

Institutional Survey Of Student's Opinion For Tutorial Classes

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Abstract: Background & Objective: To know the student's opinion about the current tutorial classes held in department of pharmacology of HIMS Methodology: The study was conducted on 250, second professional students of HIMS attending pharmacology department. A validated questionnaire of 15 questions was prepared. Each question had 3-5 options and lastly about their suggestions and comments. Students were briefed about the study before giving them the feedback form. They were given sufficient time to fill the form and were asked not to reveal their identity for unbiased opinion. Results: 97% of students agreed that tutorial helps them in understanding the topic better. Majority of students (68%) will attend tutorial classes even if attendance is not compulsory. When asked about the environment during the tutorial, 72% of the respondents said that it is strict but interactive. Majority of students were in favour that tutorial's topic should run parallel with lecture topic and should be taken by postgraduate students only. When asked about the structure of tutorial, majority of students (52%) felt that discussing whole topic will help them most. Many students suggested that tutorials should be well planned, organized and cover difficult topics in pharmacology i.e General, ANS and CNS. Conclusion: Teaching is a novel teaching technique which enhances interest among students. With some modifications and suggestions we can enhance the effectiveness of our current tutorials. [Dwivedi S NJIRM 2015; 7(1):79-82]

Key Words: Tutorial, validated questionnaire form, feedback

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Introduction: The undergraduate teaching in pharmacology has always been a challenging task for medical teachers. Teaching in pharmacology takes place by way of didactic lectures, audio visual aid based lectures, integrated teaching, computer based learning and group tutorials. Tutorial is an important teaching-learning tool which helps learners enhance their intellectual, communication and social skills¹. It comprises a class in which one or more instructors provide intensive discussion on a particular topic. Tutorial classes for medical students are meant to develop and test their own ideas on a specific topic.

The small group tutorial encourages teacher - student interaction, questioning, discussion and cooperative working for deeper understanding of the subject material². Learning occurs through multiple interactions within the learning environment, especially when the students are encouraged and expected to think both critically and creatively³. Learning in tutorial classes is not one directional (teacher to student) but multi-directional, including other students, tutors, and professors. Responsibility for learning should be placed on the student, with the instructor's role shifting from lecturer to facilitator⁴. Keeping this into consideration, medical council of india has emphasized the need to promote an active small group learning methods so that student should be encouraged to learn in tutorials, through peer interactions⁵. Tutorial requires constant student preparation, attendance and participation and gives students the opportunity to learn from peers as

they work and negotiate with in teams⁶. In the department of pharmacology in HIMS, regular tutorials are held to improve student's understanding and performance.

The only direct scrutinizer of classroom teaching method is students. Research supports the viewpoint that a learner's experiences are invaluable for assessment of teaching methodology⁷. Students are thus a potential source of feedback regarding the present teaching method. This information from students is valuable to improve teaching performance and to provide a rational and equitable basis for teaching method. No matter how effective a particular teaching method is, it can be enhanced. Despite the clear value of using multiple sources of information, student feedback is the most beneficial, and the only source of information on teaching effectiveness. We adopt various methods in teaching curriculum to make it more effective. But on other hand we should also know whether our reforms are actually helping students in their understanding or not. In order to ensure a successful and sustainable curriculum development, regular feedback from students about their views is necessary. Through this study an attempt was made to illustrate the gap between the actual level and the reference level of our teaching method. This study intends to assess whether tutorial classes are actually supporting the curriculum goals and to find out reforms for betterment of tutorial classes.

Material and Methods: A cross-sectional questionnaire based study was conducted on second and third professional students who attended classes in pharmacology department of HIMS. Prior approval was taken from the institutional ethical committee. A validated questionnaire of 15 questions was prepared. Each question had 3-5 options and lastly about their suggestions and comments. First five questions basically focused to know the standard of current tutorial classes which were held in our department. Further question no. 6 to 13 are formulated in such a way to know some reforms which can be implicated for the betterment of tutorial classes. Last two questions are just to know the preference of study material for the preparation for their exams. Before giving the questionnaire to the students, they were briefed about the study. Students were asked not to reveal their identity in order to give unbiased opinion.

Statistical method – Descriptive statistics was used to analyse the data. Frequency was expressed in percentage and in pie chart form.

Results: For our study, we enrolled a total of 250 students. 97% of students agreed that tutorial helps them in understanding the topic better. Majority of students (68%) will attend tutorial classes even if attendance is not compulsory.

When asked about the environment during the tutorial, 72% of the respondents said that it is strict but interactive while 28% students said it is friendly and interactive. Majority of students (79%) pointed out that it is helpful for whole group while 21% said that only few students dominated the tutorial. When asked to comment on duration of tutorials, 63% opined that tutorials should be conducted for an hour. Majority of students were in favour that tutorial's topic should run parallel with lecture topic and should be taken by postgraduate students only because they feel it promotes bilateral discussion without hesitation. When asked about the structure of tutorial, majority of students (52%) felt that discussing whole topic will help them most. While 21% of students were in favour of PBQ based learning, 16% in favour of MCQ based learning and 11% in OSPE based learning.

Considering reference text books, an overwhelming majority of the students (65%) preferred Essentials of Medical Pharmacology by KD Tripathi as their book of choice, the 2nd most popular book in this category

being Handbook of Pharmacology by Tara Shanbag (24%), while 11% preferred Lippincott. In detail the results are expressed in Table no. 1.

Table 1: Students opinion about following questions

SN	Questions	Yes	No	Can't say
1.	Does tutorial helps you in understanding the topic better	97%	1%	2%
2.	Would you attend the tutorial even if attendance is not compulsory	68%	12%	20%
3.	Standard of teaching method in tutorial	Excellent-12% Good- 72% Average- 16% Poor- 0%		
4.	Environment of Tutorial sessions	Strict but interactive- 72% Friendly and interactive-28% Strict and non-interactive-0% Friendly but Non-interactive- 0%		
5.	Tutorial in a group	Helpful for whole group-79% Helps only few students in the group-20% Helps none-1% Wastage of time only		
6.	Reason for poor assessment in tutorial	Topic not prepared-lengthy/difficult-69% Hesitation in asking and answering queries-27% Other reasons – specify-4%		
7.	Which help you most in preparing your subject for exam	Tutorial-52% Regular test-32% Lecture notes-13% Self study-3%		
8.	Tutorial should be taken by	PG's only-71% Faculty only-2% Both-22%		
8.	Duration of tutorial	One hour-63% Less than one hour-33% More than one hour-4%		
9.	Which book you prefer for preparation of tutorials	K.D tripathi-65% Tara shanbag-24% Lippincott-11%		

Discussion: We were particularly interested in student's perspective of the overall usefulness of Tutorial classes. Evolution of teaching methods is an on-going process and a docent needs proper feedback from the students regarding their opinion on what is satisfactory and what needs improvement⁸. Research supports the viewpoint that a learner's experience is invaluable for assessment of teaching methodology⁹. Most students agreed that the tutorial helped them to prepare for the exam, rectify their knowledge and to understand the basics, as well as

depth of the subject. In the present study Students were asked to provide any comment on this type learning.

Some of the positive comments were as follows:

1. Tutorials should be held more frequently.
2. The two most difficult sections i.e ANS & general and CNS should be covered in tutorials.
3. Many times some easy topics are included which are already covered in integrated learning while difficult ones are left. Tutorials should be well planned, organized and cover difficult topics in pharmacology.
4. The tutorial topics should be precise focusing on difficult and important portion of the chapter.

A study done in past concluded from the student's view, the main characteristics of a good tutorial are that the tutors should: a) allowing enough time for discussion, b) accepting students as partners, c) refraining from interference and d) having expertise¹⁰.

A similar study was done by A.V Karve in which randomly selected 50 MBBS students gave their feedback on tutorial. In their study they found that Eighty-eight per cent of the respondents said it was necessary to have tutorials but, they also suggested that the topics be chosen mutually by the tutor and the students¹. A study compared the team based learning with conventional teaching method in which it was found that the performance of the students of the tutorial based learning group improved in individual sessions as well as the entire module as opposed to the Conventional teaching method¹¹. In another questionnaire based analytical study concluded that tutorials and group discussions more useful than lectures and seminars and suggested to cut short the duration of the lecture¹².

Although the tutorial topics are decided by the department, it is necessary to involve students in the process of topic selection. By doing so, difficult topics can be given special attention. These suggestions, based on feedback from students, should be kept in mind while planning and conducting tutorials for undergraduate students.

Conclusion: This study concludes that tutorial is a novel teaching method. It enhances interest among teachers and learners along with uniform and sustained delivery of knowledge. The suggestions obtained from the students, if addressed effectively, can improve their

learning and produce better health care professionals. This study reveals that the tutorials although improve topic wise knowledge but still some modifications are needed to excel them further. This study unveiled the deficiency in this method of teaching. Implementation of some positive and enthusiastic suggestions by students can make this teaching technique helpful for most of the students. After modification, we can plan another study to analyze whether these implications are actually helping students by testing their knowledge. For each institution that embarks on curriculum improvement, careful consideration of these issues is necessary to ensure better understanding.

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