Embryology and Cell Biology. Most students recalled sufficient details of the upper and lower limb, thorax and abdomen to pass in these sections.

Conclusions: The "walking knowledge" of anatomy among incoming year 3 students is poor.

EDU 3

The student anatomy project: curse or blessing?

I. Stabile, O. Kirresh
Department of Anatomy, Faculty of Medicine and Surgery, University of Malta

Aims: Students are assigned an anatomy project in the summer between Years 1 and 2. The project is an attempt to integrate active learning, cooperative learning, and problem solving into undergraduate medical education. Students are provided with list of topics or they may propose topics. They may choose to work singly or in small groups with a supervisor of their choice. The Project and its write-up are assessed by two internal and one external examiner. The purpose of this study was to examine the results obtained by medical and dental students in the anatomy projects between 2005 and 2007.

Methods: The marks assigned to each of the projects were analysed and correlated with demographics as well as the final examination marks. Many other factors that influence project mark and final exam mark were not controlled for in this descriptive study.

Results: The study included 69 projects carried out by 138 students in 2 consecutive years. Most students chose to undertake dissection projects. Overall, Living Anatomy, Research, and Histology projects obtained higher marks than Dissection projects, while Imaging, Models and Embryology projects obtained lower marks than Dissection projects. In the case of dissection projects, Thorax, Abdo/Pelvis and CNS dissection projects obtained significantly higher marks than the remainder.

There was a statistically significant correlation between the marks obtained in the project and those in the final exam, in that students are more likely to perform better in that section of the exam that they undertook their project in. Moreover, there was a statistically significant correlation between student's mark in the project topic and the student's own mark in that same section of the exam. Students working in groups obtained significantly higher marks than those working alone, but the size of the group and its gender distribution did not appear to influence the result.

Conclusions: Apart from the fact that student projects contribute significantly to the department's prosected teaching material, students appear to benefit from the exercise. The fact that only 5% of the final mark in the Anatomy Exam is awarded to the project may have affected some students' dedication to the quality of the project. Qualitative data are needed to explore the students' experience of the process.

EDU 4

Analysis of anatomy knowledge in senior medical students and foundation year doctors

J. Camilleri-Brennan [1], L. Callus [2], I. Said [3], M. Pace Bardon [3], J. Dalli [4]
[1]Department of Surgery, Stirling Royal Infirmary, Stirling, Scotland, [2] Mater Dei Hospital, Malta, [3] Stirling Royal Infirmary, Stirling, Scotland, [4]Edinburgh Royal Infirmary, Edinburgh, Scotland.

Aims: To provide a snapshot of the knowledge of anatomy in senior medical students and Foundation Year doctors, and to determine whether the methods of undergraduate teaching of anatomy (traditional versus modern) have any bearing on the results.

Methods: 115 senior medical students from the University of Malta and various UK Universities as well as Foundation Year doctors who graduated from these universities participated. They were asked to identify the carpal bones from a radiograph of a hand under the direct supervision of one of the authors. The carpal bones were chosen as a yardstick for anatomical knowledge since they can be easily examined objectively and are clinically relevant to doctors in many specialties.

Results: Participants were divided into 2 groups: Group A (59 participants) had pre-clinical teaching in anatomy using the traditional method of dissection (Universities of Malta and St. Andrew's in Scotland), and group B (56 participants) were taught using a more modern approach (other UK Universities). Only 21 candidates (18.3%) could correctly identify all 8 carpal bones (Group A 14, 23.7% vs. Group B 7, 12.5%). Overall, Group A identified 60.8% of the carpal bones correctly, compared to 48.2% of bones by Group B. The Scaphoid was the most commonly identified bone (88.7%), whilst the Triquetrum the least (31%).

Conclusions: Although this is a crude measure of anatomical knowledge, it is an objective test and thus provides an insight into the level of knowledge in medical students and junior doctors. Participants who were taught anatomy using traditional methods scored better than those who learnt anatomy in less detail. However, it is disappointing that less than a fifth of participants could name all 8 bones correctly. Therefore, given the gaps in knowledge of anatomy in both groups, and since knowledge of anatomy is essential in clinical diagnosis and management, teaching of this subject in the clinical years is necessary

EDU 5

Postgraduate health education environment at the Department of Medicine at Mater Dei Hospital

C. Farrugia Jones, J. Cacciattolo
Department of Medicine, Faculty of Medicine and Surgery, University of Malta

Aims: To evaluate the postgraduate education environment at one of the largest departments at Mater Dei Hospital

Methods: All trainees on the staff of the Department of Medicine in July 2008 were asked to take part in a survey involving a self-administered validated and anonymous questionnaire on health education environment (PHEEM).

Results: Overall response rate was 57%, (pre-registration house officers: 10% , specialist registrars; 98%). The environment posed plenty of problems for 40% of trainees, and for the rest it had more positive than negative features, with room for improvement.