

BRIEF REPORT

 OPEN ACCESS

Received: 02.03.2023

Accepted: 21.09.2023

Published: 16.10.2023

Citation: Vinutha S. Research in Undergraduate Medical Education: Effectiveness of Conducting Research Methodology Workshops. *J Clin Biomed Sci* 2023; 13(3): 65-66. <https://doi.org/10.58739/jcbs/v13i3.23.8>

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Funding: None

Competing Interests: None

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Published By Sri Devaraj Urs Academy of Higher Education, Kolar, Karnataka

ISSN

Print: 2231-4180

Electronic: 2319-2453



Research in Undergraduate Medical Education: Effectiveness of Conducting Research Methodology Workshops

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Dear Editor,

Medical professionals are expected to follow evidence-based practice. Indian medical graduate (IMG) is expected to be a lifelong learner which highlights his role in asking research questions¹. Interested students lament lack of training in this direction and have perceived a need for formal introduction to research methodology. Workshop-based teaching develops a basic research skill in undergraduate (UG) medical students. The medical schools have a role to play in orienting students to research. Our University strongly believes in promoting research culture in Undergraduates (UGs) and creates opportunities for the same.

In alignment with this vision, One Day Research Methodology workshops were planned for 3rd term students to facilitate involvement in small research projects and are being conducted for the last few years. The content includes sessions on Research question, Research hypothesis, variables, objectives, review of literature, study designs and simple statistics. Lead lectures followed by group activities was the instructional strategy used. Plenary sessions after group activities had presenters from each group present the group's work for critique by other groups. In

addition to this, importance of informed consent and obtaining ethical clearance was included.

Student feedback was obtained regarding their perception about the program. In addition to student satisfaction, which was evident in the feedback, we were keen on observing the impact it had on them. We analysed the impact by noting the number of student research projects submitted, number of students who applied for ICMR STS, number of applications that got selected and number of paper presentations by students in UG research conferences conducted. There has been a rise in UGs approaching faculty in each Department with an interest to pursue a research project outside their class hours. Number of papers submitted by UGs for ethical clearance has increased and out of 75 applicants for ICMR STS 2016, 25 have been selected and the trend continues.

Faculty and student feedback suggested having sessions in staggered phases to reinforce certain concepts like statistics. A need for mentor was felt by many. Designing learning experiences to motivate students who are aware that this competency is outside their curriculum and not assessed is a challenging exercise for the faculty engaged in this workshop.

The University hosts a national research conference for undergraduates to provide a platform for students to present their research work. Elective on research methodology was initiated for 6th term students to enable students to engage in this scientific activity. Student Research Committee monitors and supports student involvement in research activities.

Research aptitude among medical students has to be instilled by creating opportunities for students to learn skills that empower them to understand and practice medicine

by inquiry. Onus is on medical colleges to consider having research related programs for UGs though it is not mandated by the prescribed curriculum.

References

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