

Medical Graduates' Perception on Curriculum Implementation at eastern University, Sri Lanka

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Abstract: Graduates' perceptions have seldom been taken as major inputs for assessing the effectiveness of implementation of curriculum, even though they are major informants. Thus, the study aimed to assess graduates' perceptions on curriculum implementation at Faculty of Health-Care Sciences (FHCS), Eastern University, Sri Lanka (EUSL). It was a descriptive study, conducted among 1st batch medical graduates (N=27) of FHCS, EUSL. Non-probability sampling method was used to collect convenience samples from study population. Self-administered questionnaire were used to collect graduates' perception. It was developed based on codes of practice on student feedbacks. Descriptive statistics were used to analyze the students' perceptions. The graduates perceived satisfaction with most of the teaching-learning methods, early clinical exposure and integrated modules. Meantime, they (57.9%) perceived less satisfaction with practical demonstration. The graduates agreed that problem based learning, group study and self-directed learning were helped them to learn a lot. The 84.2% of the graduates perceived that, end module examination was helped them to achieve the learning objectives. The curriculum implementation in FHCS, EUSL is positively perceived by first batch of medical graduate of FHCS, EUSL.

Keywords: Curriculum Implementation, Teaching-Learning Process, Medical Graduates' Perception, Eastern University, Sri Lanka

INTRODUCTION

Curriculum implementation entails course organization, teaching-learning process and assessment. The process involves helping the learner to acquire the required knowledge, appropriate skill and the right attitude. A number of teaching- learning methods were proposed over the past several decades. The traditional medical education was practiced as Teacher centered approach. The contemporary medical education is greatly emphasized student centered learning approach. Harden, Sowden & Dunn [1] developed student centered, problem based, integrated, community oriented, elective and systematic (SPICES) model for medical education.

The MBBS program was commenced in 2006 at Faculty of Health-Care Sciences (FHCS) Eastern University, Sri Lanka (EUSL).The FHCS has implemented spiral model, system based integrated modular curriculum. Problem based learning (PBL) is also in use as a learning experience in FHCS. There are three phase examinations conducted as summative assessments. End module examinations are conducted as formative assessment at the end of each module. Feedbacks were obtained from each student at the end of each module and also at the end of different

components of the study program. The students' or graduates' feedback is essential in the programme evaluation. Thus, the study aimed to assess graduates' perceptions on curriculum implementation at FHCS, EUSL.

METHODOLOGY

It was a descriptive cross-sectional study conducted in FHCS, EUSL. 1st batch of medical graduates (N=27) of FHCS, EUSL were selected as study population. Non-probability sampling method was used to collect convenience samples from study population.

Self-administered questionnaire was used to collect graduates' perception. It was developed based on codes of practice on student feedbacks [2]. The pilot study was conducted on ten students two weeks before the commencement of the main research study. It consists of four subscales, namely: graduates' perception on teaching-learning, organization of courses, learning resources and assessment. All questions were coded and entered into an electronic database. Descriptive statistics were used to analyze the graduates' perceptions. Data analysis was carried out

using SPSS version 22. Ethical clearance was obtained from the Ethics Review Committee of FHCS, EUSL.

RESULTS

Number of 27 first batch medical graduates of FHCS, EUSL participated in the study. The graduates perceived greater satisfaction (82%) with field visit followed by lecture (70%). Other teaching-learning methods namely tutorial, problem based learning (PBL), and clinical practice gained the satisfactory level

of an average of 55%. Meantime, practical demonstration is perceived as unsatisfied teaching-learning method (Fig.1). Furthermore, the graduates were greatly satisfied with facilities at Teaching Hospital, Batticaloa. Other components such as staff support to teaching – learning (65%), organization of course content of MBBS programme (62%), library (60%) and information technology lab (55%) had perceived as satisfactory (Fig.1).

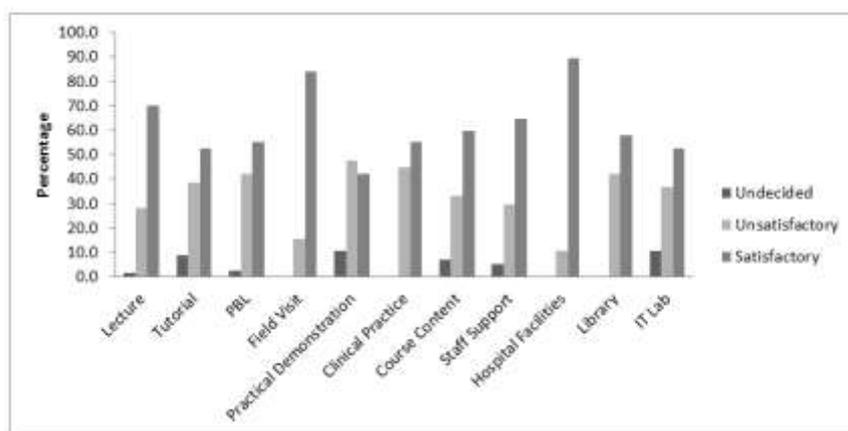


Fig-1: Graduates' perceptions on teaching - learning in FHCS, EUSL

The majority of the graduates (84.2%) enjoyed in learning different discipline as integrated module. 73.7% of graduates positively perceived that the dissection experience is adequate to understand the structure of human body. Although the early clinical exposure was positively perceived, it was negatively looked by 42.2% of the graduates. Field based projects

helped them to learn public health concepts. Moreover, the graduates agreed that problem based learning, group study and self-directed learning helped them to learn much. Also, the graduates had a positive perception on research work during their Phase-2, meantime they perceived the research project enable them to be more scientific in clinical work (Table-1).

Table-1: Graduates' Perception on Learning and Assessment

Graduates' Perceptions Statements	Level of Perception in Percentage				
	Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Graduates' Perception on Learning					
I enjoyed in learning different discipline as integrated module	42.1	42.1	5.3	0.0	10.5
Dissection experience is adequate to understand structure of human body	10.5	63.2	15.8	5.3	5.3
Peripheral hospital experience has been useful	42.1	15.8	31.6	5.3	5.3
Field based projects helped me in learning public health	42.1	47.4	10.5	0.0	0.0
Problem Based Learning help me a lot to learn	33.6	53.3	6.6	3.3	3.3
Group study help a lot to learn	39.9	27.8	28.6	3.0	0.8
Self-Directed Learning help a lot to learn	34.2	26.3	14.5	23.7	1.3
I enjoyed in research project	47.4	36.8	10.5	5.3	0.0
Research project enable me to be more scientific in clinical work	47.4	42.1	5.3	5.3	0.0
Graduates' Perception on Assessment					
End module examination helped me in achieving learning objectives	31.6	52.6	10.5	5.3	0.0
Assessment are based on student learning objectives in curriculum	35.5	41.5	15.1	5.9	2.0
Had enough time to prepare exam	35.5	40.1	14.5	5.3	4.6
Examination environment is good	35.5	52.0	9.2	2.7	0.7

The 84.2% of the graduates perceived that, end module examination helped them to achieve the learning objectives. Meantime, most of the graduates (77%) agreed that, assessments are based on student learning objectives in curriculum. 75.6% of graduates stated that, they had enough time to prepare an examination. The graduates (87.5%) also perceived satisfaction with examination environment.

DISCUSSION

The Higher Education system in Sri Lanka acknowledges that producing twenty first century graduates requires a shift towards 'outcome based education and student centered learning' [2]. Thus the university study programs require the appropriate modifications to achieve such shift. This is specifically looked into when designing curriculum for newly establishing study program. The MBBS curriculum at FHCS is such newly established one. The main feature of the FHCS curriculum plan is integration achieved through an organ-system approach and problem-based learning. The students learn medical knowledge, effective communication, and professional ethics and behavior via complementary co modules and generic courses. The evaluation will be through continuous modular and summative assessments, where emphasis is placed on feedback and counseling [3].

The process of integration is aimed at incorporating different discipline in teaching-learning process. Integrated learning is universally accepted practice in medical education and it offers many advantages to the learners [4]. The integrated curriculum implementation were positively perceived by medical graduates of FHCS, EUSL. Shashikala, Manjula and Nagaraj revealed that students were motivated in integrated learning and it is useful in imparting the knowledge, saves time, energy and gives better insight of the subject [5]. An Indian study also agreed that "integrated teaching improves the understanding of the topics" [6].

Early clinical exposure is done through peripheral hospital visits at first semester. It shortens the length of clinical orientation. In this study, 57.9% of medical graduates agreed that, peripheral hospital experience has been useful. The early clinical exposure is a new and rewarding trend in medical education [7]. A study conducted among different Asian medical schools revealed that 87% of medical students agreed that it was good to introduce clinical skills in the early years of the curriculum [8].

Problem based Learning (PBL) is a pure student centered learning approach. It allows the learner to provide active involvement in learning. PBL is used to develop the body of integrated knowledge, problem solving skill, communication skill, team work and lifelong learning behavior [9]. In this study, 86.9% of the graduates stated that PBL help them a lot to learn.

Self-directed learning is an essential feature of andragogy [10]. The medical graduates (60.6%) of FHCS, perceived that self-directed learning positively influenced on their learning.

The formative assessment is usually conducted for drive learning [11]. It has been evidenced in the study that, 84.2% of the graduates in this study stated end module examination helped them in achieving learning objectives. Validity means the assessment should be assessed what was expected to assess. The content validity ensures that the right contents will be assessed in the assessment. Right content should be represented the curriculum [12]. In this study, students (77%) accepted that the assessment contents were represented in the curriculum.

The psychomotor skill development is essential in medical practice. Practical demonstration is an important method in skill teaching [13]. However, the medical graduates of FHCS, perceived less satisfaction in practical demonstration which was held during their student period. This finding indicates that practical demonstration at FHCS requires improvements.

The FHCS was established with limited resources as a new faculty. The first batch of students recruited in the gray era of the FHCS. However, the medical graduates perceived positive satisfaction with resources such as hospital facilities, library, IT lab and staff support.

CONCLUSION

The curriculum implementation in FHCS, EUSL is positively perceived by first batch of medical graduates of FHCS, EUSL. However, the practical demonstration is identified as a weakest area in the FHCS, EUSL. Furthermore, the graduates perceived that, PBL, group study and self-directed learning helped them to learn much. The majority of the students (84.2%) enjoyed in integrated learning.

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