

ORIGINAL ARTICLE

STUDENTS' PERSPECTIVE OF AN IDEAL MEDICAL TEACHER - EXPECTATIONS AND REALITY

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Background: Medical teacher plays an important role in the education of medical students. Medical students always portray their teacher as an ideal. The objective of the study was to find the gap between the best qualities that an ideal medical teacher should have and the best qualities that a medical teacher actually has. **Methods:** This cross-sectional survey was conducted at Ayub Medical College Abbottabad from April 2021 to Dec 2021. Consented students of 4th year and Final year MBBS were the participants. Data regarding the qualities of the best medical teacher was collected on Likert scaled validated survey questionnaire. Two closed-ended questionnaires were used. Items were the same in both questionnaires. One questionnaire (Questionnaire A) was regarding expectations of students and what qualities they expected in their ideal medical teacher. The second questionnaire (questionnaire B) was about the qualities that a medical teacher actually had been exhibiting those students had experienced. Data was analyzed using SPSS version 22.0. **Results:** A total of 210 students participated in this study, 126 students were from 4th year and 84 were from the final year of MBBS. Ninety-one and a half percent of students thought that an ideal medical teacher should be competent in his/her subject but in reality, 48% of students reported that their teachers are competent. Ninety-four percent of students rated that an ideal medical teacher should have excellent communication skills but in reality, only 33% reported that their teachers are having good communication skills. Eighty-three (83%) students expect their teachers should be students friendly but in reality, only 22% of teachers are students caring. Eighty-nine percent of students expect that an ideal medical teacher shall demonstrate clinical skills to students but in reality, only 36% experienced demonstration from their teachers. **Conclusion:** There is a big gap between the expected qualities of a medical teacher and the qualities that a teacher has in reality from students' perspectives. Teachers should be trained to bridge this gap,

Keywords: Ideal medical teacher; Students; Expectations; Reality

Citation: Parveen Z. Students' perspective of an ideal medical teacher - expectations and reality. J Ayub Med Coll Abbottabad 2023;35(3):433-6.

DOI: 10.55519/JAMC-03-12087

INTRODUCTION

An ideal medical teacher can be defined as a professional who is dedicated to his/her profession, respectful, a role model, highly motivational, creates a conducive learning environment and portrays as an academic leader.¹

Medical education is evolving with every passing day and demands that medical teachers should follow the pace of change.

In the modern era, the medical teacher is not only a source of knowledge provider but also expected to be the best communicator, an inspirational leader, a student engager, an academician and more importantly be well versed with information technology.²

The qualities and attributes of teachers play a pivotal role in the teaching and learning processes. We should train teachers in such a way that they become more effective. When they are effective, they automatically deliver student achievement in academics. Some teachers may be deficient in their subject matter, knowledge of delivery to students and the necessary skill to be effective. All these components are needed to

transform students intellectually. Teachers should also be trained in effective communication which is a recognized skill for effective teaching.³

An ideal medical teacher is a great learning source and inspiration for students. While most teachers have passion⁴ for their profession of teaching and do it whole-heartedly, some are either untrained² and do not know the basics of teaching or have a casual attitude towards their job of teaching and do not perform their job of teaching according to set guidelines of medical education.⁵

The aim of my research is to find out students' perspectives on the gap between an ideal medical teacher and the one that they have. Improvement comes after evaluation. Literature is flooded with research on what should be the best qualities of a medical teacher but there are very few articles on the best qualities of a teacher that he/she actually has from students' perspective. The results of our study will help medical teachers to reflect on their performance. The difference between the expectation and reality of an ideal medical teacher from

students' perspective will provide a kind of feedback for teachers to rectify their professional deficiencies and improve their skills.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

This quantitative cross-sectional survey research was conducted at Ayub Medical College Abbottabad from April 2021 to Dec 2021. Students of 4th year and Final year MBBS were the participants. The consenting students of 4th year and Final year MBBS were included in the study. These senior class students were purposefully selected with the expectation that they can better judge the qualities of the best medical teacher. Data was collected on Likert scaled survey questionnaire. Two closed-ended questionnaires were designed.

The best qualities of an ideal medical teacher were searched in the literature² to identify existing survey scales or items that can be used or adapted⁶.

A comprehensive list of attributes of an ideal medical teacher was developed after merging the literature search. Survey items and their anchors were drafted on a Likert-type scale to ensure that items are clear, understandable and written in accordance with current best practices in survey design.⁶ Questionnaires were sent to six research experts for content validation.^{6,7} Suggestions from experts were incorporated, and questionnaires were refined. Cognitive interviews through verbal probing were conducted with 15 medical students to establish that the respondents interpret the items in the same manner as the survey designers has intended. Finally, the questionnaire was validated by pilot testing on a group of 50 medical students.

Items were the same in both questionnaires and each item was assessed on Likert-type five-point response scale.

One questionnaire (Questionnaire-A) was regarding the expectation of students and what qualities they expect in their ideal medical teacher in the construct of importance.⁸

The second questionnaire (Questionnaire-B) was about the qualities that a medical teacher actually is exhibiting and students have experienced on the construct of frequency.⁸

Data was collected from all those students of 4th and Final year MBBS of Ayub Medical College who gave consent to participate in the study. Two Questionnaires A and B were given to the student to rate the qualities which they think are important for a best medical teacher in Questionnaire A and which of those qualities actually they observe in their teachers on five-point Likert scales in Questionnaire B respectively.

The hypothesis of my study is that there is a significant difference between the expected best

qualities of an ideal medical teacher and the best qualities that a medical teacher actually exhibits. Survey data was imported into the statistical program, SPSS version 22 for analysis. Institution review board approval was sought before starting the study.

RESULTS

A total of 210 students participated in this. In the study, 126 students were from 4th-year MBBS and 84 students were from final-year MBBS. Eighty-eight students in 4th year were female and 38 were male. Of the final year, 59 were male and 25 were female.

91.5% of students thought that an ideal medical teacher should be competent in his/her subject but in reality, 48% of students reported that their teachers are competent. Ninety-four percent (94 %) of students rated that an ideal medical teacher should have excellent communication skills but in reality, only 33% reported that their teachers are having good communication skills. Eighty percent (80%) expected their teachers as inspirational and motivational but in reality, only 24% experienced that their teachers are inspirational. Eighty-three percent (83%) of students expect their teachers should be students friendly but in reality, only 22% of teachers are students caring. Sixty-four percent (64 %) of students expect that their teachers will respect their feedback but in reality, only 17.6% experienced that their teachers respect students' feedback. eighty-nine percent (89%) of students expect that an ideal medical teacher shall demonstrate clinical skills to students but in reality, only 36% experienced demonstration from their teachers as depicted in Figure-1:

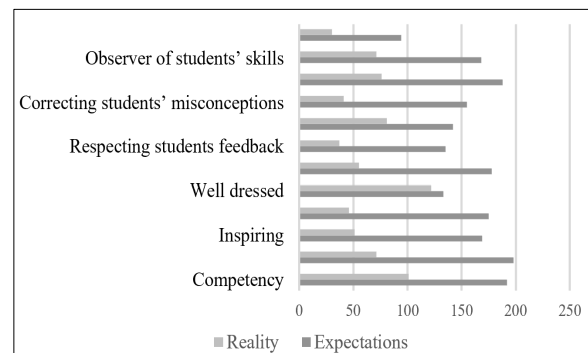


Figure-1: Qualities of an ideal medical teacher

Hypothesis testing is displayed in Table-1 which concludes that the expected mean score is significantly different from the mean reality score.

Table-2 shows that the *p*-value is 0.927, which further strengthens the argument that there is an insignificant correlation between the expected and real values. The correlation between expectation scores and reality scores is 0.006 which means that there is a

weak correlation between expectation scores and reality scores as shown in Table-2. The correlation test indicates that there is an insignificant correlation between expectation scores and reality scores.

Table-1: Hypothesis Test Summary

Null hypothesis	Test	Sig.	Decision
The mean of differences between expectation and reality equals 0.	Related samples Wilcoxon signed rank test	0.000	Reject the null hypothesis.

Table-2: Correlation between expectations and reality about an ideal medical teacher

Correlations			
		expectation	Reality
expectation	Pearson Correlation	1	.006
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.927
	N	210	210
Reality	Pearson Correlation	.006	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.927	
	n	210	210

DISCUSSIONS

Medical education is evolving and dynamic. Therefore, there is a continuing need to assess the role of the teacher in medical education. The medical teacher has a critical role in the making of our future clinicians and medical researchers. The teacher’s role goes well beyond information provider. New learning technologies and novel educational approaches are incorporated into medical education. The medical teacher has to play a key role in framing the personal and professional growth of medical students.

Ninety-one and a half percent (91.5%) of students thought that an ideal medical teacher should be competent in his/her subject but in reality, 48% of students reported that their teachers are competent. Ninety-four percent (94%) of students rated that an ideal medical teacher should have excellent communication skills but in reality, only 33% reported that their teachers are having good communication skills. Eighty percent (80%) expected their teachers as inspirational and motivational but in reality, only 24% experienced that their teachers are inspirational. Eighty-three (83%) students expect their teachers should be students friendly but in reality, only 22% of teachers are students caring. Sixty-four percent (64%) of students expected that their teachers will respect their feedback but in reality, only 17.6% experienced that their teachers are respecting students’ feedback. Eighty-nine percent (89%) of students expect that an ideal medical teacher shall demonstrate clinical skills to students but in reality, only 36% experienced demonstration from their teachers.

Kumari KL *et al*⁹ conducted a quantitative study on 321 medical students to find out the qualities of a medical teacher from students’ perspectives. They concluded that a good teacher should be approachable,

engaging, inspiring, competent and an effective communicator.⁹ Our students also expected the same. Singh *et al*² performed a study on 60 faculty members to find out the qualities of a good teacher from the faculty’s perspective. He found that teachers ranked knowledge of the subject, passion and effective communication skills of a teacher as the top three qualities that a medical teacher must have. Our students were also of the same views. Al-Mohaimed AA¹⁰ also conducted a similar study at Qasim University Saudi Arabia on 120 faculty members regarding the attributes of a medical teacher. He concluded that communication skills, honesty, knowledge expertise, motivating students, delivering organized lectures, respect for students and punctuality are important characteristics of a good medical teacher which are the same as our students expected.

Ahmed MA reviewed that a good teacher should be passionate, a role model, adaptive and flexible with the educational needs of different students. He further reviewed that a good teacher should be competent in delivering lectures, small group teaching, teaching both practical and clinical skills, facilitating learning, planning a learning program, developing learning resources, carrying assessments, evaluating educational programs, able to use technology and multimedia and demonstrate an excellent communication skill⁴ these findings corresponds to expectations of our students.

Literature shows that teachers equipped with higher emotional intelligence can cope better with students’ behavioural problems in the classroom and can resolve challenging situations in a constructive way.¹¹ Most of the studies researched on characteristics of an ideal medical teacher from students’ or teacher’s perspective but we could not find literature on the qualities of a teacher who works in the real world. Our study has found the gap between the qualities of a desired

medical teacher and the one that students experience routinely.

In a qualitative study¹², students reported that teachers have poor communication skills and teacher needs training in this skill. Students rated that all their teachers are having sound knowledge which is contrary to our findings. Our students reported that 48.1% of teachers were competent while their expectations were around 91%. Many participants were highly critical and reflected, “Only 20–30% teachers demonstrate,” which is very near to observation of our students. Our students reported that 36% of teachers demonstrate effectively. They further reported that teachers ridicule us in front of patients and nurses and are unfriendly. They said that 90% of teachers are unapproachable and do not take an interest in our personal problems and do not provide feedback. These findings are very much similar to our results. Our students reported that only 14% of teachers show concern about our personal problems, only 17% provide feedback and 21.9 % demonstrate student friendly attitude. Only 33% of teachers have spare time to observe students’ skills whereas the expectation of students were 80% from an ideal medical teacher to observe students’ skill and correct them.

In Jayaprakash¹² research while responding to personal qualities like role models and motivation, students stated that only 50 % of teachers are desirous to teach us. Our students reported that only 24% of teachers were inspirational while our students were expecting that 80% of ideal medical teachers will be inspirational. He further found out that Students described that a competent medical teacher should have communication skills, adequate knowledge, an attitude for demonstration, concern for students, teaching skills, professional development, personal qualities, and interpersonal skill. Above 80% of our students were also advocates of these qualities in an ideal medical teacher.

In a qualitative study¹² students observed that some teachers are not caring about their dress. They suggested a strict dress code for teachers. Our students reported that around 63% of teachers are well-dressed.

Limitations of the study: The study participants are from only one medical college in Abbottabad. Therefore, the results of this study cannot be generalized and a multi-centre study is suggested.

Acknowledgements: I am highly thankful to Dr. Ishtiaq Ali Khan for helping and guiding to prepare this

manuscript. I am also grateful to Dr. Saleem Wazir for proofreading and correction.

Conflict of interest: I have no conflict of interest.

CONCLUSION

Students expect that a competent medical teacher should have good communication skills, adequate knowledge, show interest to demonstrate in clinics, good concern for students, excellent teaching skill, improve his/her skills, have good personal qualities, and good interpersonal skills but the reality is the opposite of expectation. Faculty development programs should be launched in every medical institution to bridge the gap between expectation and reality in a medical teacher.

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Submitted: May 15, 2023

Revised: May 29, 2023

Accepted: June 9, 2023

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