CORRELATION OF ATTENDANCE AND ACADEMICS OF UNDERGRADUATE BDS STUDENTS OF SHARIF COLLEGE OF DENTISTRY, SMDC, LAHORE

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Abstract

Objective: To find the correlation between attendance and academic performance of undergraduate BDS students from Sharif College of Dentistry about their different academic subjects.

Materials & Methods: A study was conducted on the students of Bachelor of Dental Surgery (BDS) enrolled in Sharif College of Dentistry, Lahore. The students were divided into two categories based on their attendance record, which was the final aggregate of the attendance throughout the year. The other record used was the academic record, which was the final aggregate of the academic performance throughout the year. The students were divided into five categories based on their academics. The data was analyzed using SPSS version 23, and all nominal data was entered in frequencies and percentages whereas numerical data was entered as mean with its respective standard deviation. Pearson correlation test was applied to determine any correlation between attendance and academic performance. P-value i.e., (p<0.05), was taken as significant.

Results: The study analyzed attendance and academic records of 192 undergraduate dental students of Sharif Medical and Dental College, Lahore, 28.7% of whom were males and 71% females. The mean age was calculated to be 21 +1.398 years. The academic performance of students was found to have a significant correlation with their attendance with the Pearson correlation test (p=0.021). 78% students were with good attendance record, 54% students with excellent attendance records and 24% students with an average attendance record. Percentage of students with having both excellent attendance and academics were only 2%.

Conclusion: The low percentage of students had an excellent academic performance, with the majority of students falling in the group of fair academics; an attendance record was predominantly good, with only 1% of students with poor attendance.

Keywords:
INTRODUCTION

The profession of Medicine and Dentistry is highly sought after in the world, and it requires a great deal of hard work and dedication to be a part of it.¹ The role of medical and dental schools is to develop professionals who have adequate subject knowledge and clinical skills to treat patients effectively. They also train the undergraduate students to develop the correct attitude of a doctor.²

In order to become a good health care professional, it is essential to have a good knowledge of doctor-patient interaction, diagnostic skills, and the ability to work with other disciplines of the fraternity along with a knowledge of subject matter and clinical skills. The fulfillment of this goal requires a well-developed and elaborate system of student assessment.³

The students who get enrolled in medical and dental colleges go through innumerable tests and examinations and prove themselves worthy of being a part of this esteemed profession.⁴ After entering medical and dental colleges, these students tend to produce varying academic results. Some perform very well while others find it hard even to pass there tests and exams.¹ One of the major reasons for poor academic performance is an irregularity in attending lectures.⁵

The low attendance of students in lectures at colleges and universities is an ever-growing issue. Some institutions lay down very stern rules for the students and make it mandatory for them to maintain good attendance throughout their academic year.⁵ Efforts have been made to make the lectures more interesting by incorporating the use of different computer programs.⁶,⁷ This has still not been effective in providing a solution for the problem of student irregularity.⁸

Irregularity in lectures has multiple repercussions. These, in addition to inadequate and insufficient subject knowledge and clinical skills, also include a negative impact on other students in the class, demotivation of the teacher, and disruption of the system of education to some extent.⁹ Regular attendance in college is essential in medical and dental education as it orients the students with a specific code of ethics. This, in turn, helps develop professionalism in them.¹⁰-¹⁹ A health care professional needs to be a delicate balance of technical skills, subject knowledge as well as high moral and ethical values. A professional who lacks any one of these is highly unlikely to become a successful giver of health care.¹⁹

Studies in the past have reported that the prime factor that impacts academic performance is attendance in the lectures followed by the time allocated for self-study.²⁰ It has been reported in the past that enhancement of subject knowledge and development of concepts takes place in students by attending lectures.²¹ The students who are irregular in lectures have been mostly found to be very low academic achievers. The students who maintain good attendance all through the year are more likely to score better.²² A study conducted in undergraduate students in the subject of Medicine and Pediatrics reported a sharp decline in the scores of the final examination in students with poor attendance.²³

A study was conducted in Sharif Medical and Dental College, SMDC, Lahore, to find out the effect of attendance on the academic performance of undergraduate dental students.

OBJECTIVE

To find the correlation between attendance and academic performance of undergraduate BDS students concerning different subjects.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

A cross-sectional descriptive study was conducted on the 192 undergraduate dental students of Sharif Medical and Dental College (SMDC), Lahore, from the first year to the final year. Demographics like name, age, gender and year of study were collected. Students from all four years of BDS irrespective of age and gender were included. Students who had left college before the end of the session, those who could not attend college due to an illness or a mishap for over a month and first-year students who joined the college late due to migration were excluded from the study.

Class attendance record and annual college assessment of Oral Biology, Community Dentistry, Oral Pathology, and Oral & Maxillofacial Surgery were taken from their respective subject in charge.

The data was analyzed using SPSS version 23 and Pearson correlation and Mean ± SE were calcu-
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RESULTS

Data obtained from attendance and academic records of 192 undergraduate dental students of Sharif college of dentistry, Sharif Medical and Dental College, Lahore. It was observed that 28.7% were males and 71% females with the mean age of 21 ±1.398 years. The number of students from the first year, second year, third year and final year were 48, 47, 48, 49 respectively.

The students were further divided into two groups according to their attendance, i.e., above 75% and below in order to compare them with their academic performance, as shown in the table below.

The academic performance of students was found to have a significant correlation with their attendance. (p=0.021). It was observed that the majority of students (78%) with a good attendance record predominantly had a good academic performance.

It was also seen that approximately one-third of students with good attendance had poor academics, while only 5 % demonstrated an average performance. None of these students had an excellent academic record.

It was very evident that 54% of students with excellent attendance also showed an excellent academic record. An equal percentage of students of this category had an average and poor academic record. It was also seen that the group of good academics had students only with excellent attendance. These were found to be a total of 2%.

Furthermore, it was seen that a vast majority of students with average attendance had excellent academic performance. It was also seen that 1 % of students in this group also had poor academics. The percentage of students with poor attendance was very low, with 1% of these students falling in the category of poor academics and 1% in the group of average academics, as shown in figure 1.

DISCUSSION

The medical and dental students have to deliver good academic results, which can often be very taxing for them. An assessment system in the form of tests requires a student to be regular in lectures, and a student’s good performance is a direct measure of his dedication towards his studies. There are multiple reasons for a bad academic performance. One such reason is the poor attendance which has been in the past reported to have a strong association with better subject knowledge and academic performance.

One study reported that two in three students who did not attend 70% of their lectures were likely to fail in their assessments and almost half of the students who missed 80% of their lectures had a high chance of demonstrating a poor academic performance. Studies have reported that this can be attributed to the fact that having a low lecture attendance deprives students of some vital information delivered.

A study was conducted where the association between attendance and academic performance was studied. In this study, three basic sciences courses (infectious disease, Medicine II AND Epidemiology) and three preclinical dental courses (Anesthesiology, Fixed Prosthodontics, and Radiology) were taken into account. It was seen that students had 83%, 88%, 83%, and 88% marks in the subjects of basic sciences. These marks according to our study fall in the category of good academics (80 to 89%). The percentage of attendance for the subjects men-
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mentioned in the study above is 77%, 57%, 95%, and 95%, respectively. These results are very different from our study, where the students with an academic record between 80 to 89% predominantly had excellent attendance (90 to 100%).

It was further seen in the study that students with an attendance of 77% scored 90% marks in the subject of Anesthesiology. According to our study, attendance in the range of 70 to 79% has been considered average. In our study, students with average attendance predominantly had a fair academics performance (50 to 69%), whereas, in the study cited above, the students with an average attendance record had excellent academics (90%).

The study in the discussion also reported that in the subject of Oral and Maxillofacial Radiology, the students with an attendance of 65% had 94% marks. This finding is yet another striking difference our study shares with this study as, according to our study, the students of poor attendance (50 to 69%) had either an average or poor academic result.

CONCLUSION

It was observed that the majority of students (78%) with a good attendance record had a fair academic record, while 14% had a poor academic performance. No student in this category had a good academic record.

Moreover, 54% of students with an excellent attendance record also had fair academics. Only 2% of students with excellent attendance demonstrated a good academic performance. It was seen that although the percentage of students with poor attendance was very low, with 1% of these students falling in the category of poor academics and 1% in the group of average academics.

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RECOMMENDATIONS

The students, as well as teachers, need to realize the importance of regularity about academic performance. The students should be encouraged to attend lectures. The regular counseling session should be conducted to help the students solve their problems. The teachers should provide prompt help to the students in the form of extra classes and group discussions. The environment of the class should be such that the students feel comfortable asking questions.

REFERENCES

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