

LETTER TO EDITOR

Medical Education: A Perfect System or a Need for Improvement? A Student's Viewpoint

Dear Editor,

I am writing this letter as I feel it is of utmost importance to highlight the issues in our medical education system from a student viewpoint. In our Union Territory with a rising number of medical colleges and an increasing number of medical students entering each year, there is a big-time need to improve medical education to eventually produce a good medical graduate. As almost the whole of our medical education is government-owned, we have rarely seen any feedback being taken from students, if ever. The decisions are usually taken unanimously, even if the students feel that the decision isn't yielding results. They can barely voice their opinion because of the hierarchical system in the medical setup of our subcontinent wherein the senior-junior paradigm has produced a big generation gap between teaching faculty and the medical students.

Amid the changing pattern of the undergraduate curriculum, we are shifting from a traditional system to a competency-based Medical Education (CBME) curriculum; wherein there is a great need to improve the skills of faculty members. Furthermore, alongside the implementation of the new CBME system, it is crucial to incorporate adequate student feedback and assessment, allowing for a meaningful comparison with the traditional curriculum. Before CBME was introduced, a student in the final year of MBBS would spend most of the time in clinics joining rounds and examining patients, the new system has curtailed that and now a student is usually supposed to attend mostly the theoretical classes. How these things would affect the clinical skills of future doctors need to be assessed, and proper feedback given to the NMC.

A friendly environment must be created while teaching

students whether in class or on rounds. Students should be made to get actively involved in rounds not just allowing them to stand as just spectators. Even if a student asks the silliest question, he should not be scolded in a way that he never questions again! Teaching should be more focused on the practical aspect of medical education, things which you can easily access on a calculator should not be stressed to be crammed when you could use that time upon learning something new and more innovative.

The examinations during MBBS should not be made tough such that a student would spend the whole-time reading books just to pass the examination and compromise his practical training. The students are moving towards online coaching applications which are focusing mostly on the examination part; students now skip the ward postings to watch video lectures from these apps.

In our medical setup, the research activities during undergraduate years are usually on a back foot, while transitioning from undergraduate to post graduation most of the students don't even know the basics of research. It is of utmost importance to give students opportunities to be part of research projects so that students can learn how to carry out research independently in future which will help in improving healthcare.

While our colleges usually lack advanced medical techniques and research, these should collaborate with national institutes or international universities to have a student exchange program which would allow students to

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discover new groundbreaking innovations happening in medicine. Many top medical universities globally allow VSLO (visiting student learning opportunities) programs to allow students to rotate in their departments to gain exposure.

CONCLUSION

To strengthen medical education, there is a big-time need to improve and strengthen the above-mentioned activities at

the level of medical colleges through well-planned programs which will actively involve the student community, faculty members and administration.

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