

Assessment of Perception of New Entrant MBBS Students about Anatomy as a Medical Subject

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Research Article

Abstract: The corpus of knowledge in the subject of anatomy forms the basis of future clinical courses and specialities. Therefore, it is unimaginable to make a good and sound medical professional without adequate mastery of Anatomy among other basic sciences. The present study on medical students from two college of the State of West Bengal reflects the perception of the subjects' clearly. This also shows some of the main reasons for poor performance in the subject of anatomy. Research activities in anatomy along with allied subjects (surgical science, radiology, forensic osteology, forensic anthropology, human identification) should be encouraged. Time allocated to teaching gross anatomy in medical courses should be increased effectively.

Keywords: Anatomy, perception of student, curriculum. Medical education

Introduction

The subject of Anatomy is taught in the first year of the medical curriculum and it is considered a major speciality in the first professional examination of all Indian universities. It is also taught as a main subject to the students of paramedical courses. It is a common among teachers of anatomy in India as well as abroad to admit the gradual decline in the standard of learning and performance of medical students in this important basic medical subject. Some studies argue that In India, lack of job opportunities and adequate research facilities limits the uptake of anatomy as a career option [1]. Often this may not be true [2] but the questions raised [3] are worth examining. The corpus of knowledge in the subject of anatomy forms the basis of future clinical courses and specialities. Therefore, it is unimaginable to make a good and sound medical professional without adequate mastery of Anatomy among other basic sciences. Be it pathology, forensic medicine, clinical medicine or the surgical sciences the anatomical basis of medical science remains the bedrock of knowledge and application. Immediately after passing the first professional examination, the

students are exposed to the applied aspect of anatomy in the form of histology [4] (histopathology), osteology (forensic osteology) and anthropology, (determination of sex, age and stature from human remains [5,6,7,8,9,10] and early integrated clinical classes. It needs to be examined why the students appear to perform well below their capacity in this subject though the importance attached to the specialty is overwhelming [11, 12, 13]. The present study was designed to identify students' perception regarding anatomy as a subject for medical curriculum, the cause of poor performance in anatomy and find out the remedies thereof.

Materials and Method

This descriptive observational study was conducted on 100 first year MBBS students of each of two Medical Colleges namely Mednipur medical college Mednipur and Burdwan Medical College Burdwan WB. The total sample was 200. A predesigned and pretested questionnaire was used to record the findings. Several structured questions were asked to the students and the investigators noted their responses to those. The responses were confidential and no chance of identification of the students was allowed by complete blinding from the investigators. Data was analyzed using Statcalc Software for windows. The following items given in the table below were included in the questions.

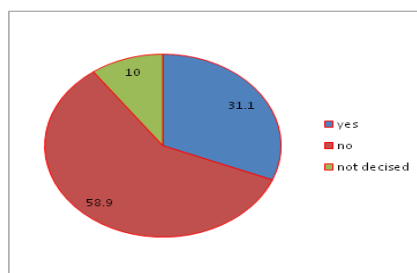
- How do you rate anatomy as a subject.
- Is nine months of teaching adequate?
- Do you face language problem in understanding?
- Do you benefit from notes and private coaching?
- Do you find the syllabus frightening?
- Will you choose anatomy as a career option?

Table 1

Number of students	Male	Female
190	106[55.8%]	84[44.2%]

Table 2

Structured Queries and Response	Number	Percentage	
How do you rate anatomy as a subject	Good	104	54.7
	Very interesting	34	17.8
	Interesting	32	16.8
	Dislike	11	5.7
	No comments	9	4.7
Is nine months of teaching adequate	Yes	18	9.4
	No	172	90.6
Do you face language problem in understanding	Yes	48	25.3
	No	142	74.7
Do you benefit from notes and private coaching	Yes	17	8.9
	No	52	27.8
	Never thought	121	63.8
Do you find the syllabus frightening	Yes	62	32.6
	No	128	67.4
Will you choose anatomy as a career option	Yes	59	31.1
	No	112	58.9
	Not yet decided	19	10.0

**Graph 1:** Chart showing Percentage of students choosing anatomy as career

Results

Of the 200 students in the sample of 190 students completed and returned the questionnaire resulting in 95% response rate. It was seen that of those 190 student responders, 106 were male and 84 were female. [Table1]. The response of the students (pooled sample) is seen from table number 2. It was seen that 54% of the sample of students rated the subject as good while 17.8% found it very interesting. Only 11 students (5.7%) disclosed their dislike. 90.6 % found nine months of teaching inadequate. Forty-eight (25.3%) faced language problem in understanding the subject in classroom teaching. Benefit from notes and private coaching was not supported by 27.8% whereas 121(63.8%) did not think about such things. 67.4 percentage did not find the syllabus frightening. Only 31.1 % said that that they would like to you choose anatomy as a career option [graph -1].

Discussion

Several previous studies have rated the clinical relevance of anatomy very high [1,3]. The present study designed to identify students' perception regarding anatomy as a subject for medical curriculum, also showed that the subject was good while 17.8% found it very interesting. This is in agreement with those works [1, 2, 3, 12, 13]. As

far as the duration of teaching of the subject in medical curriculum is concerned, effectively nine months is considered inadequate by 90.6% of the students. This requires close examination and more time needs to be devote to the subject while designing the course structure. In Indian medical colleges, the language of instruction is English. English is not the mother language of a sizeable number of students in the present series. The study showed that about one fourth found it difficult due to language problem. 67.4 % did not find the subject frightening. This is strikingly different from earlier results where 60% students felt that it is a difficult subject [1]. Students also did not support popular notes and private coaching. Regarding anatomy as a career option, only 31.1 % responded that they would like to you choose anatomy if given the chance [graph-1]. This is interestingly greater than another previous study from Gujarat State of India [] where 30% were in favour of Anatomy.

Conclusions

We conclude that the present study on medical students from two college of the State of West Bengal reflects the perception of the subjects' clearly. This also shows some of the main reasons for poor performance in the subject of anatomy. Some of these students have excellent result

in higher secondary level. Language and communication need to be taken seriously while considering the remedial measures. Professional career in anatomy should be made more attractive and interesting. Research activities in anatomy along with allied subjects (surgical science, radiology, forensic osteology, forensic anthropology, human identification) should be encouraged. Time allocated to teaching gross anatomy in medical courses should be increased effectively.

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