

## Letter to the Editor

# Students' feedback on the foundation course in competency based medical education curriculum

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Sir,

The Medical Council of India (MCI) has formulated a new Competency Based Medical Education (CBME) Curriculum for the Indian Medical Graduates with an objective of making medical education outcome based. A one month long Foundation Course (FC) is a hallmark of this CBME which is implemented during the first month of first professional MBBS studies. The objective is to acquaint, allay apprehension and prepare freshers for further studies using andragogical and heutagogical approaches. The MCI also released the guidelines for the medical colleges for uniform conduct of FC across the country. The FC was divided into six modules, i.e. Orientation Module, Skills Module, Community orientation module, Professional Development and Ethics

Module (P and E), Enhancement of Language and Computer Skills Module, and Sports and extracurricular activities.<sup>1</sup> A total of 175 hours were allotted to these modules. Like every institute, our institute also developed the implementation program and time-table of FC using MCI guidelines and taking into account the available resources.<sup>2,3</sup> The FC at our institute was conducted from 1<sup>st</sup> August 2019 to 31<sup>st</sup> August 2019 and was meticulously planned and implemented. The effective implementation required committed efforts of 30 faculty members (12 Professors, 11 Associate Professors and 7 Assistant Professors), two language and one fine arts teacher, and 4 non-teaching members (Librarian, IT-personnel, Coach for sports and motivational Guru). The students were trained to write reflections daily in their log - books which are being analysed further.

**Table 1: Student's perception of the foundation course.**

Q. No.	Question	Number of students, n (%)			
		Yes	May be	Can't say	No
1	Were the objectives of the FC largely met?	111(75%)	29(19.6%)	3(2.0%)	5(3.4%)
2	Has FC made you better prepared for the main course?	122(82.4%)	19(12.8%)	2(1.3%)	5(3.4%)
3	Did you find FC helpful in adapting to the new environment?	132(89.1%)	12(8.1%)	1(0.6%)	3(2.0%)
4	Were the faculty members helpful and responsive to your learning needs?	139(93.9%)	6(4.0%)	3(2.0%)	0

At the end of the course the students were asked to fill a pre-validated (Cronbach's Alpha score 0.839) feedback questionnaire containing 8 questions. The responses were tabulated in Microsoft Excel sheets and analysis was done.

As seen in Table 1, 75% students felt that the objectives of the FC were largely met, while 21.6% seemed to be in a dilemma answering this question. 82.4% students felt that FC made them better prepared for the upcoming studies and only 3.4% students felt otherwise. Similarly, 89.1% students found FC helpful in adapting to the new environment. These responses show that FC acts as a perfect 'starter' before the delivery of the 'main course'. At our institute, a dedicated team of faculty members was responsible for delivery of the FC. This is reflected in the responses of the students, as 93.9% of them felt that the

faculty members were helpful and responsive to their learning needs.

Students were asked to enlist the topics that they felt were most important as well as least important. Table 2 and 3 show the top 5 topics that students felt were most important and least important respectively.

Out of 148 respondents, 40.5% felt that the sessions BLS and CPR training were the most important and informative to them. When asked in detail, most of the students felt that BLS training is an important clinical skill that every medical student should acquire as it can save life. 16.2% students thought that knowledge regarding BMW and obtaining patient consent is important.

61.4% and 35.8% students felt that computer skills, and language were the least important topics respectively. The reason given was that the students already had the basic knowledge about these topics and they didn't find anything new to learn. This feedback is important for us as authors can plan these sessions more carefully for the subsequent batches. 9.4%, 6% and 4% students felt that documentation, history of medicine and ECA were the least important topics respectively. Authors feel documentation is an important aspect to learn but the results show that perhaps authors were not able to make them realize importance of documentation.

**Table 2: Topics that students felt were most important.**

Topic	Number of students (n)	Percentage (%)
CPR and Basic Life Support (BLS) training	60	40.5%
Biomedical Waste Management (BMW)	24	16.2%
Obtaining patient consent	24	16.2%
Communication skills	22	14.8%
Inter-personal and doctor-patient relationship	18	12.1%

**Table 3: Topics that students felt were least important.**

Topic	Number of students (n)	Percentage (%)
Computer skills	91	61.4%
Language	53	35.8%
Documentation	14	9.4%
History of medicine	9	6.0%
Extracurricular Activities (ECA)	6	4.0%

A question was also asked regarding the duration of the FC. 72(48.6%) students felt that the present duration of FC (1 month) was appropriate. However, equal number (73, 49.3%) students were of the opinion that one month was a long duration, and it should be less. However, they could not decide what should be the exact duration of FC. Only 3(2%) students felt that even one month is less for FC. Seven faculty members also felt that one month is a long duration for FC and it should be reduced to two weeks.

Finally, students rated their overall experience of FC. 33(22.3%) students found it to be excellent, 62(41.9%) very good, and 50(33.8%) good. 2(1.3%) and 1(0.6%) students rated their experience as poor and very poor respectively. The reason given behind their poor rating was they felt that there were many unnecessary topics and the duration was long.

Students joining MBBS course come from different socio-cultural backgrounds. There is a big change from pedagogical (school) to andragogical (college) learning. FC is a welcome step in helping students adjust to the new environment and allay their anxiety and fear. This is the first academic year of implementation of FC; hence feedback of faculty members and students is very important. A cumulative feedback from different institutes will help in further refining the program for better achievement of objectives.

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