

Opinions of Final Year and Interns about the Educational Environment and Medical Curriculum At Jazan University

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Abstract

Aim of this study: This study was aimed to assess the opinions of 6th years and interns subjects about the learning and program experience at College of Medicine, Jazan University (CMJU).

Subjects and methods: A total number of 66 (41 males, 26 females) subjects were involved in this study. The study was based on the quality of the Program Experience Survey, which is a part of a NCAAA self-administered questionnaire. The data were processed and analyzed by software program SPSS version 20.0.

Results: More than half of genders were satisfied with availability of adequate academic and career counseling for students throughout the program. Also, the study materials in the courses are up to date and useful; the program had improved their skills in developing abilities, communication, knowledge and technology using. The results were not significant between genders. Sixth year students were more satisfied related to learning, agreed regarding study materials in the courses are up to date and useful. Also they were agreed about the availability of resources. The program has improved their abilities to work effectively in groups item. A significance difference were detected among gender in items # 3 in support and among level of the subjects at items #5.

Conclusion: Majority of the participants were satisfied with availability of adequate academic and career counseling for students throughout the program. Sixth year students were more satisfied related to learning and support. They agreed regarding study materials, availability of resources when they need them. The program has improved their abilities to work effectively in groups. These data can serve as a baseline for longitudinal quality assessments of 6th year and graduated subjects at CMJU.

Keywords: program evaluation, final year medical students, graduated opinion, educational environment, college of medicine, Jazan University

I. Introduction

Saudi Arabia is a large country, occupies the major part of the Arabian Peninsula and has a population of approximately 24.5 million (1-2). Medical and dental care is provided largely by governmental institutions and, to a lesser extent, by private hospitals and clinics. The number of Saudi physicians is low and because of this, most of the medical practitioners in Saudi Arabia are non-Saudis from different parts of the world (3).

The medical colleges followed the same 6-year traditional curriculum, which consisted of 3 years of basic and medical science courses, 3 years of clinical training, followed by one year internship program, with minor differences between universities in the arrangement of disciplines and the subjects (2). The curriculum of the College of Medicine, Jazan University (CMJU) is an integrated system program which had three phases pre-med (1st year), Organ Systems (2nd, 3rd year) and clinical clerkship (4th, 5th, 6th year) which followed by a one year of internship.

The final-year teaching program concentrates on the clinical perspectives of medical care and is conducted by way of a string of lectures and interactive case discussions on health in hospitals, relaying of health-related information, social responsibilities of doctors, and how aspects of the clinical impact the outcome of clinical management (4).

The medical curricula must be effective and relevant as they are of fundamental importance in the training of general practitioner doctors (5), how effective or relevant they are may be a matter of perception (6). The weak implementation of curricula is known to result in unfavorable student perceptions (7). Furthermore, a positive perceptions are known to increase student motivation and, therefore, learning. Brooks, a constructivist, suggests that student opinion should be sought and valued (8). Thus, the frequent assessments of student perceptions are recommended and many agree that they are useful in the building of the curriculum, making them more acceptable and beneficial (9).

At the end of 2005, the Council of Higher Education approved the establishment of the National Commission for Academic Assessment and Accreditation (NCAAA), which is an independent body, financially and administratively, reporting to the Council of Higher Education (2). Its responsibilities include establishing standards, criteria and procedures for accreditation, reviewing and evaluating performance of existing and new institutions, accrediting institutions and programs, and supporting improvements in quality (10,11,12).

There are no reported studies that had evaluated the program curriculum. The Program Evaluation Survey (PES) is a survey organized by NCAAA to evaluate the final year and graduated doctors about their program. So the objective of this study was to evaluate the final year and graduated students about the quality of learning experiences at the College of Medicine, Jazan University. Also to compare between males and females from the same year. The learning experiences about their program were included; advice, help and support for learning; learning resources, facilities and teaching.

II. Subjects And Methods

This cross-sectional study was involved all the final year and the graduated subjects from both male and females, who were present in the main campus during the study period (April 2004). The subjects posted at other locations were excluded from the study. All participants in the study were informed about the objectives of the study, and the instrument used was explained by well-trained students who acted as research assistants. This study was conducted in College of Medicine, Jazan University (CMJU) at Jazan city. The city of Jazan is located in south-western part of Saudi Arabia between longitude 42 degrees 8, 43 degrees and attitudes 5, 16 degrees and 17 degrees. it's bounded to the north by Assir region and to the south by the state of Yemen and from the east Assir region and the state of Yemen, and the red sea to the west.

An ethical approval to conduct this study was obtained and approved from the Research and Ethics Committee at CMJU before starting distributions of the questionnaires and data collection.

A total of 66 subjects (41; male and 25; females) were included in this study. The questioners were distributed to students by their corresponding mails (online questioner) through the academic channels in the college. The questioner was included the consent for singeing by the participants. Convenience sampling method was used to enrolled final year and interns in the college.

The study was depending on the Program Evaluation Survey (PES), which is recommended by the National Commission for Academic Assessment and Accreditation. This survey is intended to be used at the time students have finished their program and or are about to graduate. It is recommended that distributed shortly before final year classes are finished so their opinion of the total program at that stage can be assessed. The questions include a number of items about the program itself together with some items deal with their life as a graduated at the institution, help, support and facilities for learning.

All the data were verified, arranged then entered into a Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) software program (version 20.1 SPSS, Chicago, Illinois, USA). Frequency distributions were obtained and descriptive statistics were calculated. Another level of data analysis was through calculating the means of the variables and Chi-square. The values of P Value P of < 0.05 were considered as significant.

III. Results

A total number of 66 subjects; (males 41 (61%) and 26 female (39%) students had participated in the study. The highest number of the students were in the 6th year (56; 38.1%). Figure 1, shows the distribution and percentage of the subjects.

Figure 1: distribution of the subjects according to the year and gender

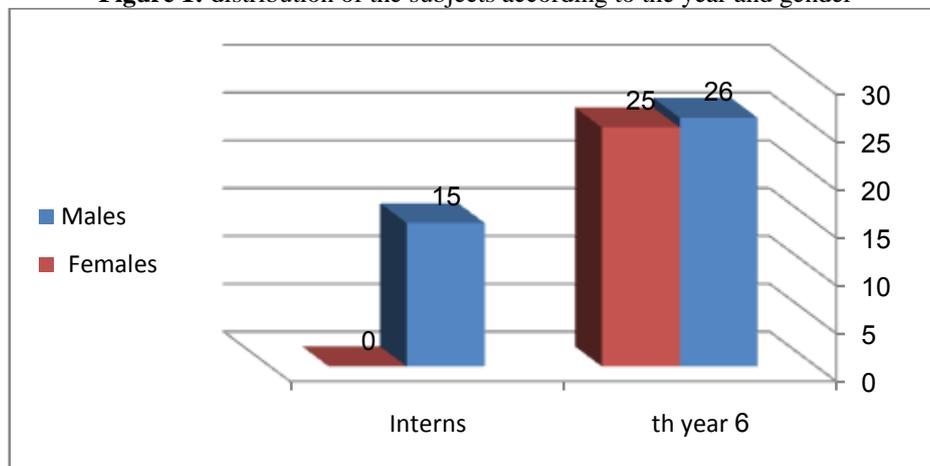


Table 1: Response about help and support for learning according to gender:

Item (7 items)	Positive response % (n)			P value
	Total (n=66)	Male (n=41)	Female (n=25)	
1) Availability of adequate academic and career counseling for students throughout the program	65.9%(27)	44%(11)	39.4%(38)	0.221
2) Availability of instructors for consultation and advice when students need to speak with them	46.3%(19)	44%(11)	45.4%(30)	0.762
3) Program's instructors' inspiration of students to do their best	26.8%(11)	36%(9)	30.3%(20)	0.356
4) Program's instructors give students help feedback on their work.	41.5%(17)	40%(10)	40.9%(27)	0.446
5) Program's instructors have thorough knowledge of the content of the course they teach	48.8%(20)	48%(12)	48.5%(32)	0.181
6) Enthusiasm of the instructors about the program	51.2%(21)	52%(13)	51.5%(34)	0.090
7) Caring of instructors about the progress of their students	53.7%(22)	52%(13)	53%(35)	0.586

Table 1; shows the response about help and support for learning according to gender: Majority of the participants were satisfied with availability of adequate academic and career counseling for students throughout the program but only 26.8 % of students have positive response to item (3). The results were not significant between genders.

Table 2: The responses about resources to support learning according to gender

Item (7 items)	Positive response % (n)			P value
	Total (n=66)	Male (n=41)	Female (n=25)	
1) Study materials in the courses are up to date and useful	61%(25)	32%(8)	50%(33)	0.243
2) Adequacy and availability of library resources when students need them	58.5%(34)	24%(6)	45.21%(30)	0.010*
3) Classroom facilities are of good quality	46.3%(19)	32%(8)	40.9%(27)	0.551
4) Sufficiency of student computing facilities for students needs	41.4%(17)	40%(10)	40.9%(27)	0.461
5) Availability of adequate facilities for extra-curricular activities	46.3%(19)	28%(7)	39.4%(26)	0.105
6) Availability of adequate facilities for religious observances	48.8%(21)	36%(9)	44%(29)	0.407
7) Effectiveness of field experience programs in developing students skills.	43.9%(18)	40%(10)	42.4%(28)	0.809

* Significance difference between genders

Table 2; shows the responses about the resources to support learning according to gender: A total of 61% of students found that the study materials in the courses are up to date and useful. Females were more agreed with item (2) which deled with the availability of library resources and it was significantly between the genders.

Table 3: The responses about evaluation of learning according to gender:

Item (8 items)	Positive response % (n)			P value
	Total (n=66)	Male (n=41)	Female (n=25)	
1) Volubility of what students have learned in this program for their future.	48.8%(20)	56%(14)	51.5%(34)	0.801
2) Program's helpfulness of students to develop sufficient interest to want to continue to keep up to date with new developments in their field of study	48.8%(20)	40%(10)	45.5%(21)	0.270
3) Program has develop students' abilities to investigate and solve new problems	60%(25)	44%(11)	54.6%(36)	0.133
4) Program has improve students' abilities to work effectively in groups	58.8%(24)	56%(14)	57.5%(38)	0.060
5) Program has improve students' skills in communication	68.3%(28)	28%(7)	53%(35)	0.031*
6) Program's helpfulness of students to develop good basic skills in using technology to investigate issues and communicate results	48.8%(20)	28%(7)	40.9%(27)	0.322
7) Students' development of the knowledge and skills required for their chosen career	51.2%(21)	40%(10)	47%(31)	0.616
8) Overall students' satisfaction with the quality of their learning experiences at this institution	41.5%(17)	25%(6)	35.4%(23)	0.207

* Significance difference between genders

Table 3; shows the responses about evaluation of learning according to gender: Majority of students found that's the program has improved their skills in developing abilities, communication, knowledge and technology using. The females have more positive response than males regarding this item (5).

Table 4: The response about help and support for learning according to year:

Item (7 items)	Positive response % (n)		P value
	6 th year(n=51)	Graduated (n=15)	
1) Availability of adequate academic and career counseling for students throughout the program	56.9%(29)	60%(9)	0.453
2) Availability of instructors for consultation and advice when students need to speak with them	45.1%(23)	46.7%(7)	0.459
3) Program's instructors' inspiration of students to do their best	33.3%(17)	20%(3)	0.328
4) Program's instructors give students help feedback on their work	41.2%(21)	40%(6)	0.510
5) Program's instructors have thorough knowledge of the content of the course they teach	52.9%(27)	33.3%(5)	0.034*
6) Enthusiasm of the instructors about the program	54.9%(28)	40%(6)	0.571
7) Caring of instructors about the progress of their students	49%(25)	66.7%(10)	0.147

* Significance difference between different levels

Table 4; shows the response about help and support for learning according to year: 6th year students are more satisfied than graduates about the instructor knowledge of their courses item (5) which may indicates improvement regarding this item.

Table 5: The responses about resources to support learning according to year:

Item (7 items)	Positive response % (n)		P Value
	6 th year(n=51)	Graduated (n=15)	
1) Study materials in the courses are up to date and useful	43.1%(22)	73.4%(11)	0.031*
2) Adequacy and availability of library resources when students need them	43.1%(22)	53.3%(8)	0.008*
3) Classroom facilities are of good quality	35.3%(18)	60%(9)	0.346
4) Sufficiency of student computing facilities for students needs	41.2%(21)	40%(6)	0.478
5) Availability of adequate facilities for extra-curricular activities	37.3%(19)	46.7%(7)	0.646
6) Availability of adequate facilities for religious observances	43.1%(22)	46.7%(7)	0.572
7) Effectiveness of field experience programs in developing students skills	41.2%(21)	46.7%(7)	0.050

* Significance difference between different years

Table 5; illustrates the responses about resources to support learning according to year: Graduates were more agreed regarding study materials in the courses are up to date and useful. Also they are agreed about the availability of resources when they need them. Items regarding the contents of the subjects are up-to date and the availability of resources at the library was significant differences between the subjects.

Table 6: The responses of evaluation of learning according to to year:

Item (8 items)	Positive response % (n)		P value
	6 th year(n=51)	Graduated (n=15)	
1) Valuability of what students have learn in this program for their future	51%(26)	53.3%(8)	0.467
2) Program's helpfulness of students to develop sufficient interest to want to continue to keep up to date with new developments in their field of study	41.2%(21)	66%(9)	0.627
3) Program has develop students' abilities to investigate and solve new problems	52.9%(27)	60%(9)	0.221
4) Program has improved students 'abilities to work effectively in groups.	58.8%(30)	53.4%(8)	0.003*
5) Program has improve students' skills in communication	53%(27)	53.4%(8)	0.398
6) Program's helpfulness of students to develop good basic skills in using technology to investigate issues and communicate results	43.1%(22)	33.4%(5)	0.527
7) Students' development of the knowledge and skills required for their chosen career	49%(25)	40%(6)	0.685
8) Overall students 'satisfaction with the quality of their learning experiences at this institution.	40%(20)	20%(3)	0.229

* Significance difference between different years

Table 6; shows the positive responses about evaluation of learning according to to year: Sixth year students were more satisfied related to learning. The program has improved their abilities to work effectively in groups item (4).

IV. Discussion

The above, well-implemented curricula are received positively by graduated and are more likely to facilitate learning. The method that we used to assess graduated satisfaction with the curriculum was measurement by the quality of the Program Experience Survey. It may be argued that graduated perceptions of various aspects of the courses are interdependent, and therefore, cannot be considered in isolation or that students who view a certain area of the curriculum positively are more likely to view others in a similar manner due to characteristics of their personality. While this may be true, it does not detract from the evidence that perceptions influence learning, whatever their basis may be. It is clear that perceptions alone may be inadequate in aiding assessment as they are subjective and liable to be affected by various situations and variables. However, when combined with an additional objective measure it holds great value (13).

The curriculum of CMJU provides active methods of instruction that include: small group discussion, tutorials, problem-based learning, case-study, clinical presentations, skills practice, seminars, practical, demonstration, and student independent learning. Methods of evaluating students include continuous and summative assessment; mid and final term exams as well as quizzes.

The objective of this cross sectional study was to evaluate the final year and graduated interns about the quality of learning experiences at the College of Medicine, Jazan University. Also to compare between males and females from the same year. The learning experiences about their program were included; advice, help and support for learning; learning resources, facilities and teaching using Program Evaluation Survey (PES).

In Program Experience Survey we found that overall 6th year and intern's satisfaction about help and support for learning regarding NCAAA system, which indicates good performance. Males have high quality performance about availability of adequate academic and career counseling for students throughout the program. Care of instructors about the progress of their students while females have good performance regarding the same two items (1, 10-12).

Our results in tables (1-3) shows help, support for learning surfaces according to gender shows that, majority of students from male and females were satisfied with the supports, this is in agreements with Al Rabaish A(14) Damman University, karim et al 2015 (15) Kuwait University, Imran et al (16) at Rabigh and Jeddah campuses of King Abdulaziz University, BHCSALE J (17), Al-Mohaimed A (18) Medical College at Qassim University, Al-Ayedand Sheik (19) at King Saud University.

Overall students' satisfaction about resources to support learning regarding NCAAA system which indicates good performance. And about the satisfaction about evaluation of learning regarding NCAAA system, which also indicates good performance. Program has developed students' abilities to investigate and solve new problems. Program has improve students' abilities to work effectively in groups and has improve students' skills in communication were indicated high quality performance among males than female. This is in Al Mohaimed et al (12), Rahman et al (20) at Sultan ZainalAbidin Medical College, Malyzia, Al-hazmi et al (21) King Abdul Aziz University at Jeddah KSA.

The results showed no significant different between gender, which was not agreed with the results founded at Sultan ZainalAbidin Medical College, Malyzia by Rahman et al (20) and at Sharjah Medical College, United Arab of Emirates by Nosair et al (22). This differences could be explained by the sample size. In our study only male internes were involved. The only significant were item # 2 (table 2, and # 5 table # 3), which deal with adequacy and availability of library resources when students need them program has improve students' skills in communication respectively. This were obvious in the results of (15, 21,22,24)

The response about help and support for learning according to year, resources to support learning according to year (table 4 and 5). The 6th year students are more satisfied than graduates about the instructor knowledge of their courses item (5) Which may indicates improvement regarding this item. Similar results were mentioned by karim et al 2015 (15) Kuwait University, Al-Mohaimed A (18) Medical College at Qassim University, Al-Ayedand Sheik (19) at King Saud University.

Significant of the study materials and adequacy and availability of library resources, this was in agreements with the results of 16,17,19,21,22,23,24. Those demonstrated that graduated founded the needed material at the library each time they needed.

Finally from table 6, there was significant differences between 6th year and internes in the item #4, which was regarding improvement the ability to work as a group, this is strongly agreed with Al Mohaimed et al (12), Rahman et al (20) at Sultan ZainalAbidin Medical College, Malyzia, Al-hazmi et al (21) King Abdul Aziz University at Jeddah KSA.

The limitation of this study is the nature of self-reporting of questionnaires imposed some limitation to the conclusions of this study. The validity and accuracy of student perceptions of their learning and learning environments has been questionable. Also the considered academic program involves a comparatively small number of students at interns.

V. Conclusion

The following conclusions were drawn from this cross sectional study for 6th year and interns subjects. According to gender regarding help, support and learning, majority of the participants were satisfied with availability of adequate academic and career counseling for students throughout the program. The study materials in the courses were up to date and useful; also, the program had improved their skills in developing abilities, communication, knowledge and technology using. The results were not significant among genders. 6th year students were more satisfied related to learning. They were agreed that study materials in the courses were up to date and useful, and the availability of resources when they need them. The program has improved their abilities to work effectively in group's item.

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