

Original Article

Perception of Foundation Course Curriculum by the Faculty of Medical Colleges

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Introduction : The Foundation course is one of the new curricula the National Medical Council (NMC) of India implemented for the present academic course at the beginning of the MBBS program. It is a month's duration where all the students should undergo this foundation course. The purpose of the course is to orient the students in all aspects of the Medical College environment, equipping them with certain basic skills required for patient care, enhancing their communication, language and computer and learning skills. Sports and extracurricular activities are also given importance in the foundation course. The present study was an attempt to take responses in the form of feedback by the faculties with regards to the foundation course.

Objectives : (1) To assess the responses with regards to the foundation course by the faculties. (2) Based on the analysis of feedback, a recommendation should be made for the Undergraduate Medical Curriculum.

Methodology : It was a cross-sectional study, the data was collected using self-administered, semi-structured questionnaires. The feedback form along with the foundation course curriculum was e-mailed to all the faculties those who are undergone one or the other training of Faculty Development Programme. Those who have submitted the responses were included in the study.

Results : The reflection responses given by faculties are apt for the foundation course implementation. They opine that NMC has taken a new initiative for the Undergraduate.

Conclusion : The foundation course is a need of the hour for the undergraduate to get sensitized to basic information about the Medical Profession.

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Key words : Foundation course, Feedback, faculties, National Medical Council of India.

The Foundation Course is one of the new curricula the National Medical Council (NMC) of India implemented for the present academic course at the beginning of the MBBS program. It is a month duration where all the students should undergo this foundation course. In this course, students were sensitized to a new Professional environment that is going to help them in their career as a medical profession. The purpose of the course is to orient the students in all aspects of the medical college environment, equipping them with certain basic skills required for patient care, enhancing their communication, language and computer and learning skills¹. Sports and extracurricular activities are also given importance in the foundation course. The present study was an attempt to take responses in the form of feedback by the students with regards to the foundation course.

Editor's Comment :

- Foundation course is in need of the hour with little modification in the module to implement for Indian medical graduates by the National Medical Council of India (NMC).
- Foundation course helps the students to sensitize all aspects of the medical environment.
- The foundation course is an excellent addendum to the Competency-based medical education (CBME).

Objectives :

- (1) To assess the responses with regards to the foundation course by the faculties
- (2) Based on the analysis of feedback, a recommendation should be made for the undergraduate medical curriculum.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

It was a cross-sectional study. Institutional ethical clearance was taken before the start of the study. After taking consent from the faculties, the data was collected using self-administered, semi-structured questionnaires. For structured questions 5 point Likert scale was applied. each item is given a numerical score ranging from 1-5 (Poor=1, Average=2, Good=3, Very good= 4, Excellent=5).

The feedback form along with the Foundation course curriculum was e-mailed to other Colleges and Different

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Departments, for those who have undergone one or the other training of faculty development program. And involved in a foundation course programme. A total of 30 faculties participated in the study. Those who have submitted the responses were included in the study. Data were analyzed using SPSS version 20.

RESULTS

A total of 30 faculties participated in the study, among them the majority were males (53.3%) followed by females (46.7%), all of them have undergone one or the other Faculty Training Program (FTP). and have also involved in the foundation course program at their institute. In the present study maximum number of respondents were professors (47%), followed by Assistant Professors (30%) and Associate Professors (23%). participants average age and length of services 41.30 ± 6.143 and 12.23 ± 5.771 respectively.

The responses related to the goals and objectives of the foundation course were good with an average mean of $3.63 \pm .928$. With regard to course, content and organization mean scores were $3.83 \pm .699$. Teaching-learning methods and assessment of syllabus were also good.

Our study observed a statistically significant association was observed between department wise and the planned theory and practical classes in the course at $p = 0.026$. Similarly for course content to achieve the learning outcome at $p = 0.023$ and also for rate the appropriateness of teaching-learning methods at $p = 0.014$. Surprisingly In our study, there is no statistically significant association observed between organizations like private, Government and Deemed University with related to their response to the foundation course curriculum (Table 1)

Responses for the open-ended questions :

All of them were given their opinion regarding foundation course and responses were compiled .as much as possible repetition were avoided.

(1) Comment on the duration of the course : The majority of them opined that the duration of the course was too lengthy (47%).

(2) Recommendations for additional evaluation method which would ensure student competency:

- Foundation course is more about awareness and orientation than acquiring the competency. So too much evaluation is not recommended.
- Introduction to Objective Structured Practical Examination (OSPE)/Objective Structured Clinical Examination (OSCE) in the foundation course.
- Small group skits on ethics and moral by students can be incorporated.

- The evaluation could include narratives also along with reflection writing.
- Too early to evaluate the competency taught in the first month.

(3) Additional comments regarding course development you feel have not been addressed :

- The majority of them gave an opinion that the course design has been adequately addressed.
- Shift the first two AETCOM modules in the foundation course itself.
- No need for extra hours for professionalism and communication.
- Reduce the time allotted to sports and other extracurricular activities
- How to handle a pandemic problem in society
- The majority of them commented that the course needs to be streamlined.
- Keep it simple with less content. Address a few things only in the foundation course
- How to lead a life in medical college including hostel and campus life.
- Communication needs more hours & more community exposure
- Can't think of any at present

(4) Comment on the infrastructure facilities available at your institute :

Much more is required in terms of infrastructure especially the skills lab. Some of them said we don't have presently the skill lab facilitates and need a lot of improvement for infrastructure facilitates. Others said they have adequate facilities for skill lab especially private and deemed universities.

(5) Challenges faced at your institute for the conduct of this course :

- Changing mindsets of faculties.
- Lack of infrastructure facilities.
- Space, equipment and manpower shortage for 150 students
- The duration of the course was not acceptable.
- Clinicians support and involvement
- Students joined a little late. Rescheduling the sessions done as the admission dates were extended.

(6) Reflection for the foundation course :

- The majority of them said, the concept of the foundation course is a very good initiative by NMC, But how it works out is to be seen in the future.
- Some of them said, very much required to orient the student to the course.
- Floating attendance was observed because of late admission.

Table 1 — Responses related to foundation course by department wise

Components	Departments	N	Mean±Std. Deviation	Kruskal Walli's test	P value
Students response to Goals and objectives (a) course gives a clear idea about what is expected out come from this course	Clinical	7	3.86±.378	2.205	0.332
	Para Clinical	11	3.91±.701		
	Pre Clinical	12	3.25±1.215		
	Total	30	3.63±.928		
(b) How do you rate the course objectives stated are well aligned with the course content?	Clinical	6	4.00±.000	2.066	0.356
	Para Clinical	11	3.64±.674		
	Pre Clinical	12	3.50±1.000		
	Total	29	3.66±.769		
Responses related to Course content and organization (a) The course identify the health care needs and problem of the community]	Clinical	7	4.00±.577	1.773	0.412
	Para Clinical	11	3.91±.831		
	Pre Clinical	12	3.67±.651		
	Total	30	3.83±.699		
(b) How well planned are the theory and practical classes in the course ?	Clinical	7	4.29±.488	7.333	0.026*
	Para Clinical	11	3.64±.505		
	Pre Clinical	12	3.17±1.115		
	Total	30	3.60±.894		
(c) course content is well structured to achieve the leaning outcome	Clinical	7	4.57±.535	7.525	0.023*
	Para Clinical	11	3.73±.467		
	Pre Clinical	12	3.50±1.087		
	Total	30	3.83±.874		
Responses related to Teaching-learning methods (a) Rate the appropriateness of teaching-learning methods	Clinical	7	4.57±.535	8.483	0.014*
	Para Clinical	11	4.00±.775		
	Pre Clinical	12	3.50±.674		
	Total	30	3.93±.785		
Responses related to Assessment methods (a) Rate the appropriateness of the formative assessment	Clinical	7	4.00±1.000	5.314	0.070
	Para Clinical	11	3.64±.809		
	Pre Clinical	12	3.08±.900		
	Total	30	3.50±.938		
(b) How do you rate depth of assessment of syllabus content?	Clinical	7	3.57±1.134	1.886	0.392
	Para Clinical	11	3.64±.809		
	Pre Clinical	12	3.17±1.115		
	Total	30	3.43±1.006		
Other questions related to course (a) To what extent do you think is the course career oriented?	Clinical	7	4.00±1.155	2.140	0.343
	Para Clinical	11	3.73±.786		
	Pre Clinical	12	3.42±.669		
	Total	30	3.67±.844		
(b) How do you rate time allotted for the course?	Clinical	7	3.57±1.134	5.130	0.077
	Para Clinical	11	2.91±1.044		
	Pre Clinical	12	2.75±.866		
	Total	30	3.00±1.017		
(c) How do you rate the quality and relevance of the foundation course content to MBBS course?	Clinical	6	4.33±.516	6.884	0.032*
	Para Clinical	11	3.64±.924		
	Pre Clinical	12	3.08±.996		
	Total	29	3.55±.985		

*Statistically Significant

- It's a good start, helpful for students to understand about the MBBS course in the beginning.
- A good initiative which exposes students to what actually they will be encountered in the future.

addendum to the Competency-based Medical Education (CBME).

- The lack of faculty orientation and unavailability of the infrastructure may pose a challenge on its

- Foundation course is good but needs adequate faculty training.

- Planning and implementing the Foundation Course was Challenging and interesting.

- Helpful for both students and teachers

- many of them told ,it is a need of the hour

- It gave an opportunity into what are the needs of students and expectations at the very beginning. It was felt the course structure was a bit prolonged, suitable modifications would definitely help.

- It provided an opportunity, how the student will identify the needs/ participate in group activities based on their diverse background of schooling.

- Very good course if trimmed and made concise. Suggested to take feedback from present and past students. Involve all stakeholders in planning.

- It has actually shifted the focus of students from learning basic sciences to the clinical context.

- Some subject topics can be spread in the first quarter for better realization.

- More hands- on, practical, and skill -based activities should be conducted than being theoretical.

- On paper, it is very good but require a lot of preparation, more number of faculties and training of faculty

- The foundation course is an excellent

Table 2 — Responses related to foundation course by different institutions

Components	Institutions	N	Mean±Std Deviation	Kruskal Walli's test	P value
Students response to Goals and objectives (a) course gives a clear idea about what is expected out come from this course	Deemed University	12	3.50±1.087	1.208	0.547
	Government Organisation	7	4.00±.577		
	Private Organisation	11	3.55±.934		
	Total	30	3.63±.928		
Students response to Goals and objectives (b) How do you rate the course objectives stated are well aligned with the course content?	Deemed University	12	3.64±.924	0.370	0.831
	Government Organisation	7	3.57±.535		
	Private Organisation	11	3.73±.786		
	Total	30	3.66±.769		
Responses related to Course content and organisation (a) The course identify the health care needs and problem of the community	Deemed University	12	3.75±.866	4.388	0.111
	Government Organisation	7	4.29±.488		
	Private Organisation	11	3.64±.505		
	Total	30	3.83±.699		
Responses related to Course content and organisation (b) How well planned are the theory and practical classes in the course ?	Deemed University	12	3.50±1.087	0.289	0.865
	Government Organisation	7	3.57±.535		
	Private Organisation	11	3.73±.905		
	Total	30	3.60±.894		
Responses related to Course content and organisation (c) course content is well structured to achieve the leaning outcome	Deemed University	12	3.75±.965	1.005	0.605
	Government Organisation	7	3.71±.488		
	Private Organisation	11	4.00±1.000		
	Total	30	3.83±.874		
Responses related to Teaching-learning methods (a) Rate the appropriateness of teaching-learning methods	Deemed University	12	3.92±.900	0.169	0.919
	Government Organisation	7	3.86±.690		
	Private Organisation	11	4.00±.775		
	Total	30	3.93±.785		
Responses related to Assessment methods (a) Rate the appropriateness of the formative assessment	Deemed University	12	3.33± 1.073	0.433	0.819
	Government Organisation	7	3.57±.787		
	Private Organisation	11	3.64±.924		
	Total	30	3.50±.938		
Responses related to Assessment methods [(b) How do you rate depth of assessment of syllabus content?]	Deemed University	12	3.42±1.084	.160	0.923
	Government Organisation	7	3.57±.787		
	Private Organisation	11	3.36±1.120		
	Total	30	3.43±1.006		
Other questions related to course [(a) To what extent do you think is the course career oriented?]	Deemed University	12	3.67±.778	.529	0.768
	Government Organisation	7	3.86±.900		
	Private Organisation	11	3.55±.934		
	Total	30	3.67±.844		
Other questions related to course [(b) How do you rate time allotted for the course?]	Deemed University	12	3.25±1.138	1.428	0.490
	Government Organisation	7	2.86±1.069		
	Private Organisation	11	2.82±.874		
	Total	30	3.00±1.017		
Other questions related to course [(c) How do you rate the quality and relevance of the foundation course content to MBBS course?]	Deemed University	12	3.45±.934	.734	0.693
	Government Organisation	7	3.86±.690		
	Private Organisation	11	3.45±1.214		
	Total	30	3.55±.985		
Non- significant					

appropriate implementation.

- However, the successive implementation from next year and shared experiences from different

institutions will pave the way for more information and outputs for better execution.

- Objectives were very appropriate and achieved.

Early exposure to clinical setup & Attitude, Ethics and Communication Manual (AETCOM) module will definitely help students.

- A foundation course is needed. It may be concise to 15 days excluding computer and language classes.

- Needs to be streamlined possible only with dedicated faculty with the support of the administration.

- Overall it was a good and new experience.

Above all are reflections given by all the faculties for the foundation course.

(7) Suggestions for the course :

- Instead of focusing on too many modules and so many competencies initially, it can be like an overview of the course and make students realize what is their attitude and expected outcome as a basic doctor

- The Foundation Course is needed. But the duration may be reduced excluding computer, language classes, also sports and extra-curricular activities.

- The course should be started after all the admission gets over through National Eligibility cum Entrance Test (NEET).

- Medical Council of India (MCI) should increase the staff position.

DISCUSSION

Implementation of the foundation course in MBBS was aimed at creating medical students to serve as health care providers who need not only provide adequate, appropriate and cost-effective health care service but also need to be the leaders of their community. The Foundation Course will also provide a sound foundation for learning in the MBBS course and later in their professional career¹. There is no available literature in general after the implementation of a foundation course feedback by faculties. Some of the literatures are available related to student feedback for the foundation course.

The present study found that the majority of the faculties are in the opinion that, foundation course is in need of the hour with little modification in the module. In 47% of the faculties said, the duration of the course was lengthy. The study conducted by Udgiri R², observed in her study similar findings related to the duration of the course that the majority of them were in the opinion that duration of the course should be between 15-20 days. Statistically, a significant association was observed between departments wise

and the planned theory and practical classes & Teaching-learning Methods. This could be due to the reason that more work for clinical staff, as already they are burdened with treating patients.

Surprisingly In our study, there no statistically significant Association was observed between organizations like Private, Government and Deemed University with related to their response to the Foundation Course curriculum. This shows that the Foundation Course is in need of the hour to implement for Indian Medical graduates by the NMC. Our study observed that faculties preferred more of more hands-on, practical and skill-based activities than being theoretical. The same opinion was observed in the study conducted by Priyadarshini *et al*³, responses like making the sessions more interactive and including role-plays.

In our study, suggestions were given to modify the foundation course. Similar suggestions were observed for modifications to be made in designing and implementing the foundation course by Sobti *et al*⁴

Limitations of the study :

With the present sample size we cannot generalize the statement, so we need more sample size. And need a follow-up study to see the impact of the course.

Conclusion :

NMC has made good initiative for implementing the Foundation Course for the Indian Medical Graduate to orient and sensitize the student to various areas and prepare a learner to study Medicine effectively. The Foundation Course is a consequence of the focus on Upgrading the Medical Curriculum. It helps the students to all aspects of the medical environment.

Conflict of Interest : None

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