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Introduction of Time and Stress Management Workshop in 1st Year Medical Students: Perception of Students

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Abstract

Objective: One of the major reasons of stress specially among medical students is lack of proper time management. If stress and time mismanagement are not taken care of, it may lead to psychological disturbances, leading to poor academic performance among students. Stress and time workshop was designed and implemented in first year bachelor of medicine and bachelor of surgery students.

Methods: Time and stress management workshop was conducted among Ist MBBS medical students in 2012 and 2013 consecutively for two batches. Workshop included time and stress management modules as well as presentation and tips for proper stress and time management.

Results: Students felt that content and presentation of workshop was excellent. Students found the workshop very useful. All students suggested that such workshops should be conducted every year.

Conclusion: It can be concluded that time and stress management workshop is very useful and should be conducted very often for medical students.

Key Words: First year medical students, time, stress, modules, management

INTRODUCTION

Medical students, especially in India are constantly in grip of stress due to vast and demanding medical curriculum. Medical studies are not only challenging but also time consuming. The medical students are constantly under academic, social or financial pressures. This stress, if not taken care of can lead to mental as well as physical deterioration of medical students, thus affecting their academic performance. A N Supe¹ in his study concluded that stress in medical students is common and process oriented. Academic and emotional factors are greater perceived cause of stress in students in medical college. Hamza², in his study had concluded that high levels of psychosocial distress existed among medical students specially in first three years of medical curriculum. According to a study conducted by Chandrashekhar T Sreeramareddy³, overall prevalence of psychological morbidity in students was 20.9% and was higher among students of basic sciences, Indian nationality and whose parents were medical doctors. One major factor responsible for stress in medical students is lack of proper time management. With the advent of newer technology and widespread exposure of students to new information, the students are finding it very difficult to keep up with time in their day to day routine. Misuse and improper use of time coupled with other factors has led to increased cases of stress among students, which has led to psychiatric problems and in certain grave situations, suicidal tendencies among students. Stewart⁴ in his study has reported that

academic performance before and during medical school was negatively related to reported stress levels. If the students are made aware of proper time and stress management, it can lead to improved efficiency of students. Medical Council of India has recognized this fact and has recommended introduction of foundation course in MBBS (Bachelor of medicine and bachelor of surgery) curriculum⁵. A very important aspect of suggested foundation course is making students aware of importance of time and stress management right from their Ist (first) MBBS, as first year forms base of their medical tenure. Our college is following traditional conventional medical curriculum. But for the benefit of students, we have tried to implement some aspects of foundation course, one of them being time and stress management workshop for Ist MBBS students.

METHODS

Time and stress management workshop was conducted among Ist MBBS students by Medical Education Unit of our college. Series of meetings between faculty of MEU and faculty of Ist MBBS were conducted to discuss various aspects of workshop, ranging from time table to content of workshop. Time and stress management workshop was conducted after first test of Ist MBBS students for two consecutive years. Faculty of anatomy, physiology and biochemistry were oriented to the workshop and objectives were defined. Various modules, in the form of hypothetical situations commonly encountered by medical students were prepared by faculty.

Students were divided into 6 groups. A facilitator comprising of faculty was appointed for each group. Each group was initially given a module for time management in the form of a hypothetical situation. We had taken guidance from foundation course suggestions given by MCI (Medical Council of India) about the hypothetical

situations. The students were required to discuss the situation as well as questions related to it among themselves. Thereafter, one student from each group was asked to present their views and answer related questions provided to them. This exercise was followed by a small presentation and tips for proper time management by faculty.

Case for time management

Sagar, a first semester student of Anatomy, Physiology and Biochemistry has an assignment to complete and submit on Wednesday. The anatomy part completion examination is to be held on Thursday of the same week. Sagar, although a hosteler, prefers to go to his home on weekends which is about 50 km from his college. After reaching home on Saturday afternoon, he felt very good about being at home and wanted to catch all family news. After eating a good dinner he felt sleepy and went off to sleep. His bedroom has a LED, so he flicks through his TV and realizes that BENHUR is playing. He has heard a lot about this movie so he tries to see it. After sleeping at 2 am, he wakes up at 10 am next day. After a good breakfast he wants to study and realizes that he has forgotten the notes which would supplement his study. In the meantime his aunt comes to meet him. Now he really wants to study but there are portions of text which he finds difficult to understand without notes. On reaching hostel on Monday he realizes that it is his friend's birthday and he wants to attend his party. By Tuesday, he is in panic since his assignment has still not started. Tries to study on the night of Tuesday, wakes up late, misses morning class.

Questions

1. Identify and list Sagar's time management problems.
2. List strategies to explain that Sagar could use to overcome his time management problem.

The same methodology was followed for stress management.

Case for stress management

Payal and Versha have been best friends and roommates for their second year in a row at college. But lately Payal has been pretty down, even depressed. She doesn't want to socialize with their other friends. She doesn't want to go out for food. She even struggles to get up for class. Due to family problems she has not been able to study for exams leading to very low marks in term examination. At first Versha was very patient with her friend and spent several weekends in the hostel and brought meals back to the room to share

with Payal. After a while, however, Versha insisted the Payal speak with a counsellor about her troubles, but Payal became insulted and refused to go. Versha has grown very worried about her friend, but she's also sick of Payal not doing anything for her herself. Now Versha has a chance to go to a great party with a bunch of friends, but Payal seems especially unhappy.

QUESTIONS

What should Versha do?

What can be done to make Payal realise her problem?

Do you think teacher can play a role in this situation? If yes, how?

Written feedback was collected from the students. Separate feedback was collected for time and stress management. The questions were framed with respect to content, presentation and usefulness of the workshop. A 5-point Likert scale with a score of 1 = poor, 2 = satisfactory, 3 = good, 4 = very good and 5 = excellent was used for student's response. The questionnaire also had a free comment section for the students to give any other feedback.

The workshop was conducted after taking due permission from the Dean of our college. Detailed explanation of the questionnaire was provided to the students by faculty. Written informed consent was not taken from the students as response to questionnaire was implied as verbal consent.

RESULTS

In the Ist MBBS 2012 batch, (Table 1 and 2), 139 students attended the workshop and all gave feedback. Students gave average 4.3 score out of 5 to the question whether they liked the workshop or not, for both, stress and time workshop. The score for content of workshop was average 4.1 and 4 out of 5 on likert scale. For presentation it was average 4.2 both for time and stress

management respectively. For the feedback regarding usefulness of workshop, the students rated 4.4 and 4.3 for time and stress workshop respectively.

In the Ist MBBS 2013 batch, (Table 3 and 4) 144 students attended and, students gave average 4.4 score out of 5 to the question whether they liked the workshop or not, for both, stress and time workshop. The score for content of workshop was average 4.1 out of 5 on likert scale. For presentation it was average 4.3 and 4.2 for time and stress management respectively. For the feedback regarding usefulness of workshop, the students rated 4.4 and 4.4 for time and stress workshop respectively. 100% of students were of the opinion that such workshops should be conducted every year for I MBBS students.

In the free comment sections, students were of the opinion that group discussion on time and stress management should be conducted in still smaller groups. Students had also suggested that in addition to modules, the students themselves should be asked to come out with problems they face related to time and stress, which can be tried to be addressed in the workshop.

DISCUSSION

Most of the medical colleges in Gujarat follow traditional conventional curriculum for MBBS course. This conventional curriculum has been going on since many years. There has arisen a need to introduce certain changes in curriculum according to changing times. With the advent of newer windows of information, the students are facing a lot of difficulty in keeping up the tight schedule of I MBBS. Also, most of the students stay away from their families in hostel. This coupled with improper time management has led to an increase in stress among the students. If this continues, the performance of students may deteriorate and the whole essence of imparting proper education to students will be at stake. Also, in I MBBS, the students are exposed to modes of teaching in which they are not permitted to get actively involved. Many time and stress management techniques have been described which have proved to be very useful. F. C. Brunnicardi⁶ had shown various time management techniques which help the doctors lead a productive as well as balanced life. Julie Brennan⁷ had concluded in their study spanning 3 years that it is feasible and beneficial to offer a stress management experience to first-year medical students. Results of the workshop were very encouraging. Students graded the workshop as excellent. This was mainly because the students were exposed to group discussion not only among themselves but also with the faculty. This provided a platform to the students to voice their opinions and ideas. The students actually learned

about time and stress management by actively participation, which is called as active learning. It has been concluded by Jana Hackathorn⁸ in his study that active teaching techniques enhance learning. The students felt that the content and presentation of the workshop was excellent. This feedback was very encouraging especially for the faculty. The content and presentation included tips for proper time as well as stress management. Students felt that the workshop was very useful for them and that they would definitely be benefited in future by it. This was because in our modules, we had included real life problems, like what they face daily in their I MBBS. This was then followed by discussion and depending upon the response of the students, the faculty gave those tips for better management of time and stress. Interventions regarding stress and time management among medical students have been proved to be very useful as concluded by Reem Rachel Abraham⁹, in their study. We have tried for such intervention among students for their betterment.

CONCLUSION

It is not possible to take the stress and time crunch out of medical school, but it is certainly possible to handle them better with proper guidance. The study showed that it is beneficial and essential to adopt regular time and stress management workshop in I MBBS curriculum. Such type of workshops should be regularly conducted as it would lead to optimum student gain in terms of quality of medical education.

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Table 1 (Ist MBBS 2012 and 2013 batches):

Question		Session- A (Time)		Session- B (Stress)	
		2012	2013	2012	2013
1. How did you like this session? (1-5)		4.3	4.4	4.3	4.4
2. Rate the session for the following (1-5) (1=minimum, 5= Maximum)	2.1.-Content	4.1	4.1	4.0	4.1
	2.2.- Presentation	4.3	4.3	4.2	4.2
	2.3.- Usefulness	4.4	4.4	4.3	4.4
3. Do you think this workshop should be done for 1 MBBS students every year (Yes/No)		Yes (100%)			
4. Any other suggestion or remark-					

(1 = poor, 2 = satisfactory, 3 = good, 4 = very good and 5 = excellent)

Table 2 (Ist MBBS 2012 and 2013 students):

Likert scale	1		2		3		4		5		Total students	
	2012	2013	2012	2013	2012	2013	2012	2013	2012	2013	2012	2013
Q1	0	0	1	1	16	11	59	64	63	68	139	144
Q2.1	1	1	1	1	27	29	62	62	48	51	139	144
Q2.2	0	0	0	0	17	17	67	67	55	60	139	144
Q2.3	0	0	2	2	6	6	62	62	69	74	139	144
Q2.1	0	0	2	2	29	29	68	68	40	45	139	144
Q2.2	0	0	2	2	19	19	70	70	48	53	139	144
Q2.3	0	1	3	3	10	6	58	61	68	73	139	144

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