

STUDENT'S PERCEPTIONS TOWARDS TEACHING METHODS IN A MEDICAL COLLEGE OF SOUTH INDIA.

DR.V.VASUKI*

Department of Microbiology,
Government Thiruvavur Medical college,
Thiruvavur, Tamilnadu, India
micro_vasuki@yahoo.co.in

Abstract :

Background: In most of the medical colleges, lecture is the most common mode of teaching. A monotonous lecture of an hour fails to hold attention of students until the end of the class. There is a need to change from traditional to interactive teaching methods so as to sustain interest of the students in class room. **Aim:** The aim of this study was to examine the perceptions of medical students towards teaching methods. **Materials and Methods:** The study was carried out on 98 second year medical students. The study was conducted using questionnaires to get feedback from the students regarding their perception about the interactive teaching methods. **Result: Conclusion:** The use of interactive lectures can promote active learning, heighten attention and motivation, give feedback to the teacher and the student, and increase satisfaction for both.

Keywords: Active learning, Medical students, Teaching methods

Introduction

Lecture is the most commonly used method for a large group teaching in most of the medical colleges. It is considered the most cost-effective method in comparison with other teaching learning methods [Borkar et al (2012)]. Lecture provides a convenient mode to impart knowledge to large classes of students. Also, professors can present a large amount of material in a relatively brief amount of time. But with this method students fail to retain as much material taught after the class has been completed. Also reports have shown that students' inactivity in traditional teacher-centered classes would make them bored and exhausted that consequently would decrease their concentration and learning and finally would result in their absence from the classroom [Schreiber et al (2010)]. Attention span studies have shown that students' attention decreases significantly after 20 min in traditional lectures [Stuart (1978)]. Introducing interactivity in the lecture breaks the monotony and stimulates interest resulting in improved attention [Ernst et al (2007)]. However in recent years, efforts are taken to make the lecture more effective by using various interactive methods. Active learning engages students in two aspects – doing things and thinking about the things they are doing [Bonwell et al (1991)]. In our medical college, traditional lectures are the most commonly used method of teaching for large group of students. The aim of this study was to examine the perceptions of medical students towards teaching methods. This study was in the context of exploring effective teaching system from a student's perspective.

Materials and Methods

This observational study was carried out on 98 second year medical students of Government Thiruvavur Medical College, Tamil Nadu. Approval was obtained from the Institutional Ethics Committee for carrying out the study. The study was conducted using questionnaires to get feedback from the students regarding their perception about the interactive teaching methods. The interactive teaching methods used were test questions to summarize lecture, Class discussion, Student presentations, Audio-visual aids, brainstorming, MCQs and Short writing activity. The questionnaires were assessed by other faculty members that enabled an improved version of the questionnaire. After obtaining informed consent from the students, the questionnaires were distributed to them.

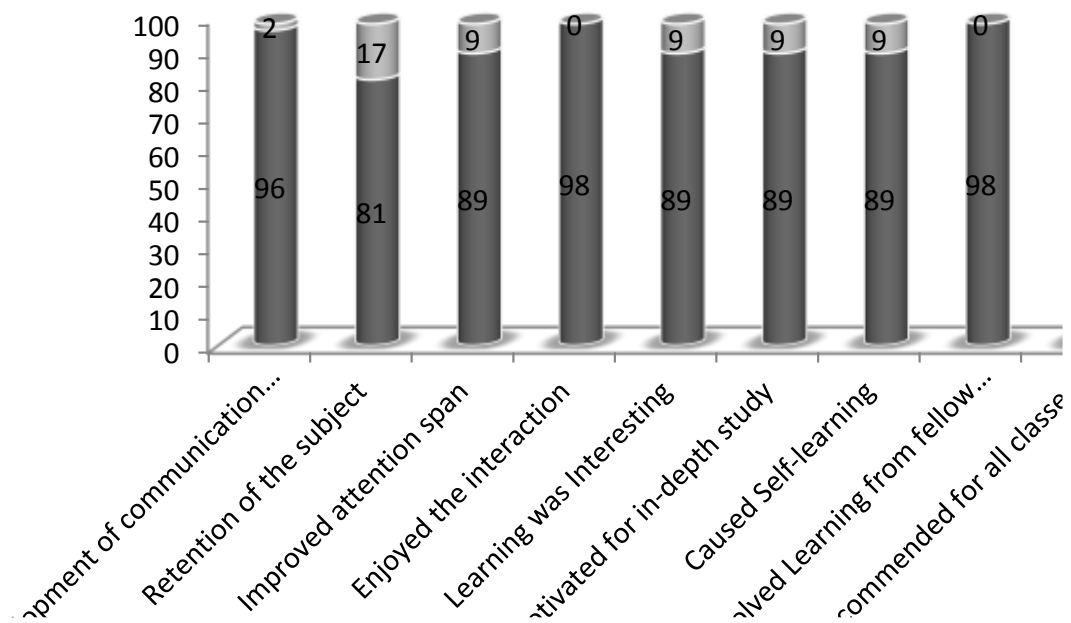
Results

The findings from the questionnaires were drawn together and the results were analysed to find out students' perceptions towards interactive teaching methods. Results obtained are depicted in Table.1(Fig.1).

Table 1. Response of students to various aspects of interactive teaching

Questions	N=98(%)
Development of communication skill	96(97.96)
Retention of the subject	81(82.65)
Improved attention span	89(90.82)
Enjoyed the interaction	98(100.00)
Learning was Interesting	89(90.82)
Motivated for in-depth study	89(90.82)
Caused Self-learning	89(90.82)
Involved Learning from fellow students	98(100.00)
Recommended for all classes	96(97.96)

Figure 1. Response of students to various aspects of interactive teaching



Discussion

Educational research has shown that active learning is always better than passive learning. Interactivity induces active learning in students thereby imparting its advantages such as a better understanding, more retention, better reproducibility, clarification of doubts and facilitating problem solving, decision making and communication skills [Ernst et al (2007)]. This is particularly important in medical education where the application and use of information is as important as the retention and recall of facts [Steinert et al (1999)].

The present study showed that majority of students find interactive teaching methods to be interesting, n=89(90.82%) are motivated for in-depth study and independent learning. n=98(100.00%) students agreed that active learning methods provide them opportunities to interact with other students and learn from them. Student interactions not only help them to evaluate knowledge and understanding of other students about the subject but also enable them to assess their own standing among other students. Thus, get them motivated to study. The students felt that interactivity improved their communication skills, added to the retention of the knowledge, improved the attention span during the lecture and hence recommended its use for all other lectures. Teacher should take a new role of facilitating the process of interactive learning rather than delivering elaborate lectures [Buch (2014)].

Conclusion

The present study provides insights into student's perceptions which were very useful in identifying their expectations. The use of interactive lectures can promote active learning, heighten attention and motivation, give feedback to the teacher and the student, and increase satisfaction for both.

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Conflicts of interest

There are no conflicts of interest

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