

ABSTRACT NUMBER: OSF-01

**Clinical Teachers' Views On Clinical And
Communication Skills Training Side By Side To
Medical Students**

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Background: While the idea that communication as an essential aspect of medicine is not new, teaching and assessment of communication skills have recently become more visible in medical education. Nowadays, this concern is increasing that some deficiencies may exist in terms of communication skills teaching in medicine. The practice of teaching communication skills separate from clinical skills, may limit the coherence that is needed to ensure the doctors to communicate satisfactorily with their patients. Those who teach communication skills now need to return to clinical workplace to develop further the quality of their teaching. The purpose of this study was to explore the clinical teachers' views on clinical and communication skills training side by side to medical students.

Methods: A qualitative approach was considered. Data was collected by semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions from a purposive sample of 18 clinical teachers of Mashhad Medical School who were informant in clinical education. Official documents of other medical schools were also reviewed.

Results: Data analysis led to the generation of themes elicited from the clinical teachers' views. The main one was known as "teaching communication and clinical skills side by side in Clinical Skills Center (CSC)". The themes related to this main theme revealed "teaching communication skills to undergraduate medical students at the beginning of their clinical education"; "communication skill training based on

the medical students' learning needs"; "using standardised patients"; and "using OSCE and OSVE to assess the medical students' communication skills performance".

Conclusion: Based on the themes, communication skills Department (CSD) was established in CSC to serve the medical students of Mashhad Medical School. CSD supports Learning communication and clinical skills side by side. Its primary goal is to improve medical students' education in interviewing and communication skills. Both of these skills are vital to the medical professionals' interaction with patients and their families.

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Problem-Based Learning In Drugs Of Abuse Course: An Experience At Faculty Of Pharmacy, UiTM Shah Alam

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Introduction: Problem-based learning (PBL) is a pedagogical method that implements a learner centered-method emphasizing on the growth of skills such as critical thinking, clinical reasoning and effective communication. In reverse to the traditional teaching and learning approach, PBL is conducted based on actual experience or scenario. Drugs of Abuse (PHR 651) an elective course consisting of 1-credit hour is conducted based on PBL techniques. The course is offered to second year Pharmacy students during the first semester. PBL involves two sessions whereby the first PBL session requires students to identify, synthesize and analyze the problem statements given to meet the desired learning outcomes. The students will then present their findings verbally during second session.

Background: The aim of this paper is to view the effectiveness of PBL embedded in 2007 and 2008 at the Faculty of Pharmacy, University Technology MARA (UiTM), Malaysia, in the teaching of Drugs of Abuse course for two different batches of Pharmacy students.

Methods: Assessment measures include quizzes, tests, oral presentations and attendance that were pooled throughout the semester toward the final grade. Statistical analysis was performed using student's T-test to compare the significant difference between the two student batches in Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS). Differences between student batches were considered to be statistically significant if p value was less than 0.05 ($p < 0.05$).

Results: In 2007, 8% of the students scored A as their final grade, 15% A-, 38% B+, 23% B and 15% B-. In 2008, there were 50% A, 30% A- and 20% B+ (A: 80 – 89%; A-: 75 – 79%; B+: 70 – 74%; B: 65 – 69%; B-: 60 – 64%). The statistical analysis shows that there were significant increase in the overall performance of students in 2008 when compared to 2007.

Conclusion: Overall there is a significant increase in the effectiveness of PBL method in teaching and learning of Drugs of Abuse course for the two student batches at $p < 0.05$.

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Exploring Chinese Patients' Perception Of Medical Students Training In Malaysian General Practice Clinics

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Background: Since the recommendation by General Medical Council to include community-based learning into undergraduate medical curriculum, students have been posted to General Practice for training. Although studies elsewhere have shown positive patients' perception and acceptance of students' presence, such studies are lacking in Malaysia. This pilot study aims to explore the perception, attitude and thinking of fee-paying private GP patients towards students' presence and teaching during their consultation.

Methods: A cross-sectional pilot survey was conducted in three urban GP clinics in Peninsular Malaysia by three trained Chinese-speaking researchers using structured questionnaire in English and Mandarin. Chinese patients above 18 years who had had no prior exposure to medical students during doctor visits were selected by convenient sampling. Analysis was done using only descriptive statistics in SPSS version 11.5 as it was exploratory.

Results: showed that 66 out of the 76 patients selected (86.8%) did not mind medical students' presence during their consultation. Only 22.4% felt that students' presence violated their privacy. Although 59.2 % would like to have prior notice of students' presence, only 55.3% required permission. 72.4% allowed physical examination by students but only 63.2% allowed procedures. 52.6% of patients minded students listening in when discussing sensitive issues. Females and younger patients are generally more apprehensive with physical examination and sensitive issues. Patients were nearly universal (96.1%) in thinking that medical students can learn from their cases but only 38.2% thought that their consultation benefited from medical students' presence.

Conclusion: Chinese patients in private GP clinics in Malaysia can accept medical students' presence with most thinking that students can benefit from studying their cases. Some hesitate having procedures done by students or discussing sensitive issues with doctors when students are present. Further studies should be conducted to verify these findings and to include other ethnic groups.

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Tangible Impact Of Curricular Reforms On Students' Perceptions Of Educational Environment

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Background: The quality of educational environment is the most important factor determining effective learning. The study of the curriculum is the study of environments that comprise, or that are linked with the curriculum. Melaka Manipal Medical College incorporated Problem Based Learning (PBL), Personal and Professional Development (PPD) component and Student Research Project (SRP) in the undergraduate medical curriculum.

Objective: To assess the impact of curricular reforms on students' perceptions of educational environment.

Method: Instrument used: The Dundee Ready Educational Environment Measure (DREEM, Maximum score 200). DREEM was administered to the batches after the completion of the first and second year courses. (n = 694) (Table 1) Results were analyzed using Independent samples t test and One way ANOVA. For all the results p value <0.05 is considered significant.

Table 1: The exposure (the curricular reforms) each group received

	BATCH 17	BATCH 18	BATCH 19
1 st year	Existing Curriculum	Existing Curriculum	Introduced PPD (PBL+PPD)
2 nd year	Existing Curriculum	Introduced PBL (PBL+SRP)	Introduced SRP

Results and Discussion: Batch 17 showed an improvement in DREEM subscales, Students' Perception of Teachers (SPT), Students' Perceptions of Academic Atmosphere (SPA) & Students' Social and Self Perceptions (SSSP). Statistically significant decreases were found in students' perception of learning (SPL) for batch 18 and SPL, SPA & SSSP scores for batch 19. The results of the One Way ANOVA revealed a statistically significant decrease in all the subscales of DREEM in the second year for batch 19 when compared to batch 17. Overall DREEM scores were 116 – 126 which showed students' perceptions about the learning environment to be positive. Mean score of most of the items were between 2 and 3 which indicated the scope for further improvement.

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Self-Esteem And Social Skills: Perception Of Private Medical University Students

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Background: Self-esteem and social skills have shown to be significant personality variables in determining human behavior. Self-esteem transmits to how people feel about

themselves and how much they like themselves, especially when it comes to university students. Social skills are most often thought of as a set of skills that allow us to communicate, relate and socialize with others. This present study examines the level of self-esteem and perception of social skills among private medical university students in Malaysia.

Methods: The study sample consisted of 251 (132 females and 119 males) first-year undergraduate medical students. Level of self-esteem and perception of social skills were respectively measured using the Responsibility and Self-Esteem Questionnaire (RSEQ). Pearson Correlation Coefficient and Independent samples t-test were used to determine the significant difference between male and female medical students.

Results: The mean scores for self-esteem is 3.61 with a SD of 0.48 while for the social skills the values are 3.42 and 0.75 respectively. This indicates that students' ratings on their self-esteem and social skills are favorable. There is also moderate positive correlation between self-esteem and social skill (r = 0.525). In other words, self-esteem explains about 27% variation in the social skills of the students. Comparison for gender revealed that there is no significant difference between the scores of male and female students with regard to self-esteem and social skill.

Conclusion: Moderate correlation between self-esteem and social skills shows that to enhance the social skills of medical students which is an important element for effective health care professionals, the university can formulate initiatives to boost their self-esteem while in training. Both male and female students show similar findings, thus a common program can be integrated in the medical curriculum.

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Student Perception Of Their Educational Environment: Can 2.5 Years Make A Difference?

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Background: At IMU the measurement of the educational environment in the phase 1 of the course is vital as it can be used to gauge their preparedness to transfer to their clinical years, reduce sources of stress and improve academic and support services. The Dundee Ready Education Environment Measure (DREEM) has been modified to the IMU-REEM questionnaire, and has been annually applied for all the programmes offered. This paper discusses the IMU REEM scores for the phase 1 medical sciences students in 2008, in comparison to the REEM scores of 2007 and 2006. The objective is to examine differences on student perception as they progress through phase 1 (2.5 years).

Methods: The survey forms were distributed to enrolled medical students from Semester 1 to 5 in December, 2008. Analysis was performed using the SPSS software version 15.

Student's t test was used to determine differences between two groups (ie. Sem 1 Vs Sem 3 for M2/07; Sem 2 Vs Sem 4 for M1/07; Sem 3 Vs Sem 5 for M2/06 cohorts) whilst ANOVA was used to determine the differences between the average of each domain score for various semesters.

Results: The total average score achieved for 2008 was 114.38 (95% confidence interval of 112.26 to 116.50), indicating more positive than negative perception. Semester 1 have the highest total IMU-REEM score compared to other cohorts with significant difference between the average score for all domains (perception of learning, teachers, atmosphere and social self perception) except students' academic self-perception. The two lowest total REEM scores amongst the 5 cohorts are in Semester 2 and in Semester 3. The current IMU-REEM scores were compared to the previous scores obtain in 2006 and 2007 for each cohort. Analysis on each domain score in 2008 indicates the semester 5 cohort has a significant difference in perception of learning whereas the semester 4 cohort had no significant difference in all the

domains compared to a year ago. Semester 3 students show a significant decrease in 3 out of the 5 domains, which are perceptions of learning, atmosphere and social self perception as their progressed from semester 1 to semester 3. However for all the 3 cohorts, the total REEM scores were in the more positive than negative range as throughout their phase 1 years. The qualitative data obtained from the IMU REEM questionnaire show students from all cohorts commenting more on the campus physical environment, IT and library facilities.

Conclusion: Student domain scores did vary amongst semesters and within cohorts. However whether these scores increase, decrease or remain relatively unchanged depends much on the cohort of students and the educational environment at the time of survey. Hence while the IMU-REEM is suitable as general diagnostic tool in phase 1, it may not be enough to measure actual student progress in terms of educational outcomes like self directed learning within the 2.5 years.