ORIGINAL ARTICLE

Our Lectures: What do the Students Think?

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ABSTRACT

Objective: The objective of the study was to reveal the perceptions and experience of our students regarding the lectures taken in our medical school.

Study Design: It was a cross-sectional descriptive study.

Place and Duration of Study: This study was conducted among second year MBBS students of Islamic International Medical College.

Materials and Methods: A questionnaire was developed, validated by piloting among faculty members and then was distributed to the students of MBBS year 2 from June to July 2013.

Results: The response rate was 100 %. Questions were grouped under various headings and categorization was done (i.e., Excellent, Very Good, Good, Fair and poor) according to responses. Lecture as an instructional strategy and the presentation of lectures was regarded as "Good" by 39% and 42 % of students respectively.36% of students commented the Multimedia preparation of lectures as "very good". Only 23% of students have mostly gone through the learning outcomes of a lecture before coming to attend it.

Conclusion: Most of the students regarded lectures as a good instructional strategy. Students were also satisfied with the Multimedia presentations and delivery of lectures.

Key words: *Perception, Experience, Lectures.*

Introduction

One of the oldest forms of teaching is lecturing. They have a centuries long history.[1] Lectures are an efficient way of knowledge and concepts to large groups. They can be used to stimulate interest, explain difficult concepts using examples, images, flowcharts etc. They provide core knowledge and direct students learning.[2]

In recent years, usefulness of lectures as an instructional strategy has been questioned. Lectures are not considered an effective way of teaching/Learning due to many reasons. The most important being one way didactic teaching. Another reason is that students do not actively process the knowledge and just become passive learners of the information presented to them. So the students have little opportunity to process the knowledge.[3] Still with all the drawbacks, owing to its utility, they are going to stay in our curriculum .Their utility lies as they are economical and convey information to a large group of learners in a very short time.[4] In our medical college, apart from lectures, we have got multiple teaching strategies to deliver cognitive information to our medical students like Case Based Discussions, Problem based learning etc. We conducted this study in our medical college to know the experience of students about their lectures. The aim was to get students' perception and their experience about lectures as instructional strategy. We also wanted to know their view about whether our Lecturers come well prepared for the lectures or not. The question was also asked about the multimedia presentation used in the lectures. They were asked regarding the students preparation for the lectures; whether they knew the topic or the learning outcomes beforehand or not. They were also asked their view whether the number of the lectures should be increased or not.

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Materials and Methods

It was a Cross sectional Descriptive study. A questionnaire was developed based on the above questions. The questionnaire was validated after piloting by circulating among five Senior Faculty Members. The questionnaire was then distributed to students of 2nd year MBBS (Class of 2016). The questionnaire is annexed at the end. There were Sixty students in that class (n=60). The responses to each of the question were taken against a Likert scale (Strongly disagree =1, while strongly agree =5). 'Neither agree nor disagree' option was not counted. The responses were then categorized as excellent, very good, good, fair and poor if the sum of the responses were 21-25, 16-20, 11-15, 6-10, and 1-5 respectively. The results were finally analyzed using

Microsoft Excel 2007.

Results

The result gathered after this study is being described here:

I. Lecture as an instructional strategy

Under this heading five questions were asked. The questions were (1) whether an individual student regards lecture as the best teaching modality, (2) whether lectures were helpful in understanding difficult concepts, (3) whether the lectures were more useful than SGD and PBL to gain knowledge and understanding difficult concepts. Finally, whether the lectures help them in solving real life problems.

The sum of the responses against the likert scale by individual student could range from 1 to 25 for the above five questions. We categorized the cumulative response to this group of questions, from an individual students as poor (sum responses 1-5), Fair (sum responses 6-10), likewise Good, very good, excellent the sum responses being 11-15, 16-20 or 21-25 respectively.

The results , as shown in table I , revealed that for the sub questions as regards their perception: Lecture as an instructional strategy, it was responded as Excellent, very good, good, fair and poor by 8 %, 15%, 38%, 35%, and 3% of students respectively.

Table I: Students' Response towards Lecture as an Instructional Strategy

Categories	Total of responses	No of students	Percentage
Excellent	21-25	5	8.33
Very Good	16-20	9	15
Good	11-15	23	38.33
Fair	6-10	21	35
Poor	1-5	2	3.33

II. Multimedia/Power Point presentation in Lectures:

Second group of questions (from question 6-10) were about Multimedia presentation in Lectures. In this group their opinion was taken about the suitability of multimedia presentation. They were asked whether learning outcomes were stated at the start of the presentation. They were also asked whether flowcharts and diagrams were liberally used or not and whether the topic was summarized at the end or not. For questions 6-10: the sum of the responses, against the likert scale, could range from 1 to 25.The cumulative response to this questions was categorized as poor (sum of responses = 1-5), Fair (sum responses= 6-10), likewise Good, very good, excellent (11-15, 16-20 or 21-25 respectively).The results, as shown in table II , revealed that adequacy of multimedia presentation was regarded as Excellent, very good, good, fair and poor by 18% ,37, 30, 13 and 1.6 % of students respectively.

Table II: Students' Response towards use of Multimedia during Lectures

Categories	Total of responses	No of students	Percentage
Excellent	21-25	11	18.3
Very Good	16-20	22	36.6
Good	11-15	18	30
Fair	6-10	8	13.3
Poor	1-5	1	1.6

III. Teachers Methodology of Lectures' Delivery

Third group of questions (from question 11 -17) was about teachers' delivery of Lectures. They were asked whether teachers' enthusiasm, their grasp of the topic presented while they came to their class for a Lecture. They were also asked whether the teachers starting their lecture activated students' prior knowledge so that the students do not feel any knowledge gap. Questions were asked about the lecturer and students interaction. In this context they were inquired about the behavior of the teacher if he/she asks a question and the student does not have the answer. At the end of this section they were asked what do they feel whether the lecture is one way teaching or seems like a two way discussion.

The sum of the answers were categorized in a similar fashion as for the previous section and mentioned above. The results, as shown in table III, revealed in the students view the delivery of lecture by the teachers was good, Very good, Fair, Excellent and poor (42%, 32%, 18%, 5%, and 3% respectively).

Table III: Students' Response towards lecturing Styles

Categories	Total of responses	No of students	Percentage
Excellent	21-25	11	18.3
Very Good	16-20	22	36.6
Good	11-15	18	30
Fair	6-10	8	13.3
Poor	1-5	1	1.6

IV. The Students Approach to Lectures:

The fourth section (question No. 18-22) was about the students' approach to the lectures. In this section they were asked: whether they as an individual knew the topic beforehand, whether before coming to the lecture they have gone through the learning outcomes of the lecture. They were also asked whether attending a lecture increases their interest in the topic to study more. They were asked whether the lectures elaborated the topic to an extent that the understanding becomes clear.

Finally in this section they were asked whether they came to lectures only for attendance otherwise they feel no attraction in the lectures.

The sum of the responses against the likert scale by individual student could range from 1 to 25 for the above five questions. Again, we categorized the cumulative response to this group of questions, from an individual students as poor (sum responses 1-5), Fair (sum responses 6-10), likewise Good, very good, excellent the sum responses being 11-15, 16-20 or 21-25 respectively).

The analysis of result, as shown in table IV, showed that the students approach to lectures was Good (53%), Fair (25%), Very Good (10%), Poor (7%), and Excellent (5%).

Table IV: Students' approach towards Lectures

Categories	Total of responses	No of students	Percentage
Excellent	21-25	3	5
Very Good	16-20	6	10
Good	11-15	32	53.3
Fair	6-10	15	25
Poor	1-5	4	6.6

V. Students View about Number of Lectures:

In the last question students opinion was taken whether the number of Lectures in the curriculum was deficient and needed to be increased. As shown in Figure 1, although less than 1/3rd of the students were unclear (30%), 40% agreed (strongly agreed =16.6%, Agreed = 23.3%, total = 40%) while another 30% disagreed (15% strongly disagreed, 15% disagreed).

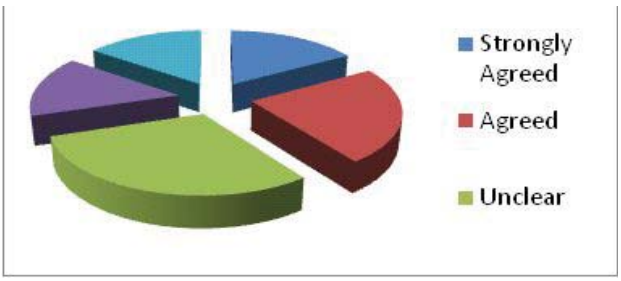

Fig 1: Students view about the number of lectures

Discussion

The results of an Indian study on perception of students regarding lectu6res show that the lectures are essential for the undergraduate medical education.[5] There are many benefits of lectures the most important being economical, time and space wise. A Single Lecturer can interact with a class to convey information. Since the major learning is still through lectures it seemed imperative to seek students view point through lecture.

Students' perception about lectures has been sought before in different studies.

In one study, 74% students did not consider lecturing sessions useful.[6] In another study didactic lecture was least preferred by medical students.[7] The lectures are often quoted by medical students as boring.[8] This was a reason of not attending the lecture.[9] We wanted to know our students view point regarding lectures since they convey about half of cognitive information. Taking students feed-back is always helpful since it helps to improve the curriculum.

In our study, regarding “lectures as a teaching modality” the students who regarded it excellent were as low as those who regarded it as poor (8 and 3% respectively), the majority, however, regarded the lectures as good, fair or very good instructional strategy (38%, 35% , 15% respectively). In another study about 20% students regarded lecture as boring and lecture schedule tiring.[10]

Since multimedia design significantly effects the learning of medical students[11], we asked the students view the questions regarding the suitability of style and content of Multimedia presentation in our lectures 36 % regarded them as very good.

Teachers' style of lecture is very important. About 1/3rd of students in a study mentioned 'better lectures' to be the source of improving examination

results.[12] As Shown by Miller and McNear in their study, when students attend a lecture which is more engaging then on an average their performance in the exams improve.[13]We asked our students whether the teachers used principles of adult learning or not. This was assessed by asking whether students prior knowledge was activated or not, for example, which remains a useful tool to start a lecture.[14] Majority of the responses to these questions came under the category of 'Very Good' or 'Good' (31.6% and 41.6% respectively).

It is suggested that if the students have some knowledge of the content before coming to lecture this will increase their understanding. Moravec and colleagues found that pre-class assignments resulted in increased learning.[15] Dobson used online quizzes before a lecture to engage students in learning and think critically about the course content. This increased the learning significantly in the group.[16]We just asked the students whether they knew the learning outcomes before coming to the class or not or at least if knew the topic before hand.36% of the students that they sometimes know the learning outcomes beforehand, while only 6 % of students always knew the learning outcomes before coming to attend a lecture. It seems important to mention here that all of the students in our institute are issued with a Module Guide before the start of module. This module guide contains the learning outcomes of the upcoming lectures.

Finally the role of attendance marking is a major external motivatory factor to attend a lecture. In a study conducted 74% students mentioned teacher strictness in marking attendance as an influencing factor for attendance.[17] In our study when we asked the students if they come to the lectures merely for attendance otherwise they are least interested: 1/3rd students said it is never so while the remaining 2/3rd said it is sometimes, mostly or always so (15% ,21% and 8% respectively).

Conclusion

To conclude our study gives some insight about the students' perception regarding lectures while reflecting their own attitudes towards lectures. Most of the students regarded lectures as good instructional strategy.

This study reflects only one class at one time , so it seems important that further studies need to be conducted in the light of the current study so that a more substantial data is attained reflecting all the classes and college as a whole.

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