

DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.18203/2319-2003.ijbcp20191120>**Original Research Article****Impact of counselling on the attendance and academic performance of second year medical students in the subject Pharmacology****Nitin D. Pise, Swapnil B. Kaikade\***

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**ABSTRACT**

**Background:** Absenteeism is becoming a major problem among medical students which has become a focus of concern nationally and globally.

**Methods:** Students are assessed at the beginning of the counselling. The academic performance and attendance rates of students are recorded and tabulated systematically. The data was evaluated for the group of students having low academic performance and attendance over the study period. Statistics applied to determine significant impact of counselling on attendance and academic performance of students over the study period.

**Results:** Study showed positive and significant impact of counselling on attendance and academic performance of the students. The study also revealed positive correlation between attendance and academic performance.

**Conclusions:** The significant impact of counselling was found on student attendance and academic performance. The counselling sessions also proved to improve the student teacher relationship in terms of better two-way communication and also helped in receiving feedback on implementation of new ways of teaching.

**Keywords:** Attendance, Academic performance, Counselling, Medical students

**INTRODUCTION**

The adjustment difficulties of medical students have been emerging issues. Many studies have proved that the adjustment of students in the field of medical environment like appetite disturbance, concentration problem and depression are the most evident factors.<sup>1</sup> To help college students in resolving their problem, difficulties and adjustment issues, are made efforts in the form of establishment of counselling cell to provide intervention to the second year medical students in the subject

pharmacology, so that their social and emotional problem with their academic performance will be solved. Counselling is an activity that utilizes interpersonal relationship to enable people to develop self-understanding and make change in their lives.<sup>2</sup> Student's attendance is thought to be an important factor in the academic performance of medical students on the basis that clinical contact and teaching is necessary to develop competence.<sup>3</sup> A common assumption in higher education is that absenteeism substantially contributed to low academic achievement. The class attendance is more

important for enhancing grade rather than obtaining a pass mark.<sup>4</sup> There is a general agreement among researchers that being chronically absent students are at risk for negative academic consequences. However, some studies have failed to find a significant correlation between attendance and academic performance. Moreover, researchers found that when the material covered in classes was not available in the course textbook, students who attend classes benefited from interactions with the teacher and classmates and did better in the examinations. Students who attend classes also were able to take class notes and such notes taking has been shown to have positive learning benefits. In curricula with predominantly didactic teaching, attendance at classes has traditionally been thought to be a prerequisite to good academic performance. There is a positive correlation between attendance and academic performance and in addition, several sources show a relatively consistent relationship between attendance and grades, regardless of the course subject or level of student. The consistent result of the holistic approach is that it enhances learning and is likely to increase academic performance. It also features attendance as being a contributing factor for such enhanced learning. Understanding the impact of guidance and counselling on performance of schools has warranted special attention over time by different fields of scientific knowledge. Following the frequent decline of school student's performance and coupled with high level of student dropout, effective guidance and counselling practice have remained the key factor that is highly depended upon to restore the performance.<sup>5</sup> Therefore, this study will be carried out to find out the impact of counselling on attendance and academic performance of second year medical students in the subject pharmacology.

The aim of this study was to study the impact of counselling on attendance and academic performance of students. The objectives were to find out the relationship between attendance and counselling and between academic performance and counselling.

## METHODS

### *Counselling session*

Students were assessed at the beginning of the counselling. The assessment was done to early understand the problem of the students, so that their situation could be improved. The students were allowed to express his or her problem and full confidentiality had assured them. Author offered encouragement and solution to their problems and promised to support them whenever they want. Depending upon the personal problem, number of sessions was increased. Counselling included personal problem, attendance in classes and academic performance of the students.

### *Data collection*

The academic performance and attendance rates of second year medical students in the subject pharmacology during the academic year 2016-2017 was recorded and tabulated systematically. The data was divided on a semester basis which would reflect the study period of academic performance and attendance of students.

### *Interpretation of data*

The data was evaluated for the group of students having low academic performance and attendance over the study period. Statistics will be applied to determine significant impact of counselling on attendance and academic performance of second year medical students in the subject pharmacology over the study period.

## RESULTS

The result showed that those who attended the counselling shows improvement in their attendance and academic performance (Table 1).

**Table 1: Attendance and academic performance.**

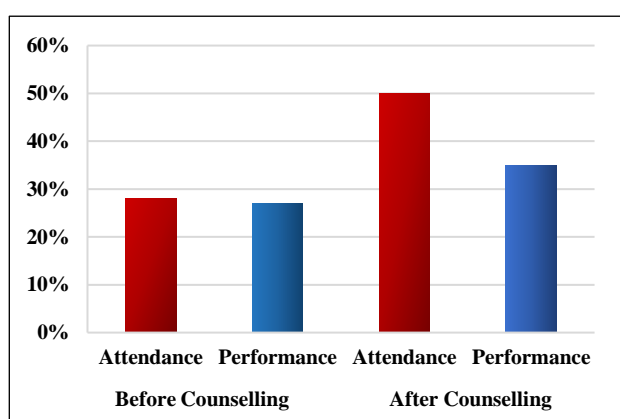
Short term outcome	Indicators	Data source	Data collection method
Improvement in the attendance of students	Attendance <50% in I semester, improve to 70-75% in II semester	Students having <50% attendance in I semester	Departmental record
Improvement in academic performance	Academic performance <35% in I semester, improve to 50-60% in II semester	Students having <35% marks in I semester	Departmental record

**Table 2: Impact of counselling on students attendance and academic performance.**

	Before counselling		After counselling	
	Attendance	Performance	Attendance	Performance
Mean score	28	27	50	35
Variance	105	158	57	99

Paired 't' test for performance: p value <0.05, paired 't' test for attendance: p-value <0.05.

When the collected data was subjected to the statistical analysis, as can be seen from Figure 1, there was significant impact of counselling on student attendance and performance. Students having attendance of less than 50% in first semester before counselling improved their attendance to 70-75% in second trimester after counselling (mean score of 28 before counselling has been improved to 50 after counselling). Also, the students with academic performance of less than 35% in first semester before counselling improved their performance to 50-60% in second trimester after counselling (performance mean score of 27 before counselling was improved to 35 after counselling) with the P value for both attendance and performance <0.05 (Table 2). Overall, there was significant impact of counselling on student attendance and academic performance.



**Figure 1: Attendance and academic performance of students before and after counselling.**

## DISCUSSION

Throughout their time in college students continuously prepare to overcome the different challenges they face. They often need some type of support guidance and counselling so that they can face their educational challenges and take a proper decision. The main aim of counselling was that students are able to handle the stress of the new surrounding they are getting exposed to for the first time and also the stress of the study which has a great impact on their academic progress and attendance in the college. Ultimately, it's the attendance of the students in the class that has significant impact on the student performance in their examination and counselling plays an important role where student's personal and professional issues can be addressed in a better way to improve their mental health and general wellbeing. Counselling is a support service for the students to assist them to make appropriate personal and educational choices. Counselling also helps the emotionally disturbed students to understand their problems and help them find the solutions to improve their academic performance. Various studies proved the impact of counselling on the academic progress and student attendance. A comparison made between the counselling of the students and general students indicated that the

counselled students showed a better retention as compared to their peers.<sup>6</sup> Reviews done on the school counselling also explored that it had a positive effect on children.<sup>7-9</sup> Some studies also proved that those who attended the counselling showed improved grades as compared to those who did not.<sup>10</sup>

Counselling was perceived by students as having positive impact on their academic achievements by improving their concentration, attend classes and also relationship with teachers. This study, like the other studies proved that there is significant impact of counselling on student attendance and academic performance as can be seen Figure 1.

## CONCLUSION

The significant impact of counselling was found on student attendance and academic performance. The counselling sessions also proved to improve the student teacher relationship in terms of better two-way communication and also helped in receiving feedback on implementation of new ways of teaching.

## Recommendations

From the result of the study, author would like to recommend that all medical schools should have a counselling unit to create awareness amongst them about implications of absenteeism on their academic performance which can prevent them from skipping classes. Medical schools should also pay more attention and take immediate measures towards the students who are continuously absent for the classes to prevent further consequences of this on their academic performance.

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*Ethical approval: The study was approved by the Institutional Ethics Committee*

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