

Orientation Programme : A student's perspective

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Abstract: Medical post graduation is a phase of training when a graduate is expected to acquire skills under supervision, in a particular speciality, so that he/she may become capable of mastering & functioning independently. Often, new graduates start with this period without any clear aim. An Orientation programme was conducted by MEU, AIMS faculty members & administrators for the first year medical post graduates to familiarize them with their clinical tasks & also their role in the community. The programme presented the students with various learning experiences, aimed at developing knowledge, skills & attitudes required for a medical profession, by including interactive lectures & group discussions. Feedback using a structured self completion questionnaire & during the informal group discussions were collected to assess & evaluate if they found the sessions relevant & useful. The evaluation also included a pre-test & post-test questionnaire. Data was analysed for probability of responses on a Likerts scale. All participants felt that the workshop was successful in achieving its objectives. The post-test score represented a significant improvement over the pre-test score. Students' view regarding the factors that facilitated their learning were good topics, good presentations, experienced speakers & inter-active faculty. Current medical education should make the transition of graduates from students to practising doctors smoother. A brief & structural Orientation programme lay a strong foundation for better understanding & learning of post graduate courses & should be integrated into the medical curriculum.

Key words: medical education, medical post graduates, medical profession, Orientation programme

I. Introduction

The Medical Council of India (MCI) is in process of implementing new regulations, namely conducting Orientation programmes compulsorily for the medical students at various levels. These programmes are being restructured to make students more participatory & competent. The Orientation programme should also focus on the development of behavioural competency, methods to familiarize students to campus environment, learning techniques & ways to facilitate the stress-coping strategies for the students. (1)

To familiarize the new post graduates with their tasks in wards/departments & their role in the community, we conducted an Orientation programme. *The objectives were to –* (i) to gain academic skills & knowledge about the PG curriculum; (ii) appreciate the need for developing good communication skills for better doctor-patient interaction; (iii) identify the ethical & medico legal issues involved in patient care; (iii) identify their role in a multidisciplinary team;(iv) develop a sense of belonging, & accountability ; (v) to know the roles & responsibilities as a medical PG.

The aim was to sensitize the potential learners with essential knowledge which will lay a sound foundation for their pursuit of learning across the post-graduate programme and also in their career of medicine. This article highlights the salient features of such a Orientation program implemented in our institute and the feedback of students regarding the programme.

We then collected feedback to ascertain their perceptions regarding the need & relevance of such training.

II. Methodology –

Medical education department in association with AIMS conducted a one day PG Orientation programme for first year fresher's from various departments. Fifty seven 1st year PG's participated in this programme. Adult learning principles were used to involve the PG's in a highly interactive process, in a non-threatening environment. The faculty helped to clear any doubts & misconceptions. During the last session, open-house discussion focussed on the written & verbal feedback from the participants. The pre & post test questionnaire was developed with a view to assess their prior theoretical knowledge on the objectives stated and what they have gained after the scientific sessions. The students were also asked to express their opinion on how the programme helped them to understand the various skills and the attributes required by a

medical professional. Questionnaire was designed to judge the perception of students regarding the need and relevance of course content. The data was analysed.

Statistical analysis –

Responses for items on the Likerts scale were categorised into 5 groups : ‘strongly disagree/disagree/neutral/agree/strongly agree’. Data were analysed for probability of responses on pentanomial model.

III. Results -

Students feedback was essentially based on the responses of the two sub-groups of the feedback, with the headings ‘Expectation of students from the programme’ & ‘Usefulness of attending the PG Orientation programme’. All values are in percentage.(Table 1,Figure 1 & 2)

Student Feedback (Table 1)

Expectation of students from the programme					
	Strongly disagree(%)	Disagree(%)	Neutral(%)	Agree(%)	Strongly agree(%)
1a. Meet academic staff	3.7	11.11	20.37	53.7	9.25
1b. Meet fellow students	1.85	0	11.11	42.59	44.44
1c. Gain academic skills	3.7	5.55	20.37	46.29	24.07
1d. Be shown around the campus	9.25	12.96	25.92	27.77	22.22
1e. Gain knowledge about curriculum	0	0	3.7	59.25	37.03
1f. To know my roles and responsibilities as PG	0	0	3.7	50	46.29
Usefulness of attending the PG Orientation programme					
	Strongly disagree(%)	Disagree(%)	Neutral(%)	Agree(%)	Strongly agree(%)
2a. Meet academic staff	7.4	11.11	31.48	33.33	16.67
2b. Meet fellow students	0	0	9.25	40.74	50
2c. Identify academic skills for success	1.85	0	14.81	50	31.48
2d. Find my way around the campus	16.66	18.51	18.51	35.18	9.25
2e. Gain knowledge about curriculum	0	0	9.25	53.7	37.03
2f. To know my roles and responsibilities as PG	0	0	5.55	48.14	3.7

Figure 1. Student feedback - Expectation of students from the programme

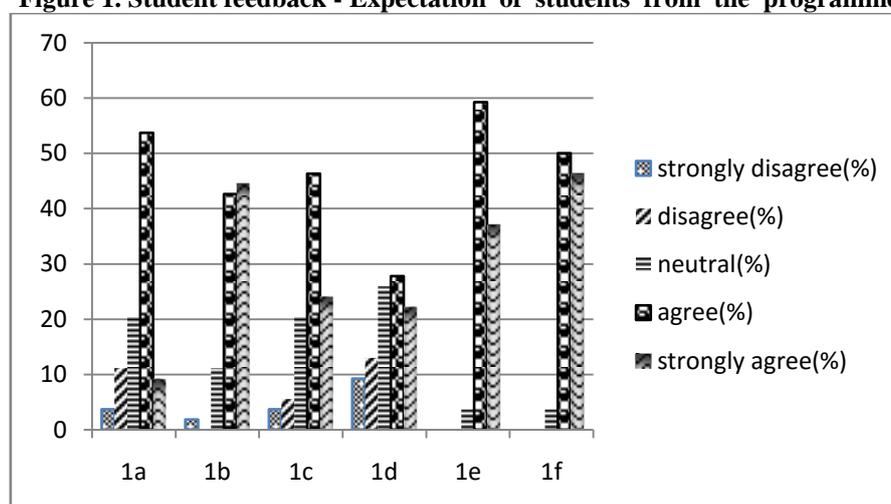
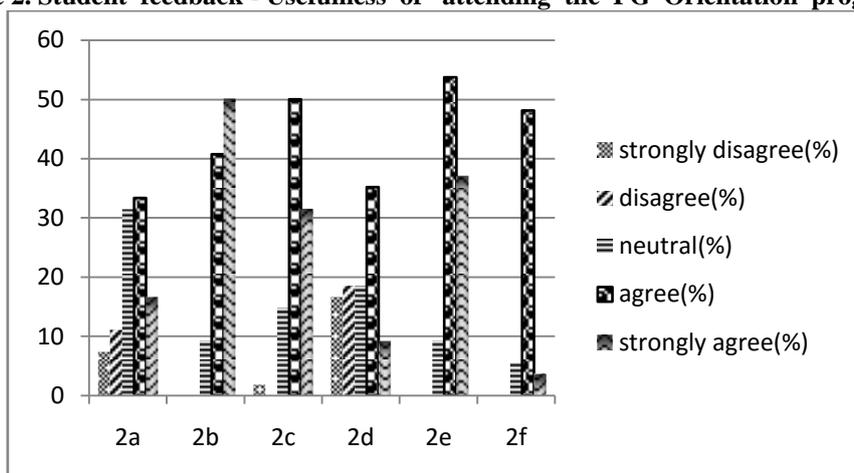


Figure 2. Student feedback - Usefulness of attending the PG Orientation programme

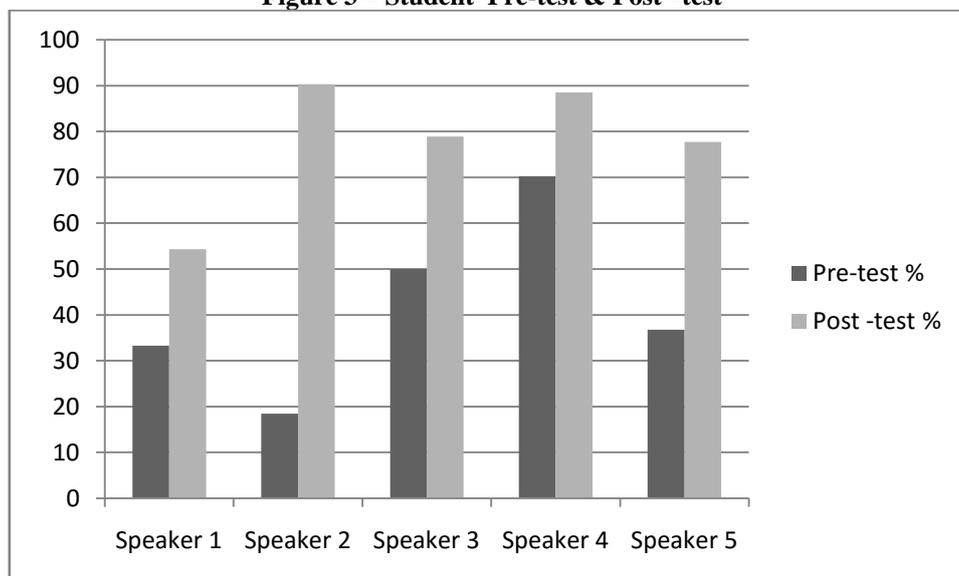


The pre & post tests are based on the criteria of knowledge gained before & after each scientific session, as designed by the respective subject experts by using different teaching-learning methods & media. All values are in percentage.(Table 2,Figure 3)

Students Pre-test & Post-test Table 2

	Pre-test	Post -test
	%	%
Speaker 1	33.3	54.3
Speaker 2	18.42	90.3
Speaker 3	50	78.9
Speaker 4	70.17	88.5
Speaker 5	36.8	77.7

Figure 3 – Student Pre-test & Post –test



The responses from the feedback questionnaires suggested that the workshop was successful in attaining its objectives (in Table 1, under heading ‘Expectation of students from the programme’ 59.25% ‘agree’ to ‘Gain knowledge about curriculum’). Further, in Table 1, under heading ‘Usefulness of attending the PG Orientation programme’ 53.7% ‘agree’ to ‘Gain knowledge about curriculum’ which ‘top the objectives’ set for this Orientation programme.

Students' view regarding the factors that facilitated their learning were good topics, good presentations, well-informed and experienced speakers. This was proved by the significant change observed in the percentage score of the respondents before (pre) & after (post) each session. Few, also have given suggestions to conduct more interactive sessions in future and also to take them around the campus so that they get familiarized with the environment sooner, which definitely will be inculcated into our future ventures.

IV. Discussion –

The academic feast of the Orientation programme was very enthusiastically accepted by the participants as their feedback was very encouraging. Most of the students had gained knowledge to a great extent in the entire topics included in the programme (Table 1 & 2).

Our study suggests that the participation of fresher PG's in an Orientation programme, conducted before their postings, significantly changes their knowledge and attitude towards their roles & responsibilities as a Medical post graduate (Table 1, Figure 1 & 2).

Majority of the students graded the Orientation Programme as 'agree' to 'Gain knowledge about curriculum' and none of the students felt 'disagree' or 'strongly disagree' to it (Table 1, Figure 2) and as per the written comments which was optional, all the students felt that the programme was useful.

With the advancement in medical education and efforts of MCI to make teaching programs more student-oriented, the medical colleges have now started organizing Orientation programmes at various levels. These programmes aim to familiarize the students with the campus environment, curriculum, and teaching programs, so as to help them to face the academic challenges. (1)

A literature search conducted on the Google search engine and Pubmed using key words, "Orientation Course", "Medical College", yielded very few published paper from India on the subject. A structured

Orientation programme would definitely help the students coming from very different learning environments to cope with the vast body of knowledge and skills required in the dynamic and rapidly changing healthcare system. (2)

Medical education in India has come a long way during the past half a century. The number of medical colleges has gone up from 30 at the time of Independence to over 300 and over 30,000 doctors graduate every year. The aim of professional education in health must be the production of a cadre of professionals who would have competence as well as motivation to serve the health needs of the country. Interactive sessions help to provide an informal environment for medical post graduates to raise questions, and hold discussions with their colleagues and teachers to allay their fears and anxieties; this makes for active participation, which is necessary, since the objectives of any orientation programme cannot be achieved unless the participants involve themselves actively. (3)

Although some medical colleges in India conduct such programmes for PG's, no evaluation has been reported. Our programme was held a few days after the start of the post graduation course. It was felt that it should be conducted before the PG's start their postings. A reorientation including subjective and objective assessment or evaluation during the course may be useful to assess the actual impact of the Orientation programme on medical education in the long term.

Medical education today does not prepare students to deal with the healthcare delivery systems. This lacuna within medical education creates challenges for physicians throughout their careers. Hence, there is a need to equip medical students in management skills as well. If the need to train students in management education is accepted, the next question is what should be taught and how it can be integrated with medical education. There are few, if any, opportunities in the existing curriculum. (4)

The MCI Regulation on Post Graduate Medical Education 2000, mentions acquisition of effective leadership as well as managerial skills required for assigned or chosen healthcare services as general objectives of postgraduate training. Institutions are advised to organize common teaching programmes for postgraduate students of all departments at institution/university level, possibly in collaboration with professional bodies/associations to meet these objectives. (4)

In response to these changing demands and priorities in healthcare delivery to the society, it is imperative that suitable revisions are made in the medical education so as to allow students to acquire skills they need to succeed not only as clinicians but also as leaders and managers. There is need of such programs to lay a strong foundation for the potential medical fraternity. Hence, we recommend that such programs should be conducted regularly in all the medical colleges and at all the levels possible.

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Declaration :

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