

Evaluation of the Orientation Program for Interns & Scopes for Further Improvement

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Abstract: ***Introduction:** Transitioning from medical student to intern is a challenging phase that necessitates structured guidance. We understand the difficulties and uncertainties that come with this transition. Internship orientation programs aim to equip interns with essential knowledge, skills, and confidence. This study evaluates the effectiveness of an internship orientation program and identifies areas for improvement. **Methods:** A mixed-methods study at a teaching hospital involved 82 interns, collecting quantitative data through structured feedback forms and qualitative insights from open-ended responses. The sample size was determined using Cochran's formula, which accounted for a 95% confidence interval and a 5% margin of error. The data were analyzed using SPSS. Participants had a mean age of 24 years (SD = 1.04); 74% were female, and 53% had previously attended a similar program. Most (62%) felt the orientation gave a clear overview of the hospital, while 23% were neutral and 15% disagreed. While topics such as professionalism and ethics were well-received, interns expressed a need for more comprehensive, hands-on training, including skill labs and emergency procedures. **Conclusion:** The orientation program, which was generally effective in familiarizing interns with hospital procedures and responsibilities, has several positive aspects. However, incorporating more interactive and skill-based training can further enhance the impact of the program.*

Keywords: Internship orientation, medical training, intern preparedness, medical education

1. Introduction

Upon completing their final professional examinations, medical students transition into internships. It is one of the most transformative yet challenging phases in medical education. They are placed in various departments for a year-long rigorous house surgeon training program, during which they participate in patient management and care. This shift from student to practitioner can be overwhelming without structured guidance. It has been observed that interns often lack direction and work aimlessly, unaware of expectations. This lack of knowledge and practical skills has led to medical errors and compromised patient safety [1]. Proactively identifying learning gaps and determining the competencies, roles, and responsibilities of interns is crucial to preventing the inadequacy from developing into significant challenges [2].

Internship orientation programs are designed to bridge this gap by providing essential knowledge, skills, and professional attitudes to ensure patient safety and effective clinical practice [3]. A well-structured orientation program should address key areas, including professional ethics, communication skills, infection control, medico-legal issues, and clinical responsibilities. It instills a positive attitude toward patient care and enhances their approach to the doctor-patient relationship as they assume more responsibilities. Effective training programs should be based on well-prepared needs assessments, which involve understanding the trainees and training environments [4]. One way to do this is by observing existing data and work samples, conducting peer reviews, and examining organizational reports. Assessing interns' current skills and competencies is crucial, as is identifying their learning needs

and preferences. It's essential to align orientation programs with the organization's strategic objectives and vision. Additionally, measuring the impact and satisfaction of existing programs is essential [5]. This study evaluates an existing orientation program at a Medical College to identify its strengths and areas for improvement. This research seeks not only to evaluate the program but also to propose actionable improvements. The findings underscore the need for more hands-on training and interactive methodologies, paving the way for a reimagined orientation framework that better equips future medical professionals for their critical roles.

2. Methods

This study employed a mixed-methods design at a teaching Medical College in southern Kerala over one month. The study population consisted of 81 interns selected through purposive sampling. The sample size was determined using Cochran's formula: $n = N \times Z^2 \times p(1-p) / (N-1) \times E^2 + Z^2 \times p \times p = 82$ where Z is the z-score (1.96 for a 95% confidence level), p is the estimated proportion (assumed to be 0.5 for maximum variability). E is the margin of error (0.05).

Based on this, the minimum required sample size was 82 interns. Data collection involved the use of structured feedback forms and semi-structured questionnaires. Quantitative data was analyzed using SPSS software, while qualitative insights were extracted from open-ended responses.

3. Results

3.1 Demographic Analysis

- Mean age: 24 years (SD=1.04)
- Age range: 22-28 years
- Gender distribution: 60 females (74%), 22 males (27%)
- Previous program attendance: 53% had attended similar programs, 47% had not

3.2 Feedback on the Orientation Program

- **Program clarity and structure:** 67% of interns agreed or strongly agreed that the program provided a clear overview of the hospital and its departments.
- **Organization and informativeness:** 72% rated the program as well-organized and informative.
- **Addressing concerns:** 62% agreed that their questions and concerns were effectively addressed.

Coverage of essential topics:

- **Professionalism and Ethics:** The topic of professionalism and ethics was generally well-received, with most participants agreeing that it was sufficiently addressed.
- **Rules and Responsibilities of Interns:** Most participants agree that the orientation program effectively covered the rules and responsibilities of interns, with a few neutral responses
- **Logbook Writing:** The majority of participants felt the program adequately addressed the topic of logbook writing, with minimal disagreement.
- **Infection Control Policies for Interns:** A substantial majority of respondents agreed that infection control policies were well covered during the orientation program.
- **Medico-legal Cases in Clinics:** Most participants agreed that the program provided a good overview of medico-legal cases in clinics, with some neutral responses.
- **Rational Considerations Before Ordering Diagnostic Workup:** The majority of participants felt that the program adequately addressed rational considerations before ordering diagnostic workups, with minimal disagreement.
- **Proper Prescription Writing:** Most participants felt that the program adequately covered proper prescription writing, with some neutral responses.
- **Pharmacovigilance & ADR Monitoring:** A majority of participants agreed that pharmacovigilance and ADR monitoring were well addressed during the orientation.
- **Communication Skills for Interns:** The program was generally seen as effective in covering communication skills for interns, with strong agreement among respondents.
- **Hospital Policies:** Most participants felt the program provided a sufficient overview of hospital policies, with minimal disagreement

3.3 Satisfaction and Suggestions for Improvement

The majority of participants expressed a positive sentiment towards the internship program, with the most common responses being "Good" and "Satisfied." However, a notable

portion had neutral responses or provided suggestions for improvement.

Interns expressed the need for:

- More hands-on skill labs and practical training
- Greater emphasis on emergency procedures (e.g., BLS, ACLS)
- Interactive training with mannequins for clinical skills
- Extended program duration for deeper topic coverage
- More real-world applications of theoretical concepts.

4. Discussion

The study highlights that while the orientation program successfully introduces interns to hospital protocols and expectations, it lacks sufficient practical components. This aligns with existing literature emphasizing the importance of interactive and experiential learning in medical training. Similar studies have found that structured orientation programs enhance intern confidence and reduce medical errors.

The inclusion of skill-based learning, such as simulation-based training and scenario-based discussions, can significantly enhance the program's effectiveness. Additionally, extending the duration and refining the content to focus on real-world applications will further improve interns' preparedness. Research suggests that programs incorporating hands-on learning improve clinical decision-making skills and overall competency in patient care.

5. Conclusion

The orientation program at this teaching Medical College is effective but requires improvements in hands-on training and interactive learning methodologies. Addressing these gaps can further enhance intern preparedness, ensuring better patient safety and healthcare delivery. Future studies should explore longitudinal assessments to determine the long-term impact of such orientation programs.

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