

The Impact of Teaching Medical Law Through Small Group Teaching for Early Clinical Preparedness Among 3rd Professional Part-II MBBS Students

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ABSTRACT

Background: Medical law is a critical aspect of medical education that equips future doctors with the knowledge and skills to navigate medico-legal challenges effectively. Despite its significance, traditional teaching methodologies, primarily lecture-based, limit student engagement and comprehension. Small Group Teaching (SGT) offers an interactive and student-centered approach that bridges the gap between theoretical knowledge and its clinical application.

Materials and Methods: This prospective, interventional study will involve pre- and post-intervention assessments. A total of 150 3rd Professional Part-II MBBS students at Gouridevi Institute of Medical Sciences, Durgapur, will be divided into 10 groups of 15 students each. The intervention includes 10 SGT sessions conducted by 4–5 faculty members covering essential medico-legal topics. A structured questionnaire will be administered before and after the sessions to assess knowledge improvement. Feedback will be collected to analyze the effectiveness of SGT in medical law education.

Results: The expected outcomes include significant improvement in post-test scores compared to pre-test scores, enhanced clinical preparedness for medico-legal cases, and positive student feedback supporting the integration of SGT into medical law curricula.

Conclusion: This study aims to provide empirical evidence on the effectiveness of SGT in teaching medical law, thereby contributing to improved clinical preparedness and patient care among medical students.

Keywords: *Medical Law, Small Group Teaching, Clinical Preparedness, MBBS Education, Medico-Legal Cases.*

NEED FOR THE STUDY

Medical law is an integral component of medical education that ensures future physicians are well-equipped to navigate the complex legal and ethical aspects of medical practice. Despite its importance, medical law education in undergraduate curricula remains limited, often relying on passive lecture-based approaches that do not engage students effectively. Many medical graduates enter clinical practice without a solid foundation in medico-legal principles, exposing them to legal risks, ethical dilemmas, and potential litigation.

The increasing number of medico-legal cases in healthcare settings necessitates a more robust and interactive approach to teaching medical law. Small Group Teaching (SGT) offers an effective pedagogical method that enhances student engagement, fosters active learning, and improves knowledge retention. By incorporating SGT into medical law education, students can gain practical experience, enhance their critical thinking skills, and develop confidence in handling medico-legal challenges in real-world clinical practice.

This study is necessary to evaluate the effectiveness of SGT in teaching medical law to final-year MBBS students. By assessing student performance before and after the intervention, this research aims to determine whether SGT enhances knowledge acquisition, comprehension, and application of medico-legal principles. The findings of this study will provide valuable insights into improving medical law education and ensuring that future doctors are legally competent and prepared for professional practice.

INTRODUCTION

Medical law plays a crucial role in the education and practice of healthcare professionals. It governs various aspects of medical practice, including patient rights, consent, medico-legal documentation, and professional accountability. With increasing medico-legal complexities in clinical settings, medical students must be well-versed in legal principles to avoid malpractice and ensure ethical decision-making.

Traditional lecture-based teaching methods often fail to provide interactive and case-based learning opportunities, leading to poor retention and application of medico-legal knowledge. SGT has emerged as an effective teaching methodology that enhances student engagement, critical thinking, and application of knowledge in clinical practice.

RATIONALE/NEED FOR THE STUDY

Despite its importance, medical law is underrepresented in undergraduate medical curricula. There is a lack of structured training programs that provide hands-on medico-legal knowledge and skills. This study aims to bridge this gap by implementing SGT as an effective teaching methodology to improve medical law education and assess its impact on students' clinical preparedness.

RESEARCH QUESTION

How does Small Group Teaching improve knowledge and early clinical preparedness in medical law among 3rd Professional Part-II MBBS students?

AIM AND OBJECTIVES

Primary Aim:

- To evaluate the effectiveness of Small Group Teaching (SGT) in teaching medical law, focusing on electives introduced by the National Medical Commission (NMC).

Secondary Objectives:

1. To assess the impact of SGT on students' clinical preparedness in medico-legal aspects.
2. To analyze student performance and identify areas requiring improvement in medical law education.
3. To gather qualitative feedback from students regarding their learning experience with SGT.
4. To compare pre- and post-intervention knowledge scores to determine the effectiveness of SGT.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

a. Place of Study:

Gouridevi Institute of Medical Sciences & Hospital, Durgapur.

b. Study Design:

Prospective, interventional study with pre- and post-intervention assessments.

c. Study Period:

Six months.

d. Period Required for Data Collection:

Three months.

e. Study Population:

3rd Professional Part-II MBBS students.

f. Sample Size:

- 150 students divided into 10 groups (15 students per group).
- 4–5 faculty members will conduct the sessions.
- 10 structured sessions covering key medico-legal topics.

g. Inclusion Criteria:

- Enrolled 3rd Professional Part-II MBBS students.
- Willingness to participate in the study.

h. Exclusion Criteria:

- Students unable to attend Small Group Teaching sessions.

i. Methodology:

- **SGT Sessions:**

- Conducted by experienced faculty members.
- Topics covered:
 1. Informed consent and its types.
 2. Forms and formats of hospital practice.
 3. Issuing of death and fitness certificates.
 4. Medico-legal case documentation.
 5. Legal obligations in POCSO and sexual assault cases.
 6. Brain death certification under THOTA.
 7. Medical Termination of Pregnancy (MTP) Act provisions.
 8. Medical indemnity provisions.
 9. Infectious disease reporting protocols.

- **Data Collection Tools:**

- Pre- and post-test questionnaire (20 validated questions).
- Grading scale: Yes = 1, No = 0; total score = 20.
- Cutoff score: 15 for adequate knowledge and preparedness.
- Feedback forms for qualitative insights.

OUTCOME MEASURES

Primary Outcome:

- Improvement in post-test scores compared to pre-test scores.

Secondary Outcomes:

- Enhanced clinical preparedness for medico-legal cases.
- Positive feedback on the effectiveness of SGT.

STATISTICAL ANALYSIS

- **Descriptive Statistics:** Summarizing demographic data and overall performance.
- **Paired t-tests:** Comparing pre- and post-test scores.
- **Qualitative Analysis:** Thematic analysis of student feedback.

ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

- Approval from the Institutional Ethics Committee (IEC) of Gouridevi Institute of Medical Sciences & Hospital.
- Informed consent obtained from all participants.
- Confidentiality and anonymity of collected data ensured.

EXPECTED RESULTS

The study anticipates:

- A statistically significant improvement in post-test scores, demonstrating enhanced medico-legal knowledge.
- Increased clinical preparedness among students.
- Positive feedback supporting the use of SGT in medical law education.

ANTICIPATING NEW KNOWLEDGE

This study is expected to contribute to the existing body of knowledge in medical education by demonstrating the impact of interactive and participatory teaching methodologies in medico-legal education. The anticipated findings include:

1. Enhanced Knowledge Retention:

- The study will provide empirical evidence on whether SGT leads to better retention and understanding of medico-legal concepts compared to traditional teaching methods.

2. Improved Clinical Preparedness:

- By integrating medical law with practical case-based discussions, students are expected to develop stronger decision-making and problem-solving skills relevant to real-world medico-legal situations.

3. Curriculum Enhancement:

- The findings may highlight gaps in current medical law education and suggest modifications to enhance interactive learning experiences in medical schools.

4. Positive Student Feedback:

- The study aims to capture students' perceptions of SGT and its effectiveness in facilitating knowledge acquisition and skill development in medico-legal aspects.

5. Policy Implications:

- The study may support the integration of SGT as a standard pedagogical approach in medical law education, influencing curriculum planning and teaching methodologies at medical institutions.

By addressing these aspects, this study will contribute valuable insights that can improve the teaching of medical law, ensuring that future healthcare professionals are equipped with essential legal knowledge and skills for ethical and legally sound medical practice.

DISCUSSION

This study aims to bridge the gap in medico-legal education by introducing a structured SGT-based teaching model. The findings will contribute to developing better teaching strategies, ensuring that future physicians are well-equipped to handle medico-legal challenges.

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