LEARNING STYLES AMONG MEDICAL UNDERGRADUATES AND PRE-INTERN DOCTORS OF UNIVERSITY OF SRI JAYEWARDENEPURA

Indunil, L.A.\textsuperscript{1}, Madushika, P.K.K.\textsuperscript{1}, Deegodagamage, Y.S.\textsuperscript{1}, Niluka, D.H.M.\textsuperscript{1}, Wijesundara, W.M.C.S.\textsuperscript{1}, Edirisinghe, E.A.S.T.\textsuperscript{1}, Dissanayake, P.H., Yasawardene, S.G.\textsuperscript{1}

1. Department of Anatomy, Faculty of Medical Sciences, University of Sri Jayewardenepura.

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. The shift from teacher-centred and subject-based teaching to the interactive, problem-based, student-centred learning is an important concept in the medical education. This study evaluates the learning styles (visual, auditory, read/write and kinaesthetic-VARK) among medical undergraduates and pre-intern doctors.

Aims: To determine Learning styles among medical undergraduates and pre-intern doctors of University of Sri Jayewardenepura using VARK questionnaire

Methods: A validated self-administered VARK questionnaire was used to assess the learning styles among 238 Medical Undergraduates and Pre-intern doctors of University of Sri Jayewardenepura. Data was analysed using SPSS v-16 and Brown-Forsythe t test.

Results: The study sample consisted of 67.2\% (160/238) pre-clinical undergraduates and 32.8\% (78/238) pre-interns. The total male (72/238) to female (166/238) ratio was 1:2.3. Among participants, the majority 59.8\% (142/238) had multimodal learning styles. Majority of the pre-clinical undergraduates [62.2\% (100/160)] and pre-interns [57.4\% (48/78)] were multimodal learners. Similarly, majority of males 81.9\% (59/72) and females 80.1\% (133/166) were multimodal learners.

Multimodal learners had a combination of auditory-kinaesthetic 28\% (40/142) and verbal-kinaesthetic 26\% (37/142) learning styles. Among unimodal learners, majority had visual [30.2\% (29/96)] and auditory [28.6\% (27/96)] learning styles.

A statistically significant difference (p=0.02) was observed in reading/writing style among pre-clinical and pre-intern groups whereas other learning styles did not.

Conclusions: Multimodal learning is the popular learning style among medical undergraduates and pre-intern doctors of University of Sri Jayewardenepura. Comparable results were observed in local and international studies. Encouraging multimodal learning styles would help to develop a better undergraduate medical curriculum. The results suggest that, learning preferences of medical students need be verified prior to the start of their academic tasks.

Email of the Corresponding Author: Iaindunil@gmail.com