

Students Opinion on guest lectures series during orientation program – An Overview

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Abstract

Background: The Orientation Program (OP) is an integral part of any professional course. A well thought guest lectures with key highlights on essential topics can be a pivoting point to address students concerns before beginning a professional course.

Objective: This study was to obtain input from first-year physiotherapy students regarding guest lecture series which were part of current orientation program.

Methods: Eighty-one students volunteered for the feedback analysis. We used a structured google feedback form with closed-ended questions focusing on cognitive, social and personality, and mental and physical health domains of psychology to evaluate the students opinion on various lectures.

Results: Most of the students expressed satisfaction, with positive feedback ranging from 56 to 83%. for every lecture and orientation session as a whole. A small percentage of students, ranging from 1 to 6%, disagreed or expressed dissatisfaction with the lectures. The overall response of students to the orientation program and guest lectures was positive.

Conclusions: The overall feedback towards all the guest lecture was positive, and merely small percentage of students disagreed. The study concludes that guest lectures should be added to such OP

Key words: Orientation, feedback analysis, Personality, Communication

Introduction

The Oxford Dictionary defines orientation as a person's basic attitude, finding directions, belief or feelings in relation to a particular subject or issue.¹ Every academic institution regularly implements orientation sessions for incoming undergraduate or postgraduate students. The primary goal of

these programs is to familiarize students with the campus, college, and other relevant departments as well as with the rules and regulations of the organization.²

When students from diverse background enroll in professional programs such as medicine, physical therapy, or dentistry at a young age (18 to 19), there are many psychological aspects associated with it. Such as anxiety about un-

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familiar places, people, bullying, language barriers, added work responsibilities towards college as well as expectations from family and the course itself². With everything taken into consideration, students have many questions. Orientation programs play a crucial role in breaking down barriers by helping students feel comfortable in unfamiliar surroundings and in fostering communication between students and staff. It also offers a safe space where new experiences can be discussed and shared with classmates or parents who may be experiencing similar emotions.³ Research conducted by Mac Eachern MJ further states that orientation sessions are essential for incoming students in every field of study to assist them in acclimating to a new setting.⁴ Throughout the orientation program, parents and students can attend educational lectures that are specifically tailored to address any issues they may have. Through their facilitation of a successful start to any course and its consequences, they help students feel less pressured and apprehensive.⁵ According to one study, orientation is ranked as the eighth most important thing for any student to do upon starting college, and it affects both attendance and performance.⁶ Typically, these training sessions include a thorough orientation to the entire campus, which includes all of the amenities, such as food courts, general stores for essentials, college, libraries, and teaching hospitals.

Guest lectures are an integral part of any orientation program. The literature suggests that guest lectures have a positive impact on students' learning and retention of knowledge.^{17, 19} In the current orientation program, guest lectures were incorporated, and an effort was made to check the opinion of the students towards these guest lecture⁷.

Many studies have evaluated impact orientation programs, which have been shown and proven to neutralize potential negative stress-induced disorders⁸, and deterioration of academic performance once enormous subject wise teaching-learning (TL)⁹ rolls on to eventually integrate into healthcare delivery systems in the course of psychosomatic, socioeconomic, emotional and family issues. However, there is a dearth of literature on the point of view of students toward planned lectures and the effectiveness of such lectures; hence, the current study is planned.

The purpose of this study was to obtain input from first-year physiotherapy students regarding guest lecture series which were part of current orientation program.

Materials and Methods

We conducted this review at the beginning and the end of the orientation program for a fresh batch of Physiotherapy undergraduate students from Belagavi, North Karnataka. The orientation program promoted by the UGC to address the changes and create awareness in 81 students over a period of 4 days. According to the schedule, we exposed the students to guest lecture series on personality development, communication skills, stress management and corona and self-care to boost their self-esteem and give them a better perspective as they began their new lives.

Data collection tool: We formulated a structured google form. The questionnaire had 3 domains: first, demographic data; second, college norms such as infrastructure, library, anti-ragging, mentorship and essential skills; and third, feedback on guest lectures. The questionnaire focused on the cognitive, social and personality, and mental & physical health domains of psychology.

Procedure: We approached first-year students and did not compel them to provide "overall impression" or "positive impact" feedback on the orientation program as a whole or in specific domains. As we administered the questionnaire, we informed the students that their honest input would benefit the orientation program in the future

Inclusion criteria: All first-year students who participated in the physiotherapy orientation program consented to be enrolled in the study

Results: A total of 81 students participated in the orientation program and in this study.

The mean age of the 81 respondents (37 men and 44 women) was 18.69 ± 0.32 years. The combined responses for the various guest lectures offered during the orientation program (OP) are presented in Table 1. The majority of the students expressed satisfaction, with positive feedback ranging from 56 to 83% (n=45 to 67) for every lecture and orientation session as a whole. A small percentage of students, ranging from 1 to 6%, (n= 1 to 5) disagreed or expressed dissatisfaction with the lectures. The overall response of students to the orientation program and guest lectures was positive.

Table 1: Collective response to various guest lectures offered during orientation programs

Feedback by students regarding different guest lectures and overall orientation program				
Sr. No	Lectures	Positive feedback	Average feedback	Negative feedback
1	personality development	66%	31.6%	2.4%
2	communication skills	58%	39.5%	2.5%
3	lecture on corona and self-care	63%	36%	1%
4	stress management	56%	41.6%	2.4%
5	bedside manners in hospital	76%	20%	4%
6	Essential skills for college students	70%	25.8%	4.2%
7	Orientation to Physiotherapy College	67%	32.6%	0.4%
8	Orientation program overall	82.7%	17.3%	0%

Discussion

We conducted the current review to check the overall opinion of students towards the guest lecture individually. Eighty-one students participated in the study regarding the students opinion on guest lectures series during orientation program. The majority of students agreed that the orientation program was helpful, and only a small percentage of students said it was somewhat helpful.

Students join university degree courses with little knowledge of their professionalism and careers. Many students who have different states and backgrounds find it difficult to adjust to new environments and places. A well-planned orientation (induction) program can help them with all their concerns^{4,19}.

The induction program included orientation to colleges, campus, rules & regulations, mentorship, anti-ragging, and guest lectures on personality development, communication skills, corona and self-care, stress management, bedside manners and psychological counseling.

Guest lectures are an integral part of the learning process, and when performed by eminent speakers, they have a great impact on students overall experience. Castello (2012)¹⁰ suggested that inviting a guest speaker is one potential method for boosting interaction and engagement among students, as lecture-based classrooms lack these elements. According to Kamoun and Selim (2007) and Alebaikan RA^{11,18}, bringing in a guest speaker can help students learn about best practices and life lessons.

Importance of personality development lectures: A study by Dr. Howard Gardner, a developmental psychologist, discusses multiple intelligences that go beyond grades to encompass a student's total development.¹² Additionally, Swami Vivekananda stressed the value of personality development and the role that teachers have in forming students. A personality development lecture at an orientation program might be a great way for them to start a new chapter in their professional lives. The opinions of the present orientation align with Kumar P's research, which states that a student's total growth is dependent on his or her personality development¹³.

Lecture on communication skills: Since university students come from a variety of backgrounds, cultures, and educational backgrounds communication can be difficult at times but is a crucial component that must be addressed. It matters a great deal in university courses how you present yourself in terms of communication abilities. Dr. Parmar-Shubhda's study on the value of communication skills for college students highlights the necessity of giving them careful thought. The current orientation program included a lecture on the same topic to help students understand the need for communication skills, and the majority of students agreed that the lecture indeed helped them¹⁴.

Lecture on COVID-19 and self-care: In response to heightened concerns amidst the pandemic, an orientation

program for students entering medical education emphasized the critical need for precautionary measures. Acknowledging the heightened vulnerability of students to potential exposure, a lecture was delivered to promote student preparedness. The lecture underscored the importance of adopting stringent safety protocols and provided knowledge on effective self-care practices. By equipping students with essential information, the program aimed to foster a culture of vigilance and responsibility, mitigating risks within the academic environment. Such proactive measures serve to safeguard student well-being and contribute to a safer educational experience amid uncertain times.^{15,20}

Lecture on stress management: Hena et al. highlighted the significance of stress management among university students and its impact on their quality of life. In alignment with this, the recent orientation program featured a guest lecture focusing on stress management. Recognizing the multitude of stressors encountered by students transitioning to university life, such as relocation, academic demands, and familial separation, the lecture aimed to equip them with coping strategies. Feedback from students indicated the efficacy of the lecture in providing valuable insights and support. By proactively addressing these challenges, the program endeavors to enhance student well-being and facilitate successful adaptation to their new academic environment.⁸

Lecture on bedside manners in hospitals: In hospital settings, bedside manners constitute a vital aspect of medical education, profoundly impacting patient care. The manner in which students conduct themselves and establish rapport with patients during examinations is paramount to their training. As a crucial element, incoming student cohorts must receive orientation regarding proper conduct in such settings. Zerwa Farooq emphasizes the significance of this aspect and explores the faculty's role in instilling these principles in students. This underscores the necessity for students to adhere to basic guidelines on interacting with patients, ensuring their comfort and fostering a conducive environment for effective medical practice¹⁶.

Essential skills: Essential skills are important for shaping a student from being a mere human to being a professional. Various patients are treated not only in terms of the treatment provided to the patient but also to counsel them and provide comfort and reassurance. Essential skills also help them develop attitudes to handle critical situations in their personal and professional life.¹⁷

Orientation to colleges and campuses: Introducing new students to campuses and colleges aids in familiarizing them with both teaching and nonteaching staff, facilitating their academic and administrative tasks. Orientation to the college's infrastructure familiarizes students with the environment and classrooms, which is particularly beneficial for interdisciplinary courses. It also enables them to grasp

the array of facilities and amenities available on campus. Moreover, it acquaints them with emergency procedures, including entry and exit points, ensuring their preparedness in times of calamity.⁴

Overall orientation program: An induction program was implemented to help the students adjust to the new environment (college campus) and become comfortable with faculty and other students. Overall, the induction program was very effective in terms of impacting their personality, providing skills for communication, and inculcating good bedside manners in hospitals, which could be reflected in patient–doctor relations in the near future.

Conclusion

The present study reviewed the student's opinion (first-year BPT students) on series of guest lectures which were a part of 4-day OP. The overall feedback towards all the guest lecture was positive and merely small percentage of students disagreed. The study concludes that guest lectures should be added to such OP

Limitation: The interview method of analysis would emphasize on individual students opinion on orientation program

Future scope: Impact analysis and/or interventional studies on pre and post analysis can be taken up.

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