

Counselling: A supportive tool to enhance the academic performance of first year M.B.B.S. students

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Abstract

Introduction: The different types of issues affect academic performance of freshly admitted first year M.B.B.S. students negatively. The importance of academic guidance has been recognized and counselling sessions were implemented to help out first year M.B.B.S. students to cope up with the lengthy and tough academic syllabus.

Aims and objectives: To study the relationship and the effect of counselling method on the academic performance of first year M.B.B.S. students through students' perceptions.

Materials and Methods: Hundred second year freshly passed out M.B.B.S. students who underwent face to face individual interviews (counselling) with skilled faculty members of Department of Anatomy during their first M.B.B.S., were given questionnaires and the analysis was based on their feedback responses to the questions.

Results: 1. 98% students reported that counselling helped in their study planning; 2. 98% students agreed that counselling augmented their theory performance; 3. 95% students agreed that counselling enhanced their practical performance; 4. 94% students reported that counselling helped to improve their presentation skills in theory and Practicals; 5. 97% students opined that counselling helped to enhance their performance in university exam.

Conclusions: The individual counselling has a positive effect/impact on the academic performance of first year M.B.B.S. students.

Keywords: Academic syllabus, Counselling, Issues, Medical students, Questionnaire.

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Introduction

Medicine is one of the toughest and lengthiest courses in education system. So many efforts are being taken on the Medical Education Technology in order to improve the knowledge and professional skills of medical students. Many modern innovative techniques are being introduced in teaching and learning methods. But hardly any emphasis is being given on Counselling of medical students which has a dramatic positive impact on academic and professional performance of first year M.B.B.S. students. The freshly admitted first year M.B.B.S. students face adjustment difficulties like food issues, financial issues, culture issues, language and weather issues, relationship issues, concentration problems and depression. Suicidal tendencies are increasing day by day among medical students because of emotional and psychological difficulties. These issues affect their academic performance negatively. The importance of academic guidance has been recognized and counselling sessions were implemented to help out first year M.B.B.S. students to cope up with the lengthy and tough academic syllabus.

Hundred second year freshly passed out M.B.B.S. students who underwent face to face individual interviews (counselling) with skilled faculty members of Department of Anatomy during their first M.B.B.S., were given questionnaires and the analysis was based on their feedback responses to the questions. The present study aims to evaluate the influence/effect of counselling method on the academic performance of first year M.B.B.S. students through students' perceptions. The study also intended to assist the successful learners to augment their academic performance.

The individual counselling has a positive effect/impact on the academic performance of first year M.B.B.S. students.

Aims and Objectives

To study the relationship and the effect of counselling method on the academic performance of first year M.B.B.S. students through students' perceptions.

Materials and Methods

Questionnaire was framed by senior skilled faculties of the department who were experts in

the medical education technologies. It was validated by expert faculties from the other departments also. The questionnaire was based on 4 point Likert scale –Very much useful, to a larger extent, to some extent, not useful at all. It consisted of various domains of counselling such as academic, social and personal counselling. It included one open ended question also asking students' opinion or suggestion on counseling

method. Informed consent was taken from each and every student. Hundred second year freshly passed out M.B.B.S. students who underwent face to face individual interviews (counselling) with skilled faculty members of Department of Anatomy during their first M.B.B.S., were given questionnaires and 15-20 minutes were given to enter their feedback responses. The analysis was based on their responses to the questions.

Observations

Table 1:

S. No.	Questions	Very much useful	To a larger extent	To some extent	Not useful at all
1	Did counselling solve your language problem?	16	22	42	20
2	Did counselling help to solve your adjustment problems?	20	28	35	17
3	Did counselling solve your personal problems?	40	30	24	6
4	Did counselling help in time management?	22	20	42	16
5	Did counselling help in your study planning?	45	30	23	2
6	Did counselling improve your theory performance?	50	35	13	2
7	Did counselling improve your practical performance?	60	25	10	5
8	Did counselling improve your presentation skills in theory and practicals?	54	16	24	6
9	Was counselling useful to improve your performance in university exam?	72	16	9	3
10	Did counselling help to relieve your anxiety and depression?	29	28	31	12
11	Did counselling improve your understanding and knowledge related to the anatomy subject?	67	20	3	10
12	Did counselling improve your extra- curricular performance?	13	32	22	33
13	Did counselling help to increase your confidence level?	52	37	8	3
14	Mention its utility for forthcoming batches?	65	23	10	2
15	Comment on role of teachers as counsellors?	70	18	7	5
16	Give your suggestions/feedback?	It motivated, should be confidential, should be conducted for all students, sessions should be increased			

Results and Discussion

It was a trial method and preliminary study on the basis of students' feedback analysis. Medical students appreciated this counseling method. They commented that after counselling, they managed the perfect balance between the personal and professional life during limited time duration of first year M.B.B.S.

1. 80% students agreed that counselling solved their language problem,
2. 83% students opined that counselling helped to solve their adjustment problem,
3. 94% students reported that counselling helped to solve their personal problem,
4. 84% students agreed that counselling helped in their time management,
5. 98% students reported that counselling helped in their study planning,
6. 98% students agreed that counselling augmented their theory performance,
7. 95% students agreed that counselling enhanced their practical performance,
8. 94% students reported that counselling helped to improve their presentation skills in theory and practicals,
9. 97% students opined that counselling helped to enhance their performance in university exam,
10. 88% students reported that counselling helped to relieve their anxiety and depression,
11. 90% students agreed that counselling improved their understanding and knowledge related to the anatomy subject,
12. 67% students reported that counselling helped to improve their extra- curricular performance,
13. 97% students opined that counselling helped to increase their confidence level,
14. 98% students agreed that counselling is very much helpful for forthcoming batches,
15. 95% students agreed that the role of teachers as counsellors is very crucial for them,
16. Some students had given valuable suggestions to improve counselling method like counselling should be confidential; its sessions should be increased etc.

Natalie White Gaughf et al in their study reported that 59% of the faculty and 54% of the students agreed the importance of academic counselling in an institution. But they found that there is a little knowledge regarding the counselling procedure and referral among students and faculties. So only 35% of the students accessed counselling services.¹

In a study conducted by Sayer M et al, different causes of academic failure in undergraduate medical students are mentioned such as financial, domestic and emotional problems (often non- academic). They also reported that with faculty support, students can overcome these problems and succeed in academics. They also designed a remedial programme for students who face academic difficulties.²

Anne Marie Delaney in their study concluded that there is a significant impact on students' performance with satisfactory interaction in students and faculties.³

According to Umbach et al, faculty members play the most important role in student learning because faculty behaviors and attitudes affect students' profoundly.⁴

In a study conducted by Rose et al, they said that Mentors are role models, guides for personal and professional development of students. Mentors can support students to augment academic knowledge required to master curriculum content. They can also enhance professionalism, ethics, values and the art of medicine not learned from texts. In many cases, mentors also provide emotional support and encouragement.⁵

Renuka Devi et al explored the relationship and the effect of counselling on the academic performance of college students. They concluded that constructive support by faculties through individual counselling have a positive influence on the academic performance of students and the number of counselling sessions correlated positively with the academic performance.⁶

Table 2:

Studies	Usefulness of counselling method
Natalie White Gaughf et al (2013)	54%
Renuka Devi et al (2013)	93%
Present study	>90%

Conclusion

In the present study, the students responded positively regarding the utility of the counselling method. It means the individual counselling has a positive impact on the academic performance of first year M.B.B.S. students. This study suggests that the college administration should actively co-operate faculties and students interested in guidance and counselling. Inter-departmental faculty interaction is needed to implement academic counselling method in the

institute. Definitely, faculty's role facilitates enhancement in academic and professional skills of medical students. Administrators should include counselling programmes regularly in routine time tables. Institutions should consider these suggestions to develop and implement counselling programmes for medical students.

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