



## Original article

## Evaluating the preceptor–preceptee relationship among Pharm D students at the King Saud University School of Pharmacy

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## ABSTRACT

**Objective:** To evaluate preceptee satisfaction concerning preceptorship and the preceptor–preceptee relationship among pharmacy students.

**Methods:** A cross-sectional study was conducted from May 2017 to August 2017 on senior Pharm D students at King Saud University (KSU) College of Pharmacy. A survey instrument was used to get feedback from students regarding their clinical rotations and internships and to evaluate their satisfaction toward preceptorship to meet the goals of the curriculum. Data were entered into SPSS, version 24.

**Results:** Of the 52 students surveyed, 36 (69.2%) were female. More than half of respondents were somewhat satisfied with their preceptors and 11.5% were satisfied. Additionally, only 17% of students rated their preceptors as having excellent clinical teaching skills; about 19% of students rated them as “needs improvement.” About 40% of students rated their preceptors as very good, concerned, competent, and safe in their care for persons living with serious co-morbidities and diseases. About half of students (48.1%) rated their non-faculty KSU preceptors’ teaching behavior as not satisfactory compared with only four respondents with respect to KSU faculty preceptors’ teaching behavior.

**Conclusion:** Pharm D students were somewhat satisfied with their preceptors’ teaching behaviors in communication skills, practice, and teaching skills as well as feedback and evaluation to students. To enhance the quality of experiential education, preceptors should be trained to develop programs that direct and energize advancement.

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## 1. Introduction

The concept of “preceptorship” was first introduced in the nursing profession in the early 1970s (Hyrkas et al., 2014) and it has been widely used in postgraduate and undergraduate pharmacy and medical education programs globally (Dibert and Goldenberg, 1995; Letizia and Jennrich, 1998; Usher et al., 1999). The popularity of this program increased during the 1980s and today this model is used by both clinical and medical educational professionals (Hyrkas and Shoemaker, 2007).

Later, the American Association of Colleges of Pharmacy (AAPC) recognized preceptor development as a crucial component of quality academic education (Boyle et al., 2002). The University of Maryland School of Pharmacy considered, established, and implemented

the Academy of Preceptors to provide student-based education and skills-oriented learning experiences (Yonge et al., 2002).

Preceptorship is a way to enculturate new employees into their role and to benefit students, or preceptees by instilling confidence in their clinical practice within a specified period of time (1–2 months) (Association, 2004). To facilitate this, a preceptorship program was implemented. An effective preceptorship program provides preceptors with an opportunity to teach, effect practice, and broaden knowledge, and provides successful placements for preceptees as they gain effective confidence in their clinical skills management (Zilembo and Monterosso, 2008).

A preceptor is a well-qualified professional who has experience in supervision, teaching, assessment, and the provision of endless feedback and has completed a preceptorship program (Hyrkas and Shoemaker, 2007). The preceptor serves as a role model, facilitator, liaison, and educator. Preceptorship is particularly useful for senior level and graduate health care students in advanced practice roles (Hyrkas and Shoemaker, 2007).

However, earlier published studies found some challenges to become an effective preceptor: for example, increased work load, lack of required time, and human resources, balancing scientific

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and didactic demands that lead to chances of stress and discomfort with the preceptor role (Carlson et al., 2010; Hilli et al., 2014). In addition, preceptors face the challenge of preceptees that lack knowledge toward learning (Yonge et al., 2002). Collaborative preceptorship, which combines the efforts of both parties (preceptee and preceptor), is important for students to achieve their clinical education goals and is crucial for pharmacy students.

To date, no study has been conducted in Saudi Arabia to evaluate the satisfaction of pharmacy students (preceptees) with respect to practical teaching techniques, and there is no continuous evaluation of knowledge and practical skills of preceptors and preceptees at clinical sites. This is a vital component in the provision of excellent clinical education and to develop a strong and effective clinical pharmacy workforce in Saudi Arabia. Therefore, the objective of this study was to evaluate preceptees satisfaction concerning preceptorship and the preceptor–preceptee relationship among pharmacy students from King Saud University College of Pharmacy, Saudi Arabia.

## 2. Methods

A cross-sectional study was conducted in King Saud University College of Pharmacy (KSU-COP). A survey instrument was used to get feedback from Pharm D students regarding their clinical rotations and internships and to evaluate their satisfaction toward preceptorship to meet the goals of the curriculum. Senior Pharm D students undertaking experimental clinical rotations in hospital were invited to participate in the study over a four-month period (May 2017–August 2017).

A self-administered questionnaire was adopted from previous (Hyrkas et al., 2014). The questionnaire was designed to evaluate preceptee satisfaction about the preceptor's effectiveness. It was consisted of three parts. First part of the questionnaire related to basic characteristic (i.e. practice sites, number rotations etc.). Second part of the questionnaire consisted of 5 questions to assess the clinical & communication skills development as “excellent”, “very good”, “satisfactory”, and “needs improvement”. Third part includes 6 questions about practice and teaching experience. In this section participants were asked to evaluate their preceptors; practice and teaching experience based on a scale of 1 to 4 where 1 = excellent, 2 = very good, 3 = satisfactory, and 4 = needs improvement. Fourth part composed of 12 questions designed to assess the feedback and evaluation. It involved a closed ended question (yes and no) and a 4 scale (not satisfied at all, somewhat satisfied, satisfied and very satisfied).

### 2.1. Data analysis

Data were entered into SPSS, version 24 (IBM Corporation, Armonk, NY, USA). Data were analyzed by descriptive statistics and results are displayed as frequencies and percentages.

## 3. Results

A total of 52 students were surveyed. Of them, 36(69.2%) were female. More than half of respondents (55.8%) reported having worked at 2–4 sites during their internships. Half of respondents had been precepted in 4–6 rotations by faculty of KSU during pharmacy practice. The other half attended the same number of rotations but was precepted by non-faculty of KSU (Table 1).

### 3.1. Clinical and communication skills development

When students were asked to rank their preceptors regarding the clinical, environmental and patient/client needs, about 34% of

**Table 1**

Basic characteristics of the participants.

Questions	Answers	Frequency (%)
Gender		
Male		16 (30.8)
Female		36 (69.2)
Number of sites where you performed your internship year	One site 2–4 sites 5–6 sites >6 sites	2 (3.8) 29 (55.8) 12 (23.1) 9 (17.3)
How many rotations were precepted by a faculty member of KSU-COP?	None 1–3 4–6 7–10	1 (1.9) 20 (38.5) 26 (50.0) 5 (9.6)
How many rotations were precepted by a non-faculty member of KSU-COP?	None 1–3 4–6 7–10	1 (1.9) 10 (19.2) 27 (51.9) 14 (26.9)

Abbreviation: KSU-COP, King Saud University College of Pharmacy.

**Table 2**

Assessment of preceptors in clinical and communication skills development.

Questions	Answers	Frequency (%)
Made me feel welcome	Excellent Very good Satisfactory Needs improvement	3 (5.8) 25 (48.1) 16 (30.8) 7 (13.5)
Identified my previous knowledge and skills, and set goals with me for further development	Excellent Very good Satisfactory Needs improvement	6 (11.5) 17 (32.7) 18 (34.6) 11 (21.2)
Had a good knowledge of the clinical, environmental, and patient/client needs, and helped me understand and develop my skills	Excellent Very good Satisfactory Needs improvement	8 (15.4) 16 (30.8) 21 (40.4) 7 (13.5)
Was approachable and communicated clearly	Excellent Very good Satisfactory Needs improvement	8 (15.4) 20 (38.5) 16 (30.8) 8 (15.4)
Assisted me in identifying others who could support my learning	Excellent Very good Satisfactory Needs improvement	4 (7.7) 10 (19.2) 24 (46.2) 14 (26.9)

respondents rated their preceptor as satisfactory, and 21.1% as needs improvements. Only 5.8% of respondents rated their preceptors about “made me feel welcome” as excellent. More ratings on the communication skills of preceptors are listed in Table 2.

### 3.2. Practice and teaching

When students were asked to rank their preceptors on effective clinical teaching skills, about 19% of students rated them as “needs improvement.” For confidence in utilizing clinical situations to assist student learning, approximately 17% of students rated their preceptors as excellent, 30.8% as very good, 32.7% as satisfactory, and 19.2% as needs improvement. For knowledge of practice and patient/client centered care, 40.4% of respondents rated their preceptors as satisfactory, and 11.5% as needs improvement. About 40% of students rated their preceptors as very good, competent, and safe in their care for persons living with serious

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