

Competencies and readiness for internship among Jaffna graduates.

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Introduction

Undergraduate programme in the medical curriculum at the Faculty of Medicine, Jaffna is mainly based on traditional way of teaching and learning. Since the year 2008 there has been several attempts to modernize the curriculum into an outcome based curriculum. The outcomes of a Jaffna graduate are mainly based on self-reflection. This study was done mainly to assess whether the teaching and learning methods are focused on the outcomes of the Jaffna graduate.

Objectives

The study was done mainly to assess the strengths and deficiencies of our students, information seeking behavior, and the confidence level in critically appraising a research and to evaluate the competency level in clinical skills, communication skills, and readiness for personal development.

Methods

A prospective study was done on the 28th batch of students. A pretested self-administered questionnaire was administered and anonymity was maintained. This survey covered a range of competencies, including practical skill, ward routines, generic attributes, information seeking methods and research approach. The study period was from June to July 2011. Results were analyzed using SPSS-16. It was a self-funded study.

Results

Total 59 students (Response rate 100%) were assessed. In general, the students were confident on common clinical skill and ward routines. They practiced more than 20 times in IV insertion (adults), blood taking (adults), and giving IV drugs. None of the students attempted a lumbar puncture. Other practical procedure such as venipuncture in children and resuscitation were performed minimally (1-5times). Majority (39%) of the students referred text book as a first choice as reference. 52% of the students read less than five journals per month and none of the students read journals more than ten times per month. Majority of the students were confident in communicating with colleagues in difficult situations (84.3%), functioning as a team member (76.3%), independently finding ward procedures (59.3%), referring to seniors (81.4%) when needing help. They also showed confidence in managing own time on and off work (61.0%), working independently away from home (52.5%), increasing physical demand (54.2%) and handling advice and criticism (52.5%). They were not so confident in coping with additional tasks and decision-making skills. Frequency of browsing the internet for medically related topics was (40.7%), most of the students did it less than five times per month. 54.2% of the students needed a lot of guidance in appraising a research paper and no one was confident in appraising all types of research.

Conclusion

The graduates showed some skills in practical procedures and not so confident in decision making skills, coping with additional tasks and team work. The skill in research was not satisfactory even though their outcome has skills to conduct and report research. Assessing the students using this educational approach provided a clear picture of their strengths and weaknesses, and identified stages in their training where additional inputs were required.