



Effectiveness of implementing mentorship programs in medical colleges- A mentor's perspective

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The transition that occurs from high school to a professional course like MBBS poses a great challenge to not only the students but also to the medical teachers to deal with such scenario. The medical schools can be considered as home away from home with emphasis on properly guiding the students for their overall development and to help them cope up with anxiety, home sickness, academic issues and the social and cultural differences they come from ⁽¹⁾. One of the best approaches to help the students out, so that they are not lost in the crowd is mentorship program. It has gained immense importance for the last couple of years in Indian medical colleges. Now a days, the meaning of the word mentor is stated as “An experienced and trusted adviser” ⁽²⁾.

With changing times, there is a paradigm shift in the role played by medical teachers. Besides being the educators, they also play the roles of guardians, facilitators, advisors, etc. Students often look up to them as their role models who often foster a better student- teacher communication ⁽³⁾. Medical students go through a lot of stressors in their life in the form of professional stress, emotional stress, language barrier, doubts in their subjects etc. A study done in 2016⁽⁴⁾ reported that most of the medical students seem to be overburdened, drained out and faced lack of emotional support. Many a times, they are in a fix and are confused whom to approach for sorting out their problems. Implementing mentorship programs right from the first year of their MBBS curriculum help students build a strong foundation for their career development. This helps in developing not only the positive attitude amongst students but also helps the mentor in improving teaching and communication skills and to develop empathy which is the need of the hour. Also, in the latter half of their professional life they require mentors who can sharpen their clinical skills. A mentor is allotted a group of students as their mentees. Personal mentoring in small groups becomes easier which otherwise becomes difficult in whole class of large number of students. To make the mentorship programs more impactful, personal training/ faculty development programs can be implemented for the eligible mentors, and also considering hectic schedule and long teaching hours, specific time can be allotted per month for mentor-mentee interaction ⁽²⁾. Many of the mentorship programs implemented at medical colleges also had a senior student or some other faculty member as a co-mentor ⁽⁵⁾. Thus mentorship programs if implemented with proper scientific approach and also keeping in mind

the psychological support mentees require, they would be potentially beneficial for both the faculty members as mentors and of course to the students as well, to build up a strong foundation for betterment of the society.

References

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