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Physiology Seminars: Perceptions of Undergraduate allied health sciences students

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ABSTRACT

Background: Seminar is reported as an effective method for improving communication skills and facilitates learning process. Seminars enable active participation, peer interaction, questioning the minds of students, handling of debatable issues, effective presentational skills, presenting opinions. **Aims and objectives:** The present study was aimed to observe the effectiveness of seminar in allied health science students through their own perceptions. **Materials and Methods**: The present cross sectional study was conducted in 60 male and female first year undergraduate allied health science students, after obtaining voluntary, written informed consent after explaining the need of the study and ensuring confidentiality. **Results:** Majority of the students expressed positive opinion about seminar. **Conclusion:** We recommend that seminar could be implemented successfully as a learning process. We also recommend further studies with involvement of multiple centers to support the implementation of seminars in the curriculum, to increase the academic performance of students in Physiology.

Key words: Seminars, Physiology, Allied Health sciences students.

Introduction

Seminar is reported as an effective method for improving communication skills and facilitates learning process. Seminars enable active participation, peer interaction, questioning the minds of students, handling of debatable issues, effective presentational skills, presenting opinions. [1] Health science students has to deal with more academic stress as the syllabus and number of subjects will be quite a lot when compared with their plus two. So these students need support from the faculty to overcome these difficulties in learning the subjects which are totally new to them. Self learning skills are most essential for health science students and seminar is a good platform to improve the self learning skills and also to improve the communication skills of students. Students can effectively interact with the faculty and their class mates in seminars to share the ideas which enhance their knowledge. The present study was aimed to observe the effectiveness of seminar in allied health science students through their own perceptions.

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Materials and Methods

The present cross sectional study was conducted at department of Physiology, Little Flower Institute of Medical sciences and Research, Angamaly, Kerala, India. 60 male and female first year undergraduate allied health science students were part of this study

after obtaining voluntary, written informed consent after explaining the need of the study and ensuring confidentiality. A series of seminars conducted to make sure that each student will get opportunity to present the allotted topic. The topic allotted in seminar was already covered in theory classes and most of the topics were from previous question papers of our university. For every 10 students one faculty member was appointed as mentor and PG students as co-mentors from department of physiology to help the undergraduates in preparation of seminar. All the topics, mentors and co-mentors were monitored regularly by Head of the department. Seminars were conducted at seminar hall of department of physiology every Thursday and Friday at sharp 9:00 am. Two seminars were planned in one day and 15 minutes time was allotted to each student (10 minutes presentation and 5 minutes for interaction). All students and faculty attended punctually to all seminars. After completion of all the seminars we have administered a standard questionnaire from literature and obtained perceptions of the students.

Questionnaire

Standard questionnaire containing ten questions was obtained from literature was administered separately to participants. Each question was to be given a score between 1 to 5, where 1 was 'Unsatisfactory', 2 was 'Satisfactory', 3 was 'Good', 4 was 'Excellent' and 5 was 'Outstanding' performance. The number of responses for each score against each question was tabulated. [2]

Statistical analysis

Data was analyzed by SPSS 20.0. Data was presented as frequency and percentage.

Results

Results are tabulated in table no 1. Majority of the students expressed positive opinion about seminar.

Table 1: Percentage responses of the students

S.No	Question	Maximum response received for	% of response
1	Your enthusiasm about the presentation was	Excellent	68
2	The faculty guides' help to you while preparing for this seminar was	Good	72
3	The respect shown by the faculty for your idea was	Excellent	70
4	The way you developed analytical and synthesis skills was	Good	62
5	Your coverage of the given topic was	Excellent	76
6	Your outline of the seminar was	Excellent	63
7	The audio-visual aids you used were	Good	61
8	The way you organized and timed your presentation was	Excellent	52
9	On the whole the seminar was	Good	82
10	At the end of the seminar your self-esteem was	Excellent	66

Discussion

It was reported that students preferred team based learning activities which are more joyful to them than regular classes.[3] It was reported that majority of students (68.8%) preferred a method that contained peer-led seminars and instructor-led lectures. These results may indicate that integration of active and passive learning into undergraduate courses may have greater benefitin terms of student preference and performance was seen in studies done by Minhas & others.[4] Studies by Sprujit A, Jaarsma AD, Hrynchak P, supported that seminars are an effective tool for health science students to develop self learning skills. For first year students especially, seminars give an opportunity for them to get to know other students in a learning environment and also to interact with teachers.[2] While preparing for seminars these students will discuss among themselves and with teachers, which make them masters in those topics and they will be surely benefited if the same topic appears in university question paper.[5] In the present study all the students actively participated and showed enthusiasm in learning the topics. Majority of students has perceived seminar as an effective tool for learning physiology.

Conclusion

We recommend that seminar could be implemented successfully as a learning process. We also recommend further studies with involvement of multiple centers to support the implementation of seminars in the curriculum, to increase the academic performance of students in Physiology.

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