

Perception about community medicine among interns of a Rural Medical College, Nalgonda district, Telangana

Sreeharshika D¹, Kishore Y Jothula^{2*}

¹Tutor, ²Associate Professor, ¹Dept. of Forensic Medicine, ²Dept. of Community and Family Medicine, ¹ESIC Medical college, Sanath Nagar, Hyderabad, Telangana, ²All India Institute of Medical Sciences, Bibinagar, Telangana, India

***Corresponding Author: Kishore Y Jothula**

Email: dr_kishore_2021@yahoo.com

Abstract

Context: Community Medicine (CM) deals with populations, those doctors who try to measure the needs, plan and administer services, engage in research and teaching in the field. CM helps the student to learn promotive, preventive, curative and rehabilitative health services which helps them to serve the people in the community.

Aims: To assess the perception about community medicine among Interns.

Settings and Design: Cross sectional study was conducted among Interns of a medical college.

Methods and Material: All the interns were included in the study. Data was collected from a sample of 125 by predesigned pretested semi structured questionnaire.

Statistical analysis used: Data was presented in proportions and analysis was done by using SPSS ver.23

Results: 49.6% of study subjects were interested to learn principles of community medicine, 93.6% opted community visits as most interesting learning area. 97.6% answered that they require repeated readings to understand the principles of community medicine.

Conclusions: Even though most of the students had positive perception towards community medicine, only few students like to opt postgraduation in community medicine.

Keywords: Community medicine, Education, Interns, Perception.

Key Message: There is a need to motivate and explain the students regarding the importance of community medicine and encourage them to choose it as a career.

Introduction

Community Medicine (CM) has been defined as that speciality which deals with populations, and comprises those doctors who try to measure the needs of the population, both sick and well, who plan and administer services to meet those needs, and those who are engaged in research and teaching in the field.¹ The scope of CM is to produce high quality public health professionals and community physicians, discover new knowledge in domain of public health, advocacy for application of new ideas in health care of populations. The main aim is on evolution of comprehensive health services and to strengthen capacity of health organizations at national and international level.

The department of CM in medical colleges focuses on teaching and training of medical students to ensure evidence-based education, primary health care, interdisciplinary teamwork, professional and ethical behaviour in practice and help in moulding them as primary healthcare physicians. Learning CM helps the

student to become a good clinician, exposes them to primary and secondary healthcare settings and to promotive, preventive, curative and rehabilitative health services which helps them to serve the people in the community.

The current shift in health care from curative to preventive medicine makes community-based medical education utmost important. Despite this shift, the importance of community medicine is still not fully appreciated with more focus on clinical and hospital-based education rather than preventive and community-based education. With this background this study was undertaken with the objective of assessing the perception of the medical interns towards CM in a rural medical college of Telangana state.

Materials and Methods

Study design

Institution based cross sectional study.

Study setting

Rural medical college, Nalgonda district, Telangana.

Study population

Interns of a rural medical college, Nalgonda district, Telangana.

Sample size

Out of 145 Interns, 20 had participated in the pilot study and 125 students were included after taking consent, hence sample size was 125

Study period

This study was carried out for 2 months from June 2019 to July 2019

Study tool

Pretested Semi structured questionnaire. Pilot study was conducted on 20 students initially for standardization of the questionnaire. Questionnaire consists of Socio demographic information and questions related to perception about CM

Method of data collection

Questionnaire was administered on interns after explaining them the importance of study and each question

in the questionnaire. Confidentiality regarding the participant response for the questions was ensured

Statistical analysis

Data was entered in Microsoft excel and analysis was done using SPSS statistical package version 23.

Results

Out of 125 participants, 65 (52%) were boys and 60 (48%) were girls, with a mean age of 23.03 ± 0.73 years. Majority of the participants were City residents (55.2%) (Table 1).

About 49.6% of study subjects were interested to learn principles of community medicine. All interns thought that community medicine subject should be part of medical curriculum and only 7.2% study subjects would like to opt postgraduation in community medicine (Table 2).

Most (96.8%) of the interns opted visit to health centre was the most interesting learning followed by visit to water treatment plant, milk factory, Rehabilitation centre (Table 3).

About 97.6% of study subjects answered that they require repeated readings to understand the principles of community medicine followed by preparing for exam (91.2%) (Table 4).

Table 1: Sex & place distribution of study subjects (n=125)

Sex	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Male	65	52
Female	60	48
Residence	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Village	14	11.2
Town	42	33.6
City	69	55.2

Table 2: Distribution of subjects according to perception about Community Medicine (n=125)

S. No	Perceptions towards community Medicine subject	No. of students answered Yes (%)
1.	Are you interested to learn principles of community medicine	62 (49.6)
2.	Did you find difficulty in reading and understanding concepts in community medicine	106 (84.8)
3.	Are you a regular reader of community medicine subject	11 (8.8)
4.	Do you think community medicine subject should be part of medical curriculum	125 (100)
5.	Do you think community medicine classes should be started in the first year MBBS	104 (83.2)
6.	Are of aware of community medicine weightage marks in post graduate entrance exam	81 (64.8)
7.	Do you like to opt postgraduation in community medicine	9 (7.2)

Table 3: Distribution of subjects according to interesting learning areas in community medicine (n=125)

S.no	Interesting Learning areas in community medicine	Frequency (%)
1	Theory classes	92 (73.6)
2	Practical classes on Spotters and models	81 (64.8)
3	Family health survey	90 (72)
4	Visits to health centres	121 (96.8)
5	Research in Community	116 (92.8)
6	Visit to water treatment plant, milk factory, Rehabilitation centre	117 (93.6)
7	Clinico-social case discussions	112 (89.6)
8	Epidemiological and Statistical exercise classes	116 (92.8)

Table 4: Distribution of subjects according to difficulty areas in community medicine (n=125)

S.No.	Difficulty areas in community medicine	Frequency (%)
1	Difficult to remember definitions	64 (51.2)
2	Difficult to remember problem statement of each disease	112 (89.6)
3	Preparing for exam	114 (91.2)
4	Require repeated readings to understand the principles of community medicine	122 (97.6)

Discussion

Out of 125 participants, 65 (52%) were boys and 60 (48%) were girls, with a mean age of 23.03 ± 0.73 years. Majority (55.2%) of the participants were City residents.

In the current study, 49.6% of study subjects were interested to learn principles of community medicine which was similar to the study done by Saleh AM et al., where 40.3% students were interested in understanding the main concept of community medicine and 42% felt it will be useful to their career as a doctor which reflects the positive attitude of students towards community medicine.² Majority (84.8%) of the study subjects in the present study found difficulty in reading and understanding concepts in community medicine and only 8.8% of study subjects were regular reader of community medicine subject. Strikingly, about 90% students said that the curriculum is too vast but only 50% commented that more time is allotted to the subject in a study done by Sadawarte MK et al.³ In the present study 100% study subjects thought that community medicine subject should be part of medical curriculum which was very encouraging for community medicine fraternity and this should answer the queries raised by some clinicians for including preventive medicine in medical curriculum. According to a study done by Mukesh B et al., 83% thought that the curriculum is relevant to the present era.⁴ About 83.2% study subjects in our study thought that community medicine classes should be started in the first year MBBS

and majority (64.8%) of study subjects were aware of community medicine weightage marks in post graduate (PG) entrance exam. In a study done by Sadawarte MK et al., it was observed that about 69% study subjects thought that PG entrance examination prevents concentration on community medicine as compared to other subjects.³ The current study found that only 7.2% study subjects would like to opt postgraduation in community medicine which is similar to studies done by Jothula KY et al., Maiti A et al., and Singh G et al., where only 7%, 1.64% and 5.7% respectively were willing to opt community medicine.⁵⁻⁷

In present study, when asked about interesting learning areas in community medicine about 96.8% subjects opted visit to health centres and 93.6% opted visit to water treatment plant, milk factory, Rehabilitation centre as most interesting learning area followed by Epidemiological and Statistical exercise classes (92.8%) and Research in Community (92.8%) which indicates that students are more interested in community based learning rather than class room teaching. In a study done by Saleh AM et al., 33.3% of study subjects identified research as a positive aspect community medicine.² According to a study done by Murugavel J et al., Concept of community medicine (36.4%), Field visits (28.2%), Projects/research studies (22.8%) were the factors that influenced interest in learning community medicine.⁸

In the present study, about 97.6% of study subjects answered that they require repeated readings to understand

the principles of community medicine followed by preparing for exam (91.2%) as difficult areas in community medicine. In a study done by Murugavel J et al., Learning definitions (48%), Memorizing numerical facts (47.4%), Preparing for exams (32.4%) and Field visits are tiring and exhaustive (15.4%) as difficult areas in community medicine.⁸ Community medicine is a vast subject and every medical student must understand its basic concepts and principles in order to become a competent doctor who can meet the expectations of patients, community and country.

Conclusion

As per our study, even though most of the students had positive perception towards community medicine only few students like to opt postgraduation in CM. This explains the need to motivate and explain the students regarding the importance of CM and encourage them to choose it as a career.

Acknowledgement

The authors were grateful to all the students who had participated in the study.

Source of Funding

None.

Conflict of Interest

None.

Ethical Approval

The study was approved by the Institutional Ethical Committee.

References

1. Park K. Park's textbook of Preventive and Social Medicine. 25th ed. Jabalpur: M/S Banarsidas Bhanot Publishers; 2019.p.10.
2. Saleh AM. Perception of students about community medicine course in Hawler College of Medicine, Iraq. *Zanco J Med Sci*. 2015;19(3):1084-90.
3. Sadawarte MK, Kakeri MK, Nandanwar DY. Community medicine: perceptions among medical students and career preference: a cross sectional study. *Int J Community Med Public Health*. 2017;4:4577-82.
4. Mukesh B, Sarika P, Amol K, Borde AN. Medical students perceptions regarding the curriculum in community medicine: A cross sectional study. *Indian J Forensic Community Med*. 2018;5(1):39-43.
5. Jothula KY, Ganapa P, Sreeharshika D, Reddy PP, Abhishek P. Career preferences and factors influencing speciality choices among the medical students in Telangana: A cross sectional study. *J Community Health Manag*. 2018;5(1):17-20.
6. Maiti A, Maiti A, Mohanty SS, Sarangi L, Pattnaik A. Community medicine as a career option: Perception among the Medical Students in a Medical College of Bhubaneswar, Odisha. *IOSR-JDMS*. 2019;18(4):15-20.
7. Singh G, Agarwal V, Misra S K. Analysis of medical students perception for community medicine as career option and subject. *Indian J Community Med*. 2018;43:56-7.
8. Murugavel J, Chellaiyan VG, Krishnamoorthy D. Attitude toward learning of community medicine: A cross-sectional study among medical school students. *J Family Med Prim Care*. 2017;6:83-7.

How to cite this article: Sreeharshika D, Jothula KY. Perception about community medicine among interns of a Rural Medical College, Nalgonda district, Telangana. *J Community Health Manag*. 2020;7(1):22-5.