STUDENT’S PERCEPTION ABOUT INCREASING PRODUCTIVITY DURING DISSECTION HALL TIME- A QUESTIONNAIRE BASED STUDY

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ABSTRACT

Introduction: A first year medical student spends around 600 hours in anatomy. Time tested cadaveric dissection is considered as the heart of anatomy learning by young students as well as eminent medical professionals. The reason for the introduction of other sources being constrained time schedule with growing internet generation which forces the anatomy faculty to blend in to make the subject interesting.

Aims and Objectives: The aim of the study was to quantify student’s perception on the cadaveric teaching and their view on integration of other tools in dissection hall, also assessing different ways to increase their productivity in dissection hall time.

Material and methods: A cross-sectional questionnaire-based survey was conducted in the Department Of Anatomy, Government Medical College, Chandigarh, India on 27 and 28th of May 2019. A predesigned 11 item questionnaire was circulated to 101 outgoing first-year MBBS students out of which 93 students participated.

Results and conclusion: Majority of the students(90%) feel that there cannot be any replacement for actual cadaveric dissection. the maximum students (84%) preferred you tube videos as compared to mobile applications (6%) thereby stating that these apps do not aid much in their learning.

KEYWORDS: Digital sources, Cadaveric teaching, Dissection Hall.

INTRODUCTION

Cadaveric dissection is the heart of Anatomy and it is held at such high estoms by both young students and eminent professors. A first-year MBBS student spends almost two-thirds of his/her academic year in the dissection hall. Hence it is important to make that time as productive and engaging as possible [1]. Modern teaching techniques such as YouTube videos, multimedia dissectors, 3 D model, computer-based atlas, etc have started taking over in the Western countries despite cadaveric dissection being important and indispensable. Increasing digitalization in the medical field and...
an internet hungry generation forces the anatomy faculty to integrate such teaching methods with the conventional ones [2,3].

But these modern techniques are not without pitfalls. Costs, complexity, and maintenance are some. And despite the digital era’s influence, the adventure of exploring and appreciation of structures in cadaveric dissection with all our senses is inestimably precious. Besides, studies on digital teaching in the dissection hall have proved it to be less productive. Other methods to increase productivity that have been proved effective include includes active engagements of students like small group discussion, questioning sessions, active recall, practice tests, etc. Also, a knowledge of applied aspects of the topic before the dissection will stimulate the curiosity of the student and enjoy the dissection [4,5].

The average adult human attention span is just 10-20 minutes and it is important to deliver a lesson effectively with attempts to increase this time with stimulation of multiple senses. Thought the integration of digital sources might seem to be the need of the hour, it is important to implement change with strong evidence [5].

So this study aims to quantify student’s perception of the cadaveric teaching and their view on the integration of other tools in dissection hall, also assessing different ways to increase their productivity in dissection hall time. This study will prove useful for future dissection hall design in medical institutions around the world.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

A cross-sectional questionnaire-based survey was conducted in the Department of Anatomy, Government Medical College, Chandigarh, India in May 2019. A predesigned 11 item questionnaire was circulated to 101 outgoing first-year MBBS students out of which 93 students participated (92% of the total). The freedom of being anonymous was given to obtain an unbiased response and they could choose more than one option in selected questions. The supplementary material is available in the appendix. The principles of ethical research according to the Declaration of Helsinki were followed.

The participants had a dissection hall routine of 15 hours of dissection hall per week on average commensurate with the MCI guidelines which had various activities like demonstration (2 hrs/week), dissection, group learning, and discussion with embryology and 3D plastic models, histology lab. The questionnaire was developed by the investigators considering the current routine in dissection hall and facilities available. The questionnaire addressed various aspects like digital vs. cadaveric teaching method, teaching methodology in dissection hall and factors affecting the productivity.

The authors declare that they have no external interest or any other remunerated engagements and/or other significant financial interests in the study.

RESULTS

The quantified analysis was done to analyse the response. There is an unequivocal preference for cadaveric dissection. Majority of the students (90%) feel that there cannot be any replacement for actual cadaveric dissection. However, there is a strong opinion (97% of students) that digital sources can be integrated as an effective teaching modality. There is an overwhelming preference of students to teach them clinical importance of the subject before proceeding for anatomical and theoretical details and also the dissection (Table 1).

Students advocate more regular oral examinations, structured or otherwise. In addition, assigning specific topics for the day increases their capacity to retain a specific topic (Table 2). Out of all associated teaching modalities, 3D models in the museum, followed by youtube videos (42%) got higher response and the least preference was for E notebook (Figure 1). For self learning, the maximum students (84%) preferred youtube videos as compared to mobile applications (6%) thereby stating that these apps do not aid much in their learning (Figure 2).

Despite digital integration, students still prefer continuous interaction with teachers in the dissection hall. 55% of the students were in the favour of a compassionate teacher who takes in their opinion and adjust the complexity of teaching accordingly. A compassionate teacher who takes in the student’s opinion and acts
Accordingly was the major choice of the students (55%) followed by a thoughtful teacher who gives them freedom to explore themselves (30%) and then a meticulous teacher who gives them specific instruction and expects it to be done in stipulated time (15%). (Figure 4)

**DISCUSSION**

Dissection of the human body is an inauguration ritual for a first-year medical student and the dissection hall serves as the chapel for that ritual. So, utilizing this time effectively is a fundamental step in building a great doctor.

**Integration is a necessity:** Time tested cadaveric dissection is the imperative method to learn gross anatomy due to its realistic exposure to human tissues. An experimental study proves the superiority of cadaveric dissection where the students exposed to cadaveric teaching performed better than those exposed to PowerPoint-based small group sessions [1,5].

In this era of artificial intelligence, integrating digital modalities in the dissection hall has...
Mobile phones were surprisingly least desired by students as a learning tool despite its advantages like real-time interaction and personalized learning. The reason might be higher distractibility, lack of standardization and inconvenience with a smaller screen [10,11].

**Ways to increase productivity:** The selective sustained attention span of an average human adult is about 10 to 20 minutes and this is further declining according to recent studies. Fortunately, this attention span can be increased by involving the students in an inherently motivating task. A neuroscience studies also prove that pleasurable classroom activities stimulate dopamine release which enhances the memory center and the release of acetylcholine which can increase focused attention. So shorter teaching sessions (as suggested by 53% of the students) within their attention span employing multiple modalities to stimulate senses can improve the efficacy of learning [12,13].

The other way to improve productivity involves the active engagement of students in the learning process in addition to traditional dissection alone. Vale et al [14] emphasized the importance of posing questions and their role in improving critical thinking. Encouraging students to pose questions is crucial and this curiosity can be watered by teaching clinical anatomy before dissection which can make dissection more interesting.

The students unanimously were positive towards active oral examinations and revision enhanced their confidence in the exam and better retention of the topic. This statement is supported by evidence from studies done by Benware C and Deci E “Quality of Learning With an Active Versus Passive Motivational Set” and another study also had results supporting active learning more productive than passive learning [15,16].

Another finding of the study is to have a specific topic for the day assigned by the teacher. This assigning tasks and topics and its productivity benefits have been earlier proved by a study from Harvard by Robert c Pozen and Kevin Downey from 19957 participants from different
Continents showed that completing assigned tasks were a habit of productive people [17]. The factors decreasing their productivity have also been addressed in this study. A few are the book of interest not being allowed, mobile phones and friends. Only a very few think that none of these affect their productivity in contrast to the majority.

Above all, an eminent teacher is an inspiration and has a great influence on the student’s perception of the subject. The students chose for compassionate teachers who take in their opinions and act accordingly followed by a thoughtful teacher who gives freedom to explore themselves. A meticulous teacher giving specific instruction to finish within frame time is least preferred. This shows that a teacher must be versatile to help students without compromising the discipline in the dissection hall.

In conclusion, it has been proven that the combination of the teacher, the student, and the content is highly interrelated and plays a major role in a classroom. This feedback survey reflects the requirement of the students and enlightens us with the student’s perception of the benefits and drawbacks of various activities in the dissection hall. It has also provided enough information to enhance productivity to a higher level in the dissection hall.

Conflicts of Interests: None

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