

Perception of Attitude, Ethics and Communication Skills (AETCOM) Module by First MBBS Students as a Learning Tool in the Foundation Course

M. Vijayasree¹

¹Professor and HOD, Department of Obstetrics and Gynaecology, Mamata Medical College, Khammam, Telangana, India.

ABSTRACT

BACKGROUND

Knowledge of proper Attitude, Ethics and Communication Skills with the patients plays a vital role in success of medical professionals. So, AETCOM module has been formulated to train the medical students from first MBBS itself as a part of their foundation course. We wanted to assess the perception of Attitude, Ethics and Communication Skills (AETCOM) Module by first MBBS students as a learning tool in their foundation course.

METHODS

This is a cross sectional observational study conducted over a period of one month involving first year MBBS students who joined in the year 2019-20 in Mamata Medical College. 100 students were included in this study. The teaching schedule of AETCOM Module had four sessions three hours each. At the end of the module feedback on their perception was obtained by Likert scale and was analysed.

RESULTS

A majority of the students (92%) opined that the AETCOM Module will definitely improve their communication skills with the patients. They also felt that such training should be integrated in regular teaching curriculum and done continuously in all the semesters. All the 100 students were given the same questionnaire. Most (30) of the first-year students joined the foundation course late because of the delay in the counselling; whereas, at any given time, 20 students were absent for these teaching sessions. AETCOM Module was satisfactory for 84% of students. For 12% it was just satisfactory, On the other extreme, 4% students were highly satisfied. Students' views on AETCOM were- asset for gaining confidence of the patients (72%), useful for themselves and for future practice (10%), excellent method for improvement of diagnosis (8%), wanted multiple exposures continuously throughout the UG course (6%) and can avoid medicolegal issues (4%).

CONCLUSIONS

The AETCOM Module will be good for the first MBBS students on the whole for communicating better with the patients in their medical course. Strengths of this study include feedback from the students for further improvement in the long-term outcome.

KEYWORDS

AETCOM, Perception, First MBBS Students, Foundation Course

Corresponding Author:

*Dr. M. Vijayasree,
Professor and HOD,
Department of Obstetrics and
Gynaecology,
Mamata Medical College,
Khammam- 507002, Telangana, India.
E-mail: hospitalstelangana@gmail.com
DOI: 10.18410/jebmh/2019/571*

*Financial or Other Competing Interests:
None.*

How to Cite This Article:

*Vijayasree M. Perception of attitude,
ethics and communication skills (aetcom)
module by first mbbs students as a
learning tool in the foundation course. J.
Evid. Based Med. Healthc. 2019; 6(42),
2750-2753. DOI:
10.18410/jebmh/2019/571*

*Submission 16-09-2019,
Peer Review 21-09-2019,
Acceptance 11-10-2019,
Published 16-10-2019.*



BACKGROUND

Knowledge of proper Attitude, Ethics and Communication Skills with the patients plays a vital role in success of medical professionals. So, AETCOM module has been formulated to train the medical students from first MBBS itself as a part of their foundation course as early as possible. Proper communication of the physician with his patient will increase patient’s satisfaction and also the compliance to the treatment.¹ Doctor-Patient communication is a teachable skill.² Training programme at medical student’s level succeeds in improving their communication skills.³ The Medical Council of India (MCI) expects a medical student to be competent enough in communicating with the patients adequately, affectively, sensitively and respectfully. It has proposed in its document (Vision-2015), a foundation course for undergraduate students in first two months of first year of MBBS, which includes an orientation towards learning the communication skills.⁴ As a part of that foundation course we have conducted sessions on AETCOM Module in our college.

We wanted to assess the perception of Attitude, Ethics and Communication Skills (AETCOM) module by first MBBS students as a learning tool in their foundation course.

METHODS

It was an Cross sectional Observational Study done involving First MBBS students joined in the year 2019-20 Batch in Mamata Medical College done over a period of one month after getting approval from Institutional Ethics Committee. Among the 150 students only 100 students were included in my study after obtaining their consent. Since 30 of them were late joining and 20 were absent at any given time, these 50 students were excluded from the study. The Teaching Schedule of AETCOM Module was systematically designed which Had Four Sessions Including Three Hours Each. This is the first batch of students who had this foundation course which will help them while interacting with various types of patients during the subsequent years of their under graduation. The sessions of the course were spent in theoretical teaching of the students. Later, they were taught about the importance of proper communication with patients, role of doctors in the society, communication skills with peers and teachers. We also focused on ‘student-patient interaction’, in which the students were taught about proper method of communication within patients during their clinical posting. Major emphasis was given on their appearance, dressing, language, nonverbal communication, proper way to start and conclude the conversation. All the sessions were very interactive. We had video presentations, live role plays and symposium. They also had a interaction where every student he/she presented his/her experience of conversation with his/her patient and his/her relatives. This discussion benefited all the students as they also came to know about the common problems faced during

communication with various types of patients and about the proper way to interact with them. They were also given different case scenarios related to attitude and ethics and were encouraged to discuss in the sessions on how they would react in such situations. At the end of the module Feedback on their perception was obtained by Likert scale and data was collected and analysed.

RESULTS

Among the 150 batch students (2019 batch) who were supposed to join the MBBS course, most (30) of the first-year students were late joining for the foundation course because of the delay in the counselling, whereas at any given time 20 students were absent for these teaching sessions. So, 100 students only were included in my study. All these 100 students were given the same questionnaire. (Table 1 & Figure 1). AETCOM Module was satisfactory for 84% of students. For 12% it was just satisfactory, On the other extreme 4% students were highly satisfied. (Table 2, Figure 2).

Students Participation	No. of Students (n=150)	Percentage
Actively Participated	100	66.7%
Late joining in the course	30	20%
Absentees for the sessions	20	13.3%
Total	150	100%

Table 1. Students’ Participation (N=150)

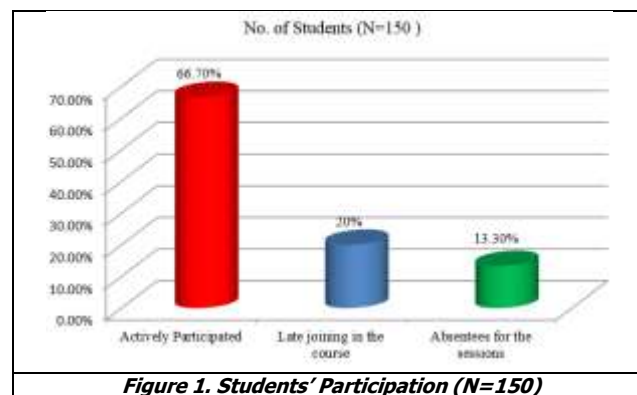


Figure 1. Students’ Participation (N=150)

Students Satisfaction	No. of Students (n=100)	%
Satisfactory	84	84%
Just satisfactory	12	12%
Highly satisfactory	04	04%
Total	100	100%

Table 2. Students Satisfaction on AETCOM Module (N=100)

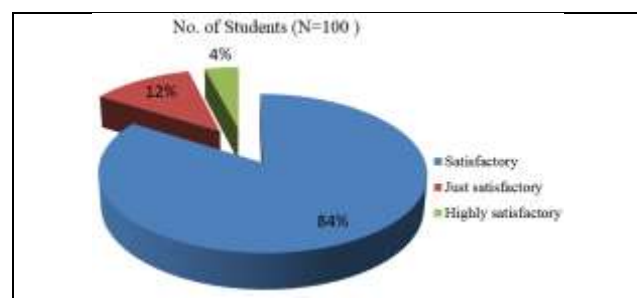


Figure 2. Students Satisfaction regarding AETCOM Module (N=100)

Perception by Students	No. of Students (n=100)	%
Asset for gaining patients confidence	72	72%
Useful for them and future practice	10	10%
Excellent method for improving the diagnosis	08	08%
Wanted exposure to AETCOM continuously throughout their UG course	06	06%
Can Avoid Medico Legal Issues	04	04%
Total	100	100%

Table 3. Students Perception on AETCOM Module (N=100)

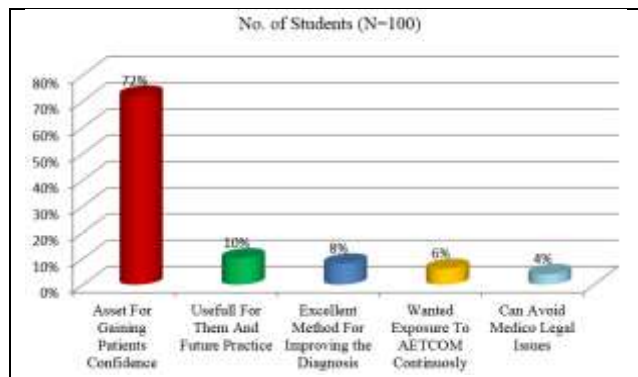


Figure 3. Students Perception on AETCOM Module (N=100)

Students Opinion	No. of Students (N=150)	%
Definitely usefull to improve communication skills	92	92%
Occasionally usefull	05	05%
No comments	03	03%
Total	100	100%

Table 4. Students Opinion Regarding AETCOM (N=100)

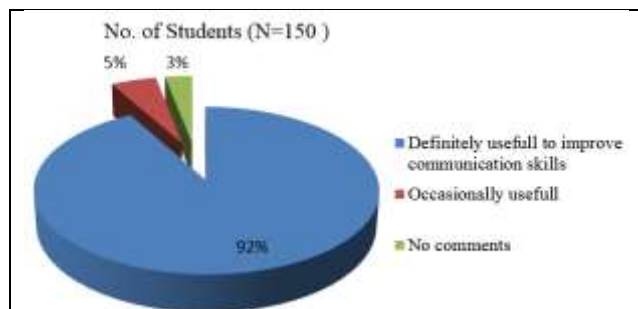


Figure 4. Students Opinion Regarding AETCOM (N=100)

Students views on AETCOM were - Asset for gaining confidence of the patients (72%), Useful for themselves and for future practice (10%), excellent method for improvement of diagnosis (8%), wanted multiple exposures continuously throughout the UG course (6%) and can avoid medico legal issues (4%). (Table 3, Figure 3) A majority of the students (92%) opined that the AETCOM Module will definitely improve their communication skills with the patients. They also felt that such training should be integrated in regular teaching curriculum and done continuously in all the semesters. (Table 4, Figure 4)

DISCUSSION

92% of our students expressed that their communication skills with the patients would be improved with these sessions on AETCOM. Similar finding were observed in other

studies done by Jagzape TB et al., Towle A and Hoffman J; and Wagner PJ et al., Jagzape TB et al., in their observational study found a 78.46% improvement in communication skills experienced by the students.⁵ Similarly, in their five-module advanced communication skills course; Towle et al., obtained a high rating both by students and tutors alike.⁶ In a study by Wagner PJ et al., four interactive lab sessions were designed and assessed on several parameters.⁷ They reported a significant overall improvement in students-patients communication following this structured learning programme. The same 92% of the students opined that communication skills training should be compulsorily included in MBBS curriculum and found that they were Definitely useful to improve their communication skills. This matched with the observation of Jagzape TB et al., In last few years, several studies have been conducted at different medical and dental colleges of our country in relation to early teaching of communication skills to the students during undergraduation period.^{8,9,10,11,12,13} Each study is based on different methods of teaching and assessment of communication skills of medical students, but all of them concluded that the introduction of such teaching courses improves communication skills of the students. AETCOM Module was satisfactory for 84% of students. For 12% it was just satisfactory, On the other extreme 4% students were highly satisfied. They were satisfied after teaching them the 5 A's Model.

A Flexible & Patient Centered Approach for Assessment and Intervention. The model includes Introduction to behavioural health consultation service for 1-2 min. Assessment done by Identifying /clarifying consultation problem in 1 min and conducting functional assessment in 12-15 minutes. Advise includes Summarizing understanding of the problem in next 1-2 min and Listing possible change-plan options for 1-2 min or beginning Motivational Interviewing for the patient. Agreement done by Engaging the patient in determining a course of action, if any. Assisting by Starting a change in the plan for 10 min and finally Arrangement done for Determining and discussing next steps and communicating plan to healthcare team. Total time taken would be for 30 minutes.¹⁴ we also taught them how different systems are related to patient's health with examples for each. Environmental or Systems Theory where behaviour is influenced by a person's environment. So, Interventions aimed at the individual and the environment have potential for positive outcomes. Human Developmental Theory says that People have different needs and capacities related to the current phase of their life history. Grief and Loss Theory where all persons experience losses that have the potential to result in feelings and reactions like denial, anger, depression, bargaining, and acceptance. Lastly, Social Support Theory where No one should try to go it alone. Having access to a network of support may result in improved healthcare outcomes.¹⁵ We asked the students to apply the theory to practice we also had activity - brainstorming on at least 2 questions for each theory that lead them to a better understanding of the person. After learning all these theories, Students views on AETCOM were

- Asset for gaining confidence of the patients (72%), Useful for themselves and for future practice (10%), excellent method for improvement of diagnosis (8%), wanted multiple exposures continuously throughout the UG course (6%) and can avoid medico legal issues (4%). We also told the students about patient Empowerment which is a process by which people gain mastery over their lives¹⁶ told by J. Rappaport in his article. Empowerment is defined as an educational process designed to help patients develop the knowledge, skills, attitudes, and degree of self-awareness necessary to effectively assume responsibility for their health-related decisions¹⁷ by Feste-Anderson and finally "Increased self-efficacy allows patients to view disease and symptoms differently, giving more opportunities for effective self-management",¹⁸ with this the students were convinced about the fact that the patient empowerment has a key role in the effective management of their disease.

CONCLUSIONS

The AETCOM Module will be good for the first MBBS students on the whole for communicating better with the patients in their medical course. Strengths of this study include feedback from the students for further improvement in the long-term outcome.

REFERENCES

- [1] Stewart M, Brown JB, Boon H, et al. Evidence on patient-doctor communication. *Cancer Prev Control* 1999;3(1):25-30.
- [2] Morgan WL, Engel GL. *The clinical approach to the patient*. Philadelphia: WB Saunders 1969.
- [3] Simmenroth-Nayda A, Weiss C, Fischer T, et al. Do communication training programs improve students' communication skills?--a follow-up study. *BMC Res Notes* 2012;5:486.
- [4] Medical Council of India. *VISION 2015* (Internet). New Delhi Mar 2011.
- [5] Jagzape TB, Jagzape AT, Vagha JD, et al. Perception of medical students about Communication Skills Laboratory (CSL) in a rural medical college of central India. *J Clin Diagn Res* 2015;9(12):JC01-JC04.
- [6] Towle A, Hoffman J. An advanced communication skills course for fourth-year, post-clerkship students. *Acad Med* 2002;77(11):1165-1166.
- [7] Wagner PJ, Lentz L, Heslop SD. Teaching communication skills: a skills - based approach. *Acad Med* 2002;77(11):1164.
- [8] Sngappa SB, Tekian A. Communication skills course in an Indian undergraduate dental curriculum: a randomized controlled trial. *J Dent Educ* 2013;77(8):1092-1098.
- [9] Choudhary A, Gupta V. Teaching communication skills to medical students: introducing the fine art of medical practice. *Int J Appl Basic Med Res* 2015;5(Suppl 1):41-44.
- [10] Komattil R, Hande SH, Mohammed CA, et al. Evaluation of a personal and professional development module in an undergraduate medical curriculum in India. *Korean J Med Educ* 2016;28(1):117-121.
- [11] Ashin S, Shahid A, Gondal GM. Teaching communication skills and medical ethics to undergraduate medical students. *J Adv Med & Prof* 2013;1(3):72-76.
- [12] Modi JN, Anshu-Chhatwal J, Gupta P, et al. Teaching and assessing communication skills in medical undergraduate training. *Indian Pediatr* 2016;53(6):497-504.
- [13] Naineni K, Rao GVR, Saie U, et al. Addressing the challenges of training in communication skills in medicine in India. *Journal of Research in Medical Education and Ethics* 2016;6(1):10-14.
- [14] Hunter CL, Goodie JL, Oordt MS, et al. *Integrated behavioral health in primary care: step by step guidance for assessment and intervention*. 2nd edn. Washington, DC: American Psychological Association 2009.
- [15] Robbins SP, Chatterjee P, Canda ER. *Contemporary human behavior theory: a critical perspective for social work*. New York: Allyn & Bacon 2005.
- [16] Rappaport J. Term of empowerment/exemplars of prevention: toward a theory for community psychology. *American Journal of Community Psychology* 1987;15(2):121-148.
- [17] Feste C, Anderson RM. Empowerment: from philosophy to practice. *Patient Educ Couns* 1995;26(1-3):139-144.
- [18] Gonzalez VM, Goepfinger J, Lorig K. Four psychosocial theories and their application to patient education and clinical practice. *Arthritis Care Res* 1990;3(3):132-143.