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A STUDENT'S PERSPECTIVE ON ANATOMY TEACHING IN MEDICAL COLLEGE

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Abstract

Background: Anatomy is an important subject in medical sciences. It has been considered the foundation of medicine for hundreds of years and this view is supported by clinicians, students and general public.

Methods: A cross-sectional study was carried amongst the 1st year MBBS students. The students were contacted at a suitable, available time. The purpose of the study was explained and participation was voluntary. One hundred anonymous, pre-designed and pre-validated questionnaires containing close and open ended questions were distributed randomly amongst the students.

Results: A majority of the students, 99 (99%) found anatomy to be an important subject in MBBS curriculum and a further 95 (95%) felt it is an interesting subject, whereas a mere 1 (1%) did not find anatomy important and 5 (5%) did not find it interesting.

Conclusion: The learners agree that anatomy is a core subject and its fundamental role in medical curriculum is undisputed. The traditional teaching and learning (T/L) methods like blackboard teaching, dissection and lectures are preferred by the newer generation learners also and should be integrated with newer teaching modalities and modern technology.

Keywords: Lectures, Dissection, Blackboard Teaching.

Introduction:

Anatomy is an important subject in medical sciences. It has been considered the foundation of medicine for hundreds of years and this view is supported by clinicians, students and general public [1]. Anatomical knowledge is essential not only for surgeons, but also for anyone who performs an invasive procedure on a patient; carries out emergency procedures; examines radiological imagings; performs a physical examination of a patient or explains a procedure to a patient[2].

Changes in undergraduate MBBS curriculum have reduced not only the amount of time dedicated to anatomy and dissection but also the teaching staff [3]. Since these changes in medical education are here to stay, we the teachers must learn to adapt and make teaching more effective. Learners are the most qualified sources to report effectiveness of the learning experience. Various studies have taken the feedback from the learners i.e. the students for assessment of the complex topic of anatomy teaching [4]. By evaluating the student's perception towards teaching of anatomy we can better assess the existing teaching methodology and also design a future programme for the better teaching and understanding of the subject.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The questionnaire collected information regarding the college and professional year of the students. The students were asked to rate the teaching and learning aids in anatomy from poor to excellent and enlist the difficulties faced in learning anatomy. They also gave their perceptions regarding the syllabus of anatomy, the adequate and appropriate time for teaching anatomy in the MBBS curriculum.

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Table 1: Various teaching aids rated by students.

Teaching aids	Response		
	Good	Neutral	Poor
Dissection	62	27	11
Power point presentation	51	36	13
Blackboard teaching	40	32	28

A majority of the students, 99 (99%) found anatomy to be an important subject in MBBS curriculum and a further 95 (95%) felt it is an interesting subject, whereas a mere 1 (1%) did not find anatomy important and 5 (5%) did not find it interesting.

While rating the teaching aids, excellent /good rating was given by 40 (40%) students to classroom teaching on the black-board, followed by 62 (62%) to dissection and 51(51%) to power-point teaching

Table 2: Various learing aids rated by students.

Learing aids	Response		
	Good	Neutral	Poor
Dissection	65	20	15
Lecture	52	40	8
Text book	36	31	33

Further, amongst the learning aids, excellent / good rating was given by 65(65%) students to dissection, 52 (52%) to lectures followed by 36 (36.00%) to textbooks.

DISCUSSION

The knowledge of anatomy is fundamental to medical practice and the present study attempted to find out the perceptions of MBBS students regarding the teaching-learning methods and adequacy of time and content of anatomy curriculum. A majority of the students, 99 (99%) found anatomy to be an important subject in MBBS curriculum and a further 95 (95%) felt it is an interesting subject, whereas a mere 1 (1%) did not find anatomy important and 5 (5%) did not find it interesting.

A lot of debate has taken place about how to teach anatomy. Anatomy teaching-learning (T/ L) methods have evolved as the medical undergraduate curriculum has modernized. Traditional T/L methods of lectures / large group teaching especially using black-board teaching, dissection of cadavers, pre-dissected prosections and tutorials / small group teaching are now supplemented by using power-point or multi-media, anatomical models, simulations and e-learning. The traditionalists favor dissection of human cadavers and the modernists support newer learning modalities like computer assisted learning, problem based learning and self-directed learning [5-7]. The preference of medical students and anatomy faculty towards both traditional and modern T/L methods is not well studied in India.

CONCLUSION

The learners agree that anatomy is a core subject and its fundamental role in medical curriculum is undisputed. The traditional teaching and learning (T/L) methods like blackboard teaching, dissection and lectures are preferred by the newer generation learners also and should be integrated with newer teaching modalities and modern technology. The challenge should not be to determine the superiority of one method over another, but to maximize learning benefit available from different methods.

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