EDITORIAL

STUDENT SUPPORT SYSTEM

Medical colleges accompanied by high academic requirements create an extremely stressful environment which may have adverse effects on the performance of the students, and their psychological well-being. Not all students may be able to cope with stress and end up breaking down and the stress of examinations may increase the incidence of depression. Medical students are a vulnerable population globally and according to one study are known to show higher rates of depression, suicidal ideation, and stigmatization around depression and are also less likely to seek support. It is therefore important to safeguard their mental health with an effective plan to support their wellness and education. Student support, or student services is the division of services and support for students to be successful at institutions of higher education as it allows them to enhance their growth. This system provides the process and procedures for schools to address and improve student achievement. It includes a full range of interventions, programs, services of integrated and proactive supports to improve student's academic and behavioral performance.

It should be addressing barriers to learning and teaching, re-engaging students who have become dis connected. Meanwhile, also sustaining and enhancing learning opportunities for students who are succeeding and nurturing students' social, emotional, and behavioral development so growth is balanced and occurs in all domains. Student support system has been identified as an important role of medical teachers that covers much wider aspects of the development of students and is not limited to improvement of performance in just a particular subject. Supporting learners in difficulty is a fundamental professional role of a teacher.

Students struggle for a broad and complex range of reasons during their academic and professional age. The student support programs are helpful but there have been marked variations observed in the goals that are set and the methodology that are followed. An educational assessment interview is a useful tool for identifying reasons for difficulty. It is better that intervention is individualized and holistic; simple interventions can have good outcomes and is necessary to have a clearer understanding regards the development of support programs. Follow-up and coordination with other providers of support is important. First step is to identify the present problem as to howthe student seesthe problem and what do they see as the cause. Focus should be on the understanding how do they learn, plan and do the preparation and revision of knowledge. How do they learn clinical communication skills through their preparation practice and feedback? What is their study pattern? Do they work regularly and how many hours per week are they studying? How many patients per week are they fully clerking? Are there any difficulties in approaching patients? How do they organize their notes/handouts/files? How did they do in their written/practical exams?

The weightage of percentage of personal situations such as accommodation, relationships and money in their life. When in their life were they most motivated to be a doctor?

Tutors to be designated to these students to personally motivate, supervise individual short-comings. To allocate and engage these students in different peer study groups in the same class. Weekly summative feedback to be provided to these students by tutors with suggestions to further improve. To involve the students in redesigning the curriculum and assessment tools. To develop the student advisory office which should include study-skills tutor. To establish peer support systems involving the pairing of these students with senior class students. To establish professional development committee to provide pastoral support to students. To organise workshops for the faculty development on teaching in small groups, problem based learning and integrated curriculum design. To change the instructional strategy to introduce modern methods as well as to redesign the curriculum towards integrated modules, problem based learning and to introduce assessment tools which should test conceptual knowledge.

Research show that these learners become demotivated and disheartened if they are not encouraged at the correct time and they eventually fall to this vicious cycle of failures. Every medical college should build a student support system to identify and support learners who are having difficulties during their medical education. Comprehensive and coordinated student support services are critically important for the social, emotional and character development of students and the development of learning climates that are conducive to student achievement of high academic standards. Strategies are most powerful when linked directly to the most urgent needs of the student.

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