

# A Cross Sectional Observational Study on the Attitude of Medical Students about the Existing Curricular Pattern in Medical Education

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**Abstract:** ***Background:** There is general consensus to modify medical curriculum to make it more practical and application oriented. **Aim & Objective:** To evaluate the attitude of MBBS students towards medical curriculum and the changes they want in the curriculum **Methodology:** A semi structured questionnaire was designed and given to three consecutive batches of MBBS students and results obtained. **Results:** Majority of the students find the medical curriculum interesting but voluminous. They opine that social media is the major distractive factor from studies. They also feel it will be better if the final year is extended to 1 ½ years*

**Keywords:** medical curriculum, attitude, questionnaire, university marks, social media

## 1. Introduction

Medical education is prestigious one to pursue and also very difficult to navigate. Today it has been widely discussed all over the world that there should be a revamping of medical education so that it should be more practical and enable the graduates to be better clinicians. Medical Council of India is planning for many reforms. So it is intended to know the actual attitude of medical students towards their curriculum and the difficulties faced by them by a questionnaire based study

## 2. Literature Search

Medical schools are now in the midst of curricula redesign that will affect students who will graduate, complete residency training, and become practicing professionals in 2020 and beyond.<sup>1</sup>

The reasons quoted for this curricular redesign are enormous and continuous increase in the medical knowledge and emergence of newer trends in managing diseases. Curricular reforms to systematically address these issues and develop strategies to strengthen the medical education and health care system are needed so that Indian Medical Graduates match or better the international standards.<sup>2</sup> Technological advances has made the patient population more aware of existing treatment options. This increases the social pressures on the practising clinicians. The method students followed to enter into medical school is very different than the methods they have to adapt when doing medicine. There are lot of distractions for the students. To meet all these problems many curricular changes are proposed. It is

suggested to modify the curriculum with a foundation course for first 14 months (2 months orientation course and 12 months for I year); 12 months in 2<sup>nd</sup> year; 28 months in final year with 2 electives and 1 year in internship<sup>3</sup>

Before taking measures to modify the medical curriculum it will be better to know the problems faced by the students and their attitude towards those problems. So this questionnaire based study was done to meet that objective

### Aim

To evaluate the attitude of MBBS students towards medical curriculum and the changes they want to be done in the curriculum

**Type of Study:** A questionnaire based cross sectional observational study

**Study Group:** 3<sup>rd</sup> 4<sup>th</sup> year MBBS students and Interns of Madurai medical college (2010,2011, and 2012 batch students)

**Methodology:** After obtaining permission from the Institutional Ethical Committee and getting consent from students a questionnaire was given.

**Questionnaire:** A questionnaire of 10 questions was framed. The validation of questions is obtained from subject experts. The students were explained about the purpose of study and asked to answer all the questions. The results were tabulated and expressed as percentages. Total no of 226 response sheets were obtained.

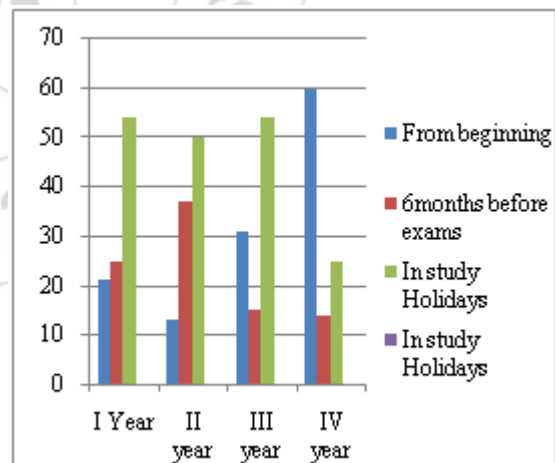
**Tick Appropriately 2010/2011/2012 Batch**

		Yes	No
1. Do you enjoy your curriculum?		91	9
2. Have you joined the course on your own interest?		88	12
3. Have you joined the course due to parental pressure?		10	90
4. Have you ever thought you made a wrong decision?		19	80
5. If so the reasons are			
a. There is too much of taxing		20	7
b. The portions are voluminous		54	9
c. The subjects are dry		27	7
6. When did you start serious reading			
	From beginning	6months before exams	In study Holidays
I Year	21	25	54
II year	13	37	50
III year	31	15	54
IV year	60	14	25
7. Do you feel you could have concentrated more on studies from the beginning?		63	28
8. What are the reasons for lack of concentration on studies?			
Everybody is relaxing		30	
Television		14	0.8
Social media		32	
Unable to cope up		14	3
Language problem		2	1
Every data available in internet; Need not strain to memorize all		9	1
9. Do you feel university marks are not reflecting your efforts		Yes	No
More than expected		28	
Less than expected		46	
Idiosyncrasies present		26	
10. Would you like any change in the present curriculum?			
1 <sup>st</sup> year may be extended for 1 1/2 years		11	2
Forensic medicine may be added to 3 <sup>rd</sup> year		13	1
3 <sup>rd</sup> year may be made into 6 months		20	1.5
Obstetrics and Paediatrics may be added in 3 <sup>rd</sup> year		16	2.4
Final year may be made into 1 1/2 years		29	2.7
No change needed in the present situation		12	

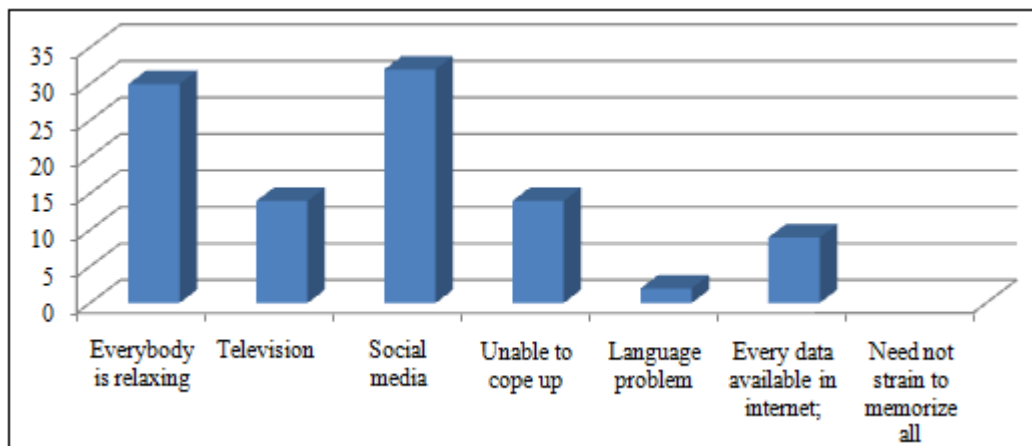
### 3. Discussion

This survey discusses the outlook of medical students about their curriculum and how they manage their study pressures are discussed. From the results it can be seen that the majority of the students joined the course on their own interest (88%) and only 10% has joined out of parental compulsion. It can also be seen that 91% of students enjoy their curriculum. It means even those who have joined without willingness also started liking the course after joining (3%) But 19% of students feel that they have made a wrong decision and the major reason they attribute is that the subjects are voluminous. Considering all these facts we can see 8% students who have joined out of their interest feel the decision may be wrong. So it can be considered that a semester system with lesser amount of portions can help to overcome this situation. Contemporary education, they argue, should shift its focus in favour of developing the learner's abilities<sup>4</sup>

It can be observed that around 50% of students start studying the subjects only in the study holidays in 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, and 3<sup>rd</sup> years. Only in final year 60% of students start studying from the beginning. At the same time 63% students feel it would have been better if they would have started from the beginning

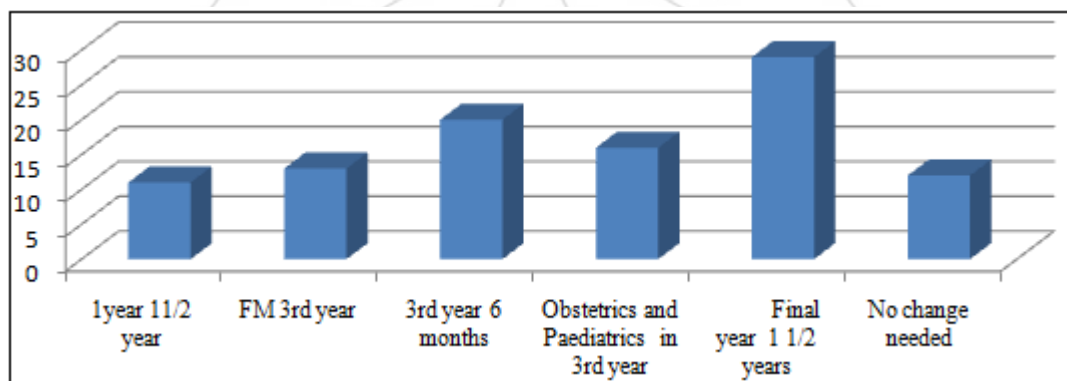


In medical colleges we get the creamy layer of students so the main reason for not performing well in the exams is mainly due to distractions rather than their inability. The students feel the one important reason for lack of continuous attention to studies is social media (32%) and another important reason is peer group influence; (30%) Language problem attributes to only 2% and availability of all data in internet by 9%.



So in addition to the routine internal assessment tests and viva regularly conducted by the departments we can also find some other methods to motivate the students to study from the beginning. We can arrange many seminars by the students and many interactive small group discussions can be arranged. And discussing their test performance individually will help them to improve their methodology in preparing for the next test

About the university marks 46% felt their university marks are less than their expectations. And about the change in curriculum 29% feels it will be better if the final year may be extended to 1 1/2 years and 20% feel that 3<sup>rd</sup> year may be shortened to 6 months.



Final year is short to prepare both for theory and clinical examinations. So majority of students prefer to increase the duration of final year to 1 1/2 years. International research has identified concern about the high levels of depression and anxiety among medical students attending either public or private medical schools<sup>5</sup>

So this questionnaire study help to identify the problems faced by the students after entering into medicine as a curriculum and also throw light into the attitudes of the students towards the problem

#### 4. Conclusion

From this study it can be observed that having exams with lesser portions as in semester system will lessen the burden of students. They should be motivated to study from the beginning. This can be done by arranging more no of seminars ;small group discussion in addition to routine lectures . A feed back about their test performance will help them to improve their methodology in preparing for the exams And the last one is considering to extend the duration of final year to 1 1/2 years.

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#### Author Profile



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