

# Study on the need to implement mentorship for the emotional development among medical students

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## Abstract

**Introduction:** In this study the effect of mentoring on the emotional development of medical students of Malabar medical college hospital and research centre were studied. The study group consisted of medical students who are exposed to a lot of complex situations throughout their academic tenure and their professional life thereafter. Assessing the quality of emotions is important for medical students, the emotional maturity is an explicitly important aspect of their future professional development. Thus the study makes a much needed effort to find out the influence of emotional maturity on the performance among the First year MBBS students of Malabar medical college. The ability of introducing mentorship programme and how it can influence the emotional wellbeing and thereby show a better performance.

**Materials and Methods:** The study population included preclinical medical students of first MBBS (2017-2018). Data were collected using 'Emotional Maturity Scale' to study the emotional maturity. The data were then compiled and analyzed using SPSS Version 18. The paired T test and chi-square tests method was carried out to find the significance of the association between the variables. There is significant association between emotional maturity and performance after mentorship (p -value < 0.001).

**Results:** Among the study participants, 27.5% and 72.5% were males and females, respectively. The study demonstrated a strong association between improvements in emotional maturity of the students by the influence of mentoring being implemented in the student's activity.

**Keywords:** Mentoring, Academic performance, Emotional maturity, Mentorship: Medical students.

## Introduction

Medical education has been regarded as highly stressful period for students throughout the academic tenure.

Exposed to this stressful environment, which can exert a negative impact on the academic performance and psychological overall wellbeing of the student. The students are expected to imbibe an avalanche of knowledge in order to complete their academics in a crammed up time period. They have to make tremendous social and personal sacrifices. This new environment which is filled with academic burden competitive environment definitely makes the first year student perturbed confused, biased and inefficient. So a formal mentoring could facilitate the students growth. A mentor - mentee relationship which will be an invisible support and guidance by a senior faculty, who themselves have taken the same path earlier.

Emotional wellbeing of a person is based on the emotional maturity. It is a measure of our emotional strength to cope with our surroundings. Being aware of our own emotions shows people's emotional maturity. Assessing this quality of emotions is important for medical students to examine their overall ability to deal with their immediate world since they may have to confront with end number of stressful situations in their profession. These difficult scenarios are giving rise to many psycho somatic problems among students such as anxiety, tensions, frustrations and emotional upsets in day to day life. The emotional maturity explicitly has an impact on student's academic performance and is also an important aspect of professional development.

## Five broad factors of emotional maturity

Emotional stability, Emotional progression, Social adjustment, Personality integration, and Independence.

Formal mentoring programs for medical students are lacking in most countries.<sup>2</sup> Planning a mentoring program for medical students in preclinical and clinical academic schedule in medical colleges is need of the hour. Mentoring is acknowledged as key to a successful and satisfying career in medicine. Thereby introducing Mentorship in student life may help the student early on in this path.

## Goals of mentoring program can be various

1. To develop professionalism
2. To support students in their personal growth
3. To provide career counseling
4. To increase interest in the subject and boost morale
5. To foster students interest in a specialty for which a future shortage is projected.

The awareness of the existence of this kind of support from the faculty under whom they would be spending their first year and the effort made by the faculty can be assessed as a reflection on the students overall wellbeing which would also impact the faculty's morale to a great extent.

Therefore a conceptual model for implementing mentoring program in the Institution. Thus the study made an effort to find out the influence of mentoring on the emotional maturity and thereby wellbeing on performance among the First year students.

## Objective

To compare the emotional wellbeing of students before and after mentoring.

## Materials and method study design

Interventional study

**Sample size**

150

**Study setting/population**

150 (2017 -2018) admitted first MBBS students of MMC, Kozhikode.

**Duration of study**

8 months November 2017 to June 2018 (durn of study type error as students all three 1 year internals were considered).

**Inclusion criteria**

1. Student should be in 1<sup>st</sup> year
2. Voluntary informed consent to be a part of the study

**Exclusion criteria**

1. Students who did not regularly visit their mentor.
2. Students who did not appear for all three tests.
3. Students who did not give consent to participate in mentorship.

**Data Collection****Methodology**

The faculty implemented mentorship after they were oriented and briefed on mentoring by conducting a workshop of half a day by an external faculty and also orientation by Psychologist and Psychiatrist of our hospital. To achieve a standardized procedure, all the participants had an exposure as to role of mentors, identified several themes focused on mentorship, including the characteristics of effective mentors, actions of an effective mentor, and tactics for effective mentorship.

Based on the first internal assessment marks 17 students were categorized among the mentors by grading equal distribution of good average and below average students in each group. Mentorship was provided for a period of three months. The mentor mentee one to one session lasting for a maximum of 30 minutes a week. Feedback from mentor's perspective was collected at the end of every month. Each faculty maintained a diary for the sessions with uniform prefixed areas of discussions.

**Assessment tools**

Emotional wellbeing is assessed using a questionnaire, before and after implementation of mentoring system. By using a pre validated emotional maturity scale.

The emotional maturity of the students will be measured by using Emotional Maturity Scale (EMS) developed by Dr Yashvir Singh (Agra) and Dr Mahesh Bhargava (Agra) 1984.

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Very much; Much; Undecided; Probably and Never. The items are so stated that if the answer is very much a score of 5 is given; for much 4; for undecided 3; and for probably 2 and for negative answer of never, a score of 1 is to be awarded.

Reliability of the scale was determined by test retest reliability which was 0.75 and internal consistency for various factors ranged from .42-.86.

Emotional maturity is measured based on emotional instability, emotional regression, social maladjustment, personality disintegration and lack of independence. There was a range of statements under each topic and the core element of this leads to emotional maturity that was measured by Likert scale, giving a maximum score of 240. The mean of total score shows respondents' emotional maturity. The instrument consists of open ended questions on emotional maturity. The interpretations of EMS scores for level of maturity were 50-80 as extremely emotionally immature, 81-88 as moderately emotionally mature, 89-106 as emotionally immature and 107-240 as extremely emotionally immature.

The outcome variables were the scores of the EMS scale scoring, marks of three internal exams.

The study was done after obtaining clearance from the institutional ethics committee.

Informed consent of student was obtained prior to participation.

**Statistical analysis**

Paired t test, Chi square and Fischer exact test was used.

**Statistical package**

Statistical package social science (SPSS 18.0)

**Results**

Out of 150 students 10 students did not appear for all the three

internal exams conducted, 8 students did not give consent for mentoring. 12 students were not regular for the mentorship provided.

Therefore 120 students as sample size.

**Gender**

Out of 120 students 33 (27.5%) were Male and 87(72.5%) were female students.

**Table 1**

	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Male	33	27.5	27.5
Female	87	72.5	100.0
Total	120	100.0	

**Emotional maturity scale (EMS)**

Emotional Maturity Scores before implementing mentorship: Prior to mentorship; as per scoring based on EMS, 20(16.7%) were extremely emotionally immature, 54(45%) were emotionally immature and 38(31.7%) were moderately mature students.

**Table 2**

	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Extremely emotionally mature	8	6.7	6.7
Moderately emotionally mature	38	31.7	38.3
Emotionally immature	54	45.0	83.3
Extremely emotionally immature	20	16.7	100.0
Total	120	100.0	

**Emotional maturity scale after implementing mentorship**

After providing mentorship, as per scoring based on EMS, only 11(9.2%) were extremely emotionally immature, 27(22.5%) were emotionally immature, while 49(40.8%) students were moderately emotionally mature and 33(27.5%) were extremely emotionally mature students.

**Comparison of emotional maturity scores of students before and after implementing mentorship**

Mentoring was found to be significant (p value=<.001) with emotional stability, progression and wellbeing of the student.

**Association between gender and emotional maturity after implementation of mentorship**

There is no significant association between gender and emotional maturity after implementing mentorship.

**Limitations of the study**

1. There is lot of apprehension on the feasibility of having a mentoring program for a large number of students, by the faculty due to the existing faculty student ratio.
2. Students with good academic scores felt this was a waste of their time as mentorship was uniform for all the students.

**Review of Literature**

The concept mature emotional behavior of any level is that which will reflect the fruits of normal emotional development. Bernard listed a criteria's as early as 1954 of mature emotional behavior, and according to Fred Mc Kinney the characteristics of an emotionally mature are appreciation of attitude and behavior of others, tendency to adapt to the attitudes and habits of others and also have the capacity to delay one's own response to them. According to another author Seoul, if the emotional development of the person is relatively complete his adaptability to surroundings is high, his regressive tendencies are relatively low and his vulnerability is minimal. Thus we can put forth that a emotionally mature person will be continually in the process of visualizing himself with clear perspective and have a healthy thinking action.<sup>3</sup>

The term mentor has more than twenty different kinds of definitions in the literature and there is no consensus on any operational definition. The concept of mentorship has been present since Greek mythology, and much of the prior work in this topic was in adult development and higher education.<sup>4</sup> How far students are successful in acquiring knowledge, understanding, and skill in different subjects presented to them for study through the curriculum is to be reflected in their academic achievement. Another recent study showed a strong correlation between emotional maturity and academic performance in a multi national student population(r= 0.783, p<0.001).<sup>5</sup>

Reflection on an action can be repeatedly trained in reflective practice interventions, such as mentoring, thus allowing reflexivity to be developed. According to Archer (2007), reflexivity is a continual internal dialogue using language, including emotions, sensations and images, where people engage in twofold positions, mediating between their own concerns and the social contexts.<sup>6</sup> A mentor may, for example, help the mentee to develop implicit knowledge about the hidden curriculum of professionalism, ethics, values and the art of medicine, which cannot be learned from a text.<sup>7</sup> A training programme for people taking on the mentor role is well recommended.<sup>8</sup> A mentor may also facilitate skills development and provide guidance and strategic advice.<sup>9</sup> Medical colleges generally in earlier times encouraged mentoring, but majority was of an informal nature.<sup>10</sup> As it was not a culture practiced by choice it was never meant to be a compulsory practice. It was seen as a part of certain professional's personal desire and interest in mentoring. The pattern of students approach to a faculty has also changed a great deal as compared to earlier scenarios.

**Discussion**

The sample size was 120 first year medical students. Among the students 33 (27.5%) were Male and 87(72.5%) were female students respectively. The study demonstrated a strong association between improvements in emotional maturity of the students by the influence of mentoring being implemented in the student's activity. Only 11 (9.2%) were extremely emotionally immature after mentorship as compared to 20 (16.7%) before implementation.

The medical colleges should encourage adult learning in budding professionals. Psychological maturity exerts an impact on the entry to andragogy learning type. As a person matures emotionally and intellectually, his or her self-concept moves from that of a dependent human being to that of a self directed one. This key point of adult learning. A qualitative study done across two academic health centers also showed that failed mentoring relationships were characterized by several aspects including poor communication, lack of commitment to the mentoring relationship and lack of personal similarities.<sup>11</sup>

The emotional instability is an aspect greatly impacting, thereby affecting the learning area of students emotional maturity. This is supported by two other previous studies which also showed emotional instability reacts negatively to academic stress. This factor contributes to the low academic performers due to lack of emotional balance.<sup>12</sup> Now here comes in the role of mentors who can assist in moulding to a certain extent by alleviating the anxiety and apprehension largely due to the transition phase of life in itself school to a professional college atmosphere. This situation by itself demands some emotional maturity.

The mentors in unison agreed that students felt stressful due to crammed up curriculum, thus majority of stressful incidents are related to medical training rather than to personal problems. Curriculum load and feeling overwhelmed by the information load in short time span are major sources of stress. The fears of failing or falling behind as many haven't tasted failure in academics until the reached here, are particular preoccupations.<sup>13</sup> The medical schools in the developed countries tackle the problem at an earlier stage by undertaking prevention in the form of health promotion programs.<sup>14</sup> These interventions have been shown to reduce the effects of stress on medical students health and overall performance.

## Conclusion

This study throws light on the need to develop a well crafted mentorship, which will look into the emotional development and thereby influence the overall development of the student. This will pave the way in producing competent medical graduate. Introducing this does bring a lot of extra burden on the faculty as to find time for mentoring in between hectic teaching and practice schedule. Indeed introducing such programs in the institution may also develop the insight among the mentors to polish their own skills. The study results support the hypothetical view is a need for formal

mentoring; as it will influence a student's emotional maturity and wellbeing, thereby influence the student's performance in the institution.

## Source of funding

None

## Conflict of interest

None.

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