

A Study on Preferences of I M.B.B.S Students about Internal Assessment Tools

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Abstract: Introduction: Assessments play an important role in determining what and how students learn. Reviewing the teaching and assessment methods periodically and modifying methodologies are a must for the improvement in undergraduate teaching. Student and peer feedback help the faculty to identify the strengths and weaknesses of their teaching and student evaluation methods to meet the needs of the students. **Aim:** To study I MBBS student preferences about tools of evaluation, used for internal assessment in Human Physiology **Methodology:** This is an observational study conducted in Shri Vasantnao Naik, Govt. Medical College, Yavatmal, from September 2015 to December 2015. The data was collected by administering a pre-designed questionnaire on 130 student (II semester) regarding preferences about various types of assessment tools. **Results:** 74(56.9%) students preferred MCQ as assessment questions and most of them, i.e. 91(70%) preferred a schedule that had daily or weekly assessment tests **Conclusion:** The findings of this study will pave a way to many elaborative studies in different settings and geographical areas across India which would lead to a more student friendly assessment designs and schedules.

Keywords: Assessment, Preference, Schedule, Frequency

Introduction:

It has been shown time and after that assessments play an important role in determining what and how students learn. There is a lot of truth in the statement "assessment drives learning". Therefore we can use assessments to convey to students what is important and motivate them to study. Assessments also help to identify areas of deficiency or gaps in learning. Assessment thus forms an integral part of the teaching-learning-assessment cycle, and planning of instruction should include assessment planning.

Assessments are effective when they are designed to assess a clearly defined set of learning outcomes. They provide information that is meaningful, dependable and relevant and seem fair to everyone. Specific learning weaknesses are revealed by the assessment results. The results provide information useful for evaluating the appropriateness of the objectives, the methods and materials of instruction.

Therefore, reviewing the teaching and assessment method periodically and modifying methodologies are a must for the improvement in undergraduate teaching. Student and peer feedback help the faculty to identify the strengths and weaknesses of their teaching and student evaluation methods to meet the needs of the students.⁽¹⁻³⁾ It is an inexpensive and valuable tool to improve the quality of teaching and student assessment. This study was undertaken to elicit the perception of the students

regarding their preferences about the prevailing tools of assessment.⁽⁴⁾

Aims & Objectives:

Aim: To study I MBBS students preferences about tools of evaluation, used for internal assessment in Human Physiology

Objectives:

- To know the most preferred type of questions administered in Physiology internal assessment examinations by students
- To find out the most convenient frequency of internal assessment tests

Material & Method:

This is an observational study conducted in Shri Vasantnao Naik, Govt. Medical College, Yavatmal, from September 2015 to December 2015.

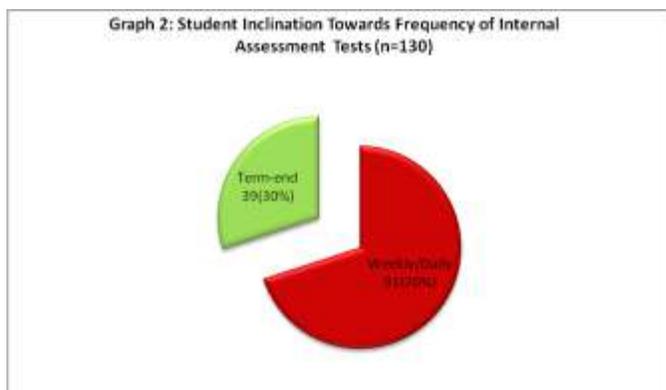
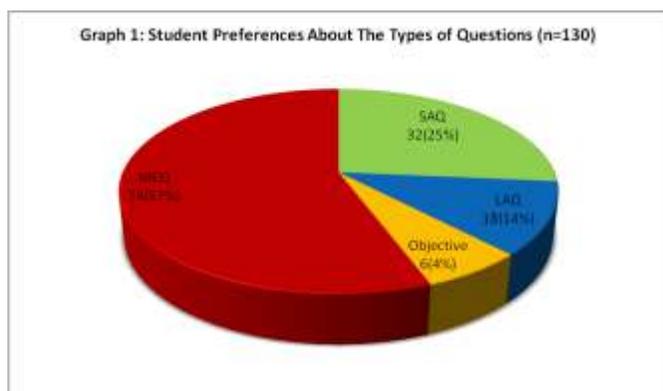
After permission and approval from Institutional ethical committee, the data was collected by administering a pre-designed & pre-validated questionnaire regarding open and close-ended questions pertaining to student (II semester) preferences about various types of assessment tools used by Physiology faculty during I semester internal assessment examinations. Informed consent was taken from all the students included in the study, before their participation and all 130 II semester students present on the day of data collection day were included in the study.

Results:

The data thus collected was analysed by using percentages and was presented in graphical format.

The students when asked about the types of questions they prefer in examinations, whether internal assessment or at university exams, 74(56.9%) out of 130 students preferred MCQ as assessment questions in theory while 32 (24.6%) preferred SAQ, 18 (13.8%) preferred LAQ and the remaining 6(4.6%) preferred other objective type questions like fill-in-the-blanks, match the following etc.

When student inclination towards the most preferred frequency of internal assessment tests was sought, 91(70%) students were inclined to a schedule that had daily or weekly assessment tests while the remaining 39 (30 %) students preferred only a term end assessment pattern.



Discussion:

The students when asked about the types of questions they prefer in examinations, whether internal assessment or at university exams, 74(56.9%) out of 130 students preferred MCQ ;this finding is similar to a study conducted in Manipur⁴, in which multiple choice questions were preferred by 74% of the participating students. But the findings were different from the findings of two Indian studies conducted in 2005 and 1999, which found that

long questions were the most preferred types of questions.^(5,6)

When student inclination towards the most preferred frequency of internal assessment tests were sought, 91(70%) students were inclined to a schedule that had daily or weekly assessment tests. 50% suggested a monthly evaluation. These findings were similar to a study conducted in Manipur, in which majority of the student preferred weekly internal assessment / Tutorials over term-end assessment schedule.⁽⁴⁾ In another study conducted in Patiala,⁽⁷⁾ most of the students favoured regular assessment tests but suggested that too frequent internal assessment exams reduce the time for self-preparation and also with other studies that suggest similar schedule.⁽⁸⁾ For any assessment, the content, format and frequency of assessment, as well as the timing, should be aligned with the specific goals of the medical education program.⁽⁷⁾

Conclusions:

The study findings confirm the well-known belief that for students, MCQs are the most preferred types of tools of assessment for both internal and university level examinations. Internal assessment examinations should be held regularly but not too frequently during the course. It is the evaluation system rather than the educational objectives, curriculum or instructional techniques that have the most profound impact on what the students ultimately learn. The findings of this study will pave a way to many elaborative studies in different settings and geographical areas across India which would lead to a more student friendly assessment designs and schedules.

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