



Assessment of Phase I Medical Students Perception of Learning Their First MBBS Subjects

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Abstract: *Introduction:* Medical undergraduates in India are being selected to learn medicine by putting them to vigorous training in schools to clear highly competitive exams that requires hard work, dedication and knowledge. Such students after joining MBBS, most of them don't fair well in internal examinations being conducted in their respective departments, both in theory and practicals. Among those who pass the subjects are not expected to have a thorough understanding of the subject. This study aims to assess the perspective of first year MBBS students on learning their syllabus. *Methodology:* Students who had just finished first year MBBS from different medical colleges were asked to fill a feedback form comprised of questions regarding their perspective of learning first MBBS syllabus. **Results:** 15.9% of students opined that they studied the syllabus only to pass the examination whereas 84% of students studied the subjects to lay strong foundation of medicine. **Conclusion:** Through this study we concluded that there are students who study MBBS for the sake of only passing the exam instead of acquiring sound knowledge in the field. It also addresses the factors that dampen their quality of education.

Keywords: MBBS students, MBBS syllabus, learn medicine, knowledge

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INTRODUCTION

Disease prevention and patient care are intricate, multifaceted fields of study and practice. Undergraduate medical education programs aim to provide students with a rigorous and superior education and training in the science and abilities required to provide medical care. Undergraduate medical education in India strives to support the development of general or basic physicians who can meet the nation's health needs, the advancement of medical science, and the demands arising from the nature, responsibility, and role of the physician in society. In India, undergraduate medical students graduate from high school at an average age of 18 ± 1 year and enroll in medical college following 14 years of education. Parents of high school kids encourage them to apply for medical colleges rather than deciding on their own [13].

The Medical Council of India (MCI) is in charge of overseeing the laws, norms, and policies governing undergraduate medical education in India. Until the year 2000, the fundamental sciences study lasted 1.5 years, or three semesters. Following the MCI's suggestions, the length has been shortened to one year, divided into two semesters now. The basic medical sciences are seeing a rapid expansion in knowledge. But MCI has stipulated that 620 hours of instruction in anatomy, 360hrs in physiology and 240 hours in biochemistry are adequate to complete the program in this field year

without changing the syllabus for the three foundational disciplines. As a result, students are adopting short texts and concentrating on quick fixes to pass a university exam, which is lowering the actual caliber of their topic knowledge.

Furthermore, most students who are accepted into India's undergraduate medical program do so via a complex system of private tuition and coaching sessions at their "10+2" level. They become accustomed to learning in a setting that emphasizes personalized care as a result. As a result, these students must adjust to a quite different environment when they attend lecture lectures for the first semester at a medical college [7].

However, it is also important to keep in mind that the medical colleges and schools educate their students in the preparation for the role of a doctor. In the beyond couple of years, there has been an expanded spotlight on the deficiency of specialists in our nation and the requirement for expanding the quantity of clinical seats. Subsequently, the quantity of undergrad clinical seats has expanded impressively, however the nature of clinical schooling is confronting difficulties [12]. Although medical students are provided with the best faculty, the performance of students and doctors in the community is believed to be significantly lower. The performance in the examination is considered the most important indicator of a student's progress [13] and the current scenario projects their lower performance in the proctored examinations. In the present era, gadget addiction poses serious threat to their academic performance. Research has shown that understudies with poor scholarly execution are at expanded hazard of ensuing proficient misconduct [11]. Hence the present study is conducted to address the above mentioned affairs in private medical colleges in south India.

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

- To assess the learning perspective of students of first year MBBS.
- To study the factors affecting the quality of learning in their phase I time frame.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

A total of 220 first-year medical students from various private medical institutions who completed their exams in December 2023 consented to participate in the study after obtaining clearance from the IEC. Additionally, they were told that all of their answers would remain anonymous. The cross-sectional survey was done over the course of one week, from December 18 to December 25, 2023, utilizing questionnaires comprised of two closed ended questions that were submitted using Google Forms. The participants' answers were gathered. Microsoft Excel 2021 was used to enter and analyze the data through descriptive analytical methods. Charts were used to display the results.

The following close ended questions were sent to the students for the study

Question 1: What was the main reason you studied the first MBBS

- (a) To lay strong foundation of medicine
- (b) Only to pass the exam

Question 2: What challenges did you encounter throughout your first MBBS?

- (a) Vast portions of MBBS with less time to delve deep
- (b) Joining medical college was not my decision
- (c) Lack of guidance on how to approach the first year syllabus.
- (d) Sudden transition from school to medical college resulting in unfamiliar setting
- (e) Packed exams and academic schedules
- (f) Gadget addictions
- (g) Language difficulties
- (h) Peer pressure
- (i) Perceived high pass percentage
- (j) Teaching methods and methodologies

RESULTS

Out of 220 students, 185 (84.1%) said they studied to build a solid foundation in core medical courses, while 35 (15.9%) said they studied primarily to pass the formative and summative tests during their first year of MBBS.

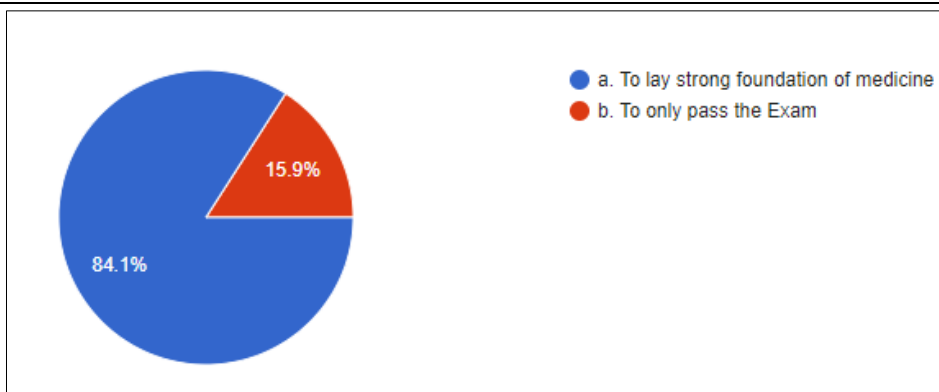


Chart 1: Primary objective for 1st year MBBS

For 88 students (about 40% of the total), the initial challenge is to overcome the large volume of MBBS syllabus with little opportunity to go deeply. The second reason given by 45 students (20.5%) for their inability to focus in their studies was their busy exam schedule, which included constant assessments, record works, and assignments. Thirty-one students (14.1%) ranked lack of instruction regarding how to approach the first year of MBBS as the third characteristic. The abrupt change from education to MBBS, experienced by 20 students (9.1%), is the fourth reason for their inability to focus on their studies.

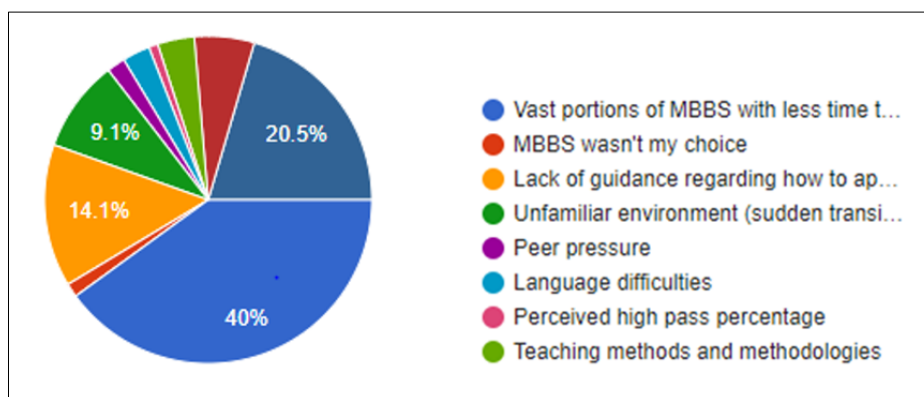


Chart 2: Major factors affecting the quality of learning in 1st MBBS

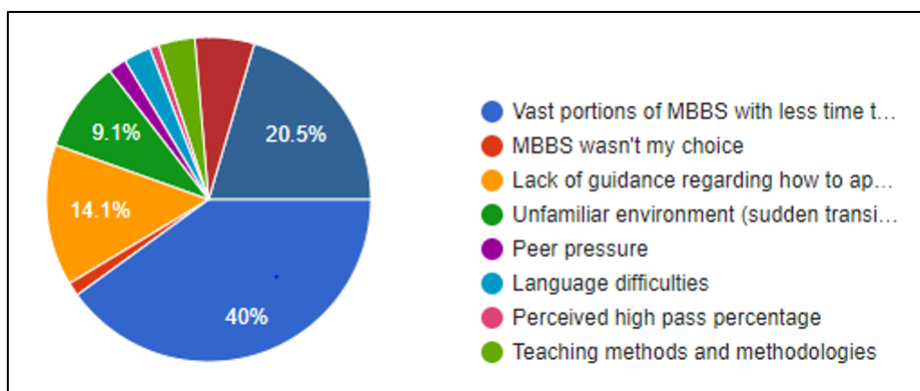


Chart 3: Language as a factor affecting the quality of learning in 1st MBBS

Out of 220 students only 6 students (2.7%) are opted that language is one of the factors that hinders their effective learning.

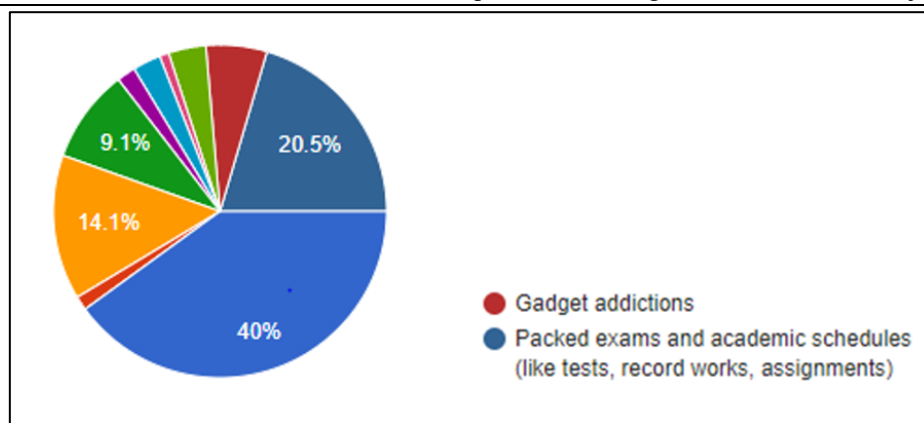


Chart 4: Gadget addictions as another factor affecting the quality of learning in 1st MBBS

13 students (5.9%) responded that gadget addictions contribute to less effective studying in their 1st year of MBBS.

DISCUSSION

For hundreds of years, anatomy has served as the cornerstone of medical education, offering a foundation of knowledge applicable to all medical specialties. Physiology is a basic discipline that is constantly expanding and teaching us new information about how the body works. Biochemistry by definition is the chemistry of life, and life is a system of cooperative enzyme-catalyzed reactions [7].

These Basic medical subjects provide a solid foundation for the entire medical career. Knowledge of the basic sciences made it easier for them to understand the clinical subjects. Basic sciences lay strong foundation for subsequent clinical learning and are and will always be an integral part of the MBBS curriculum. A significant number of students (84.1%) opined that they study the first MBBS subjects to gain knowledge in the field of medicine. 15.9% of students concurred that they study their subjects in order to pass the phase I MBBS summative exam.

In the present study, 40% of students agreed that because of vast portions of MBBS subjects with duration of one year study period, they were unable to dwell deep into the material for a complete comprehension of the concerned topics. The results of our study are in agreement with the previous studies that have also reported high course load being imposed on first year medical graduates [14].

20.5% of students commented that packed exams and academic schedules like continuous tests, assignments, record work and log books attributes to hampering their quality of time to concentrate enough on their subjects. 14.1% of students opined that lack of guidance to approach first year syllabus as a root cause to their ineffective learning irrespective of the foundation course conducted in the parent college. Similar findings have also been reported among 1st year students in earlier literature [14]. 9% of students felt that sudden transition of school to medical colleges resulted in unfamiliar environment as a cause of difficulty learning in their phase I MBBS. 6% of the students said gadget addictions as a major factor for not utilizing their time to concentrate on their subjects [11]. Language difficulties contributed to less effective learning in 3% of the students.

In spite of the difficulties faced by each one of them, 84% still study hard to gain sufficient knowledge in their subject whereas 15.9% of students take it as an excuse and superficially learn, omitting few topics thereby to only pass in the summative exam.

Limitation of the Study:

This investigation was limited to private medical schools. This has to be compared and expanded to include government medical colleges. Students from only phase I MBBS were involved. Students in phases II and III could participate in it.

CONCLUSION

Through this study, we were able to determine that some students prioritize their study of MBBS subjects over gaining solid understanding in the field in order to pass the exam. It also addresses the issues that impede their ability to study and advance their medical expertise.

Conflicts of Interest: There are no conflicts of interest.

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