

Learning Approaches among Medical Undergraduates and Pre-Intern Doctors of University of Sri Jayewardenepura

L.A. Induni¹, Niluka D.H.M¹, Madushika P.K.K¹, Deegodagamage Y.S¹, Wijesundara W.M.C.S¹, Edirisinghe EAST¹, Dissanayake PH¹, Yasawardene SG¹

Department of Anatomy, Faculty of Medical Sciences (FMS), University of Sri Jayewardenepura(USJP)¹

Background

Medical education is an ever evolving process. Gaining required knowledge, attitudes and skills within a stipulated period of time to become a competent doctor is a challenge. This study tested the hypothesis that learning approaches (deep, strategic, superficial) differ, among pre-clinical undergraduates and pre-interns.

Methods

Learning approaches of 138 medical undergraduates and pre-interns of University of Sri Jayewardenepura, were assessed using a validated self-administered ASSIST questionnaire. Data was analyzed using SPSS v-16 and Brown-Forsythe t test.

Results

From the total of 138 participants, 33.3% (46/138) were males and 66.6% (92/138) were females. The sample consisted of 77.5% (107/138) pre-clinical medical undergraduates and 22.5% (31/138) pre-interns.

Among participants, the predominant learning approach was Strategic approach (SA) 78.3% (108/138) while Deep approach (DA) was 15.2% (21/138) and Surface apathetic approach(SAA) was 6.5%(9/138).

Majority of pre-clinical undergraduates [77.6% (83/107)] followed SA, while 16.8% (18/107) were DA and 5.6% (3/107) had SAA. Similarly, majority of pre-interns [80.6% (25/31)] followed SA while DA and SAA learners were equally distributed [9.7% (3/31)].

Majority of males 69.6% (32/46) were SA learners and the rest were DA [21.7% (10/46)] and SAA [8.7% (4/46)] learners. Similarly, majority of females 82.6% (76/92) were SA learners and the rest were DA [12% (11/92)] and SAA [5.4% (5/92)] learners.

There was no significant statistical difference in learning approaches among pre-clinical and pre-intern groups.

Conclusions

Learning approaches of medical undergraduates have not significantly changed over a five year period of University education.

This needs to be addressed in a subsequent curriculum change.