6)	93 (32.1)	39 (13.8)

Figure in parenthesis indicate percentage

Table 4: Habits and relaxation techniques for better learning (n=289)

Factors	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
Prefer taking sleep as relaxation in between study time	20 (6.9)	33 (11.4)	34 (11.7)	112 (38.8)	90 (31.2)
Taking snacks or food during while studying	35 (12.1)	39 (13.4)	66 (22.9)	108 (37.4)	41 (14.2)
physical activity is preferred before reading	38 (13.2)	57 (19.7)	84 (29.1)	68 (23.5)	42 (14.5)
Use music or watching TV while studying	94 (32.5)	79 (27.3)	61 (21.1)	39 (13.5)	16 (5.6)
Prefer take bath or fresh myself before start studying	9 (3.1)	50 (17.3)	79 (27.3)	96 (33.2)	55 (19.1)

Figure in parenthesis indicate percentage

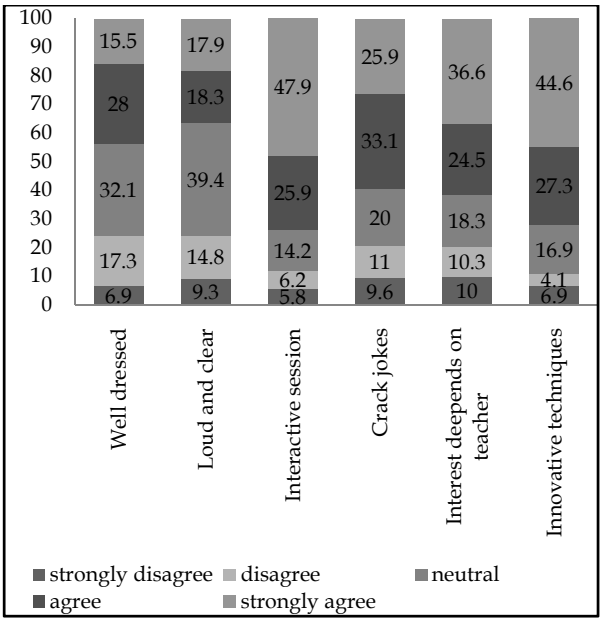

Fig1: Bargraph showing the Requirements from teachers side for better learning (n=289)

From the above Table 1 it is shown that, majority of them opined breaking study time into small bits and keep it for the next study hours, finishing the work on the day which is assigned and studying during exam days are some factors which impact better learning. Approximately 1/3 of the students opined that asking doubts and reading loud or silent doesn't matter in learning. Many opined making notes, preference of notes over text book reading doesn't make much difference in better learning.

Table 2 shows that, most of them opine that Morning hours will be better and preferred compared late night reading and reading in library is better. About 1/4th of the students think that reading in classroom or at their rooms doesn't affect learning.

Table 3 indicates that, Majority of the students opines that following time table, sticking posters of difficult topics, use of internet, flowchart and diagrams learning by teaching are better ways of understanding the subject. About 1/4th of the students think that flashcards not preferred over the note and group discussions doesn't make much difference in learning.

From the table 4 it is found that, majority of the students think that sleep and taking bath or fresh up before studying and eating some foods or snacks while studying increases efficiency of learning. Many of them opine that listening music or watching Television during study decreases concentration and learning.

From figure 1 it is evident that, majority of the students opined that teacher should be well dressed, interactive, loud and clear. Also teacher should crack jokes and use innovative techniques (story-telling, mnemonics and videos) while delivering the lecture.

DISCUSSION

In our study many students opined that taking notes and reading before exams and during exam times is sufficient because it is easy to remember the portion of the syllabus during exam times when compared to the regular days of reading, Devi V et al in their study at Melaka Manipal Medical College students opined taking notes and reading the lecture notes and also reading during exam times using the previous exam question papers helps in competency and accuracy in better learning.[12]

Madhavi S et al in their study revealed that many students practiced innovative skills like using charts and mnemonics, breaking the study time into small bits; in our study many students opined the same for better learning.[13]

In this study, many students think that reviewing and taking notes may not be helpful in learning , following time table of the particular subjects of concern is helpful in better learning . Kumar SD et al in their comparative study on students in private and government medical colleges opined that, many students of private medical colleges followed time table and reviewing and taking notes for their learning.[14]

Many studies aimed to determine the various practices of the study skills and strategies,[12,13,14] our study determines the opinion of students for their learning. In addition requirements from teachers like use of innovative techniques, voice modulation and other factors were also addressed for better learning among medical students.

CONCLUSION

Student's perspective thinking about the factors like following time schedule, use of innovative and relaxation techniques and requirements from teachers are all important factors in better learning of the medical curricula.

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