Perception of teacher about current education trends – An institutional survey

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Abstract:

Aim: To observe and analyze teachers' perception about current education strategy and their expected changes to improve it.

Materials and method: A validated, semi structured questionnaire compromising of 10 questions, (closed and open ended) regarding teaching pattern and examination pattern currently followed in the university were circulated among the teaching staff of VSPM's Dental College. The participants were asked to tick the appropriate answer. The data was collected and calculated to analyze various opinions and suggestions given by teaching staff to improve the existing education system.

Result: 27(62.7%) teachers thought that 40 minutes duration is sufficient for a theory class. Majority of teachers (81%) were already using combinations of power-points, blackboards and OHP projectors, for delivering lectures. Problem based learning was well known for 35(81%) teachers and was thought to be very helpful to be integrated in regular teaching by 31(72%). Obtaining feedback of teaching skills was taken as positive way to improve teaching according to 35(81%) teachers. 35(81%) teachers would be interested to examine students for every topic taught for core improvement. For formative or summative assessments equal distribution of marks for theory and practical was voted by 34(79%) teachers. Current examinations pattern was accepted and would like to be continued by 25(58%) teachers.

Conclusion: Teachers and students together can initiate and define the curriculum for better future of academics as well as advancing medical education. This study states the need of significant move towards amendments in ongoing teaching and curriculum designing suggested by teachers.

Keywords: Education strategy, examinations pattern

Introduction:

Medical education has seen major changes over the past decade. Increasing emphasis is being placed on self-directed study with students expected to take more responsibility for their own learning. The application of new learning technologies has supported this move. New directions also can be identified in the area of assessment with increased emphasis on performance assessment, the use of techniques such as the objective structured clinical examination, the use of standardised patients, log books, portfolio assessment and self-assessment.(1)

It has become fashionable to talk about learning and learners rather than teaching and the teacher. This increased attention to the learner may be seen by teachers as a loss of control and power which can lead to feelings of uncertainty, inadequacy and anxiety (Bashir 1998). The shift may even be seen as, in some way, a devaluing of the role of the teacher. It has to be recognised, however, that this is not true, that teaching and learning are closely related and that the purpose of teaching is to enhance learning. It is important to ensure that the changing role of the teacher is not neglected in discussions about new educational strategies and approaches to curriculum development.[1]

In the education system students and teachers appear as two sides of the same coin. The current system has certain lacunae because we observe a decline in the attendance and success rate of student and also the students are really stressed out when competing for higher studies. Knowledge and performance are not separable, we need to assess both.[2] Therefore a need was felt to assess the current teaching system and obtain suggestion to improve it. A survey will be carried out to analyze the same, as teachers, as well as students may have their own opinions to change the system. This may further help university to have vision to revise the education pattern time to time to take it to more heights.

Aims and Objectives:

To observe and analyze teachers' perception about current education strategy and their expected changes, to improve it.

Materials and Method:

After approval from institutional ethics committee, all the teaching staff present (43) on the day of survey were included in the study (from first year to final year BDS). A validated, semi structured questionnaire (Fig.1) compromising of 10 questions, (closed and open ended) regarding teaching pattern (7 Que.) and examination pattern (3 que.) currently followed in the university were circulated among the teaching staff of VSPM's Dental College. The

participants were asked to tick the appropriate answer. The data was collected and calculated to analyze various opinions and suggestions given by teaching staff to improve the existing education system.

Result:

Descriptive statistics was used for analysis of data and results were expressed as percentage. Forty three teachers from VSPM's Dental College answered the questionnaire which was analyzed as their perception (Table1).

Table1:

Question No.	A - %	B - %	C - %	D - %
1	12-28	**27-62.7**	4-9.3	NA
2	**28-65.11**	5-11.62	5-11.62	5-11.62
3	3-7	3-7	2-4.6	**35-81**
4	**35-81**	8-18.6	NA	NA
5	3-7	**31-72.0**	9-20.9	0
6	0	**39-90.6**	4-9.3	0
7	**35-81**	8-18.6	-	-
8	1-2.3	8-18.6	**34-79.06**	-
9	**25-58.1**	1-2.3	17-39.5	-
10	**29-67.4**	11-25.5	3-7	-

27(62.7%) teachers think that 40 mins are sufficient for a theory class whereas 12(28%) would like to continue with 60 mins lecture. 28(65.11%) teachers are somewhat satisfied with the attendance of students in the class. The opinions obtained from teachers for satisfaction of attendance, were equally variable. When asked about modes of delivering lectures, majority of teachers 35(81%) were already using combinations of power-points, blackboards and OHP projectors. Very few teachers were in favor of single modality to deliver lecture.

Problem based learning was well known 35(81%) and was thought to be very helpful to be integrated in regular teaching 31(72%). To obtain feedback of teaching skills was taken as positive way to improve by 35(81%) teachers. At the same time 35(81%) teachers were interested to examine students for every topic taught for core improvement. For formative or summative assessments equal distribution of marks for theory and practical was voted by 34(79%) teachers.

Figure 1:

1. Time period for a theory class should be:
   - A. 60 min.
   - B. 40 min.
   - C. 30 min.

2. Are we satisfied with the attendance of students in the class?
   - A. Somewhat
   - B. Largely
   - C. Completely
   - D. cant say

3. Which method do you prefer for delivering lectures?
   - A. Black/ white Board
   - B. OHP
   - C. LCD
   - D. Combinations

4. Are you aware of problem based learning?
   - A. Somewhat
   - B. Largely
   - C. Completely
   - D. cant say

5. Do you think, problem based learning will be helpful?
   - A. Somewhat
   - B. largely
   - C. Completely.
   - D. Cant say

6. Do you think students should give feedback to teacher for their teaching skills?
   - A. Disagree
   - B. Agree
   - C. Strongly agree
   - D. Strongly disagree

7. Should the students be examined at the end of every topic?
   - A. Strongly agree
   - B. Agree
   - C. Disagree
   - D. Strongly disagree

8. In the context of marks distribution in internal assessment more weightage should be given to-
   - A. Theory.
   - B. Clinics / Practical.
   - C. Equal.
   - D. Cant say

9. I am satisfied with the existing examination pattern?
   - A. Strongly agree
   - B. Agree
   - C. Disagree
   - D. Strongly disagree

10. Do you think e-learning should be integrated into the regular teaching?
   - A. Strongly agree
   - B. Agree
   - C. Disagree
   - D. Strongly disagree

Current examinations pattern was accepted and would liked to be continued by 25(58%) teachers. But 17(39%) teachers were not happy with it, they would like to change it. e -learning should be a part regular teaching according to majority of teachers whereas 3(7%) teachers don't feel to include it.

Discussion:

Brookfield (1990) suggested that teaching is the educational equivalent of white water rafting. Medical education has seen major changes over the past decade. Integrated teaching, problem based learning, community based learning, core curricula with electives or options and more systematic curriculum planning have been advocated.

Increased emphasis is being placed on self-directed study with students expected to take more responsibility for their own learning.the incresed emphasis on student autonomy in medical education has moved the centre of gravity away from the teacher and closer to the students[1,2].

The six areas of activity of the teacher can be summarised as:

1. The teacher as information provider.
2. The teacher as role model.
3. The teacher as facilitator.
4. The teacher as assessor.
5. The teacher as planner.
6. The teacher as resource developer.

Recent accreditation standards for graduate medical education programs require a shift from a process-oriented to an outcomes-oriented model of evaluation[3].

Knowledge measurement should not replace the performance measurement and performance measurement should not replace knowledge measurment[2].According to preset concepts of advances in teaching practices, problem-based learning (PBL) became an established method in undergraduate medical education that aims to develop reasoning skills based on clinical problems[4,5]. In current study teachers were acquainted with PBL and were interested to introduce it in regular teaching.

The study was aimed at evaluation of education trends in present scenario by teachers, whereas, evaluation of program or new teaching modality is routinely practiced and known method.[1,4,6] There are various studies which documents the effects and benefits of evaluation by teachers and students (UG & PG). David W. Musick *et al* comments that, involving teaching faculty and residents in developing a comprehensive evaluation program is significant to get success. Regardless of philosophic debates pertaining to the appropriateness of the outcomes model for medical education, this approach appears likely to predominate in the foreseeable future

particularly as related to the general competencies of the physician. A practical, task-oriented approach will assist program directors in ensuring compliance with program evaluation standards.

Obtaining feedback to evaluate the program was also recommended[7] by Syed Shehnaz[8] et al, where their study was aimed to compare the faculty and students' perceptions of the student experiences with the new curriculum. The study states that, proportions of agreement between faculty and students showed that more faculty members than students perceived the need for increased feedback to students and a greater emphasis on long term learning.

Evaluation was viewed as a means to facilitate improvements within medical education.[9] Not all good doctors are good teachers. Without proper training or vocation, most of the medical faculties lack the skill[6]. So, obtaining feedback from student for self-improvement in teaching was found to be accepted by majority of the teachers in this study. Teaching quality was believed to be dependent on content, process, teacher and student characteristics as well as learning outcome, with an emphasis on the latter. [9]

Conclusion:

Medical schools are the only institutions with the responsibility of preparing medical students to become doctors. Teachers and students together can initiate and define the curriculum for better future of academics as well as advancing medical education. This study states the need of significant move towards amendments in ongoing teaching and curriculum designing suggested by teachers. The perfect feedback and periodic evaluation of regular teaching methods can surely improve the education atmosphere from core.

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