



ORIGINAL ARTICLE

Pharmacy education instruction: Preference and practices, Saudi students' perception



Mirghani A. Yousif ^{a,*}, Ahmed S. Eldalo ^b, Mustafa A. Abd Allah ^a,
Mohammed A. Al-Sawat ^c, Haitham M. Al-Wahaibi ^c, Abd Allah S. Al-Osaimi ^c,
Salman H. Al-Gethami ^c

^a Department of Clinical Pharmacy, College of Pharmacy, Taif University, Saudi Arabia

^b Department of Pharmacology, College of Pharmacy, Taif University, Saudi Arabia

^c Pharm. D student, College of Pharmacy, Taif University, Saudi Arabia

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Abstract *Aim/Background:* The methods of instruction in pharmacy education are crucial and meant to suit the professional development and encompass the advanced variety of services and functions provided by the pharmacists to serve individual patients. The aim of this study was to determine the students' opinions on the adopted and preferred methods of instruction in pharmacy colleges in Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

Methods: Opinions of Saudi pharmacy students regarding the adopted methods of learning were measured using a pretested questionnaire combined with Likert-type scales.

Results: Three hundred pharmacy students were interviewed. Direct type of lecturing was dominant (53.7%). The most frequently used language of instruction was combined English and Arabic (48.8%), that was mostly preferred by 52.5% of the students. Handouts were the most adopted post-lecture learning method (48.3%), while only 5.9% used student's self-written notes. A cocktail of traditional and electronic aids was used as admitted by 68.7% and 59.3% of the students who preferred this lecture delivery method. Almost half (49.3%) of the students agreed of having a routine fair guidance and support when referring to their lecturers.

* Corresponding author. Address: Department of Clinical Pharmacy, College of Pharmacy, Taif University, Al-Haweiah, P.O. Box 888, Zip Code 21974, Saudi Arabia. Tel.: +966 567 484804.

E-mail addresses: mirghani53@yahoo.com, y.mirghani@tu.edu.sa (M.A. Yousif).

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Conclusion: The study outcomes had revealed a practical guidance to be considered for instituting preferred modes of instruction to upgrading students' capacities for better understanding and acquiring academic and professional skills.

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1. Introduction

Pharmacy education in its broadest meaning is to qualify graduate with the core knowledge of pharmaceutical sciences as well as to equip him/her for lifelong knowledge and training in science and practice (Asiri, 2011). Radical shift was attained in the concept of pharmacy education, patient-focused as an alternative to the old product orientation one is rapidly becoming globally an essential component of pharmacy education, although, some developing countries remain influenced by the traditional type of pharmacy education. Pharmacy education methods should clearly qualify a graduate to meet patients' perceptions and perspectives toward medications being important determinants of the success of health intervention strategies (Hassali et al., 2011). The adopted type and methods of instruction in pharmacy education are crucial and groundbreaking concepts to suit the professional development and encompass the advanced variety of services and functions provided by the pharmacists to serve individual patients (Wiedenmayer et al., 2006). In general the curricula contents as well as the adopted instruction methods should meet the patients' need and should curb the treatment misadventures. The Vancouver Consultancy agreed that pharmacists must possess specific knowledge, attitudes, skills and behaviors to equip them to perform their roles effectively (FIP 2000). It is right to state that classroom teaching enables the instructor to stimulate critical thinking among students, but this was limited by many factors (David and Dianne, 2009). These limitations had led to the development of different teaching methods and tools that overcome issues like one way communication, passive audience and learning assessment. Many studies were carried out to measure the impact of different teaching methods adopted for pharmacy students (Khan et al., 2012). The traditional chalkboard method was used which was replaced by computer-assisted multimedia methods, despite this development; the importance of class room-based learning should not be neglected. This was confirmed by Hossein and Abdus (2005), since, electronic teaching materials may contribute toward passive learning and students only retain *short-term memory information*.

The objective of this study was to determine the students' opinions and preference on the adopted methods of instruction in pharmacy colleges in Saudi Arabia as well as to train them in doing a survey research.

2. Materials and methods

2.1. Design and setting

This cross sectional study was carried out among final batches of pharmacy students in different randomly selected colleges of pharmacy in KSA in the year 2012. The research work was approved and funded by the Secretariat of Postgraduates and Scientific Research, Taif University. Personal consents were

obtained from participants prior to their enrollment in the study. The inclusion criterion was the final Saudi pharmacy students who were duly registered at the time of the study in the randomly selected colleges of pharmacy in Saudi universities.

2.2. Survey development

An inclusive questionnaire was used to elicit general opinions of the students on different variables to address the study's objectives. Different opinions' variables that authors believed most potential to reflect pharmacy students' perception on the adopted and preferred methods of instruction were designed. The survey instrument underwent a face validity check with number of students for respondents' understanding assurance. The survey consisted of four parts that were collectively composed of 31 questions.

2.3. Survey content

The questionnaire consisted of 4 parts. The first part (9 questions) dealt with students' demographic characteristics and basic information on: gender, age, academic level, academic status, first intake grade. The second part of the questionnaire (17 questions) dealt with the methods of instruction. The third part (12 questions) composed of assorted questions to measure the students' opinions and preference on the instruction methods. The last part constituted of six questions (*three open questions and three closed ones*) on whether this type of research may raise awareness to improve the instruction modes in pharmacy education and investigating on whether the Saudi pharmacy students were well convinced and duly satisfied with the applied methods of instruction. The survey tool was tested for internal consistency and then piloted on random convenient sample of pharmacy students in the College of Pharmacy, Taif University. The piloted data was not included in the study sample.

2.4. Data processing

Data was processed by using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS), windows version (16). The differences in the participants' responses were analyzed with chi-square and Fisher's exact tests. The 0.05 level of significance was used as a cutoff measure for statistical significance.

3. Results

Table 1 showed that the majority of the responded students in the current study were males 250 (83.3%), 164 (56.9%) of them aged above 22 years, 220 (73.3%) of the students were living in urban areas. Interestingly, more than half of the heads of the families 168 (56%) had a university level of education.

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