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Study on the Causes of Students' Academic probation in Hamadan University of Medical Sciences, 2001-2002

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Background: One of the priorities of research in education is study about the causes of students' failure during their academic work.

Objective: To investigate the causes of students' academic failure and probation.

Methods: In this case-control study, 761 volunteer students in Hamadan University of Medical Sciences' during fall and spring semesters of 2001-2002 were participated. Students were divided into two groups. Case group consisted of 43 students who had academic failure leading to their probation and control group consisted of 718 students who were successful in their study program. Data collection was done by a questionnaire designed based on eight main factors in learning process including: method of teaching, evaluation, educational materials, planning for the semester courses, personal characteristics, environmental problems, academic environment, and accessibility of academic advisors. The questionnaire was used after reliability and validity evaluation.

Results: The percentage of academic probation was higher in boys (9.4%) compared to girls (4.3%). Among eight factors affecting learning process, there was a significant difference ($P=0.014$) between the two groups in their mean score of opinions about the method of teaching (3.56 ± 1.16 in the case group vs. 3.59 ± 0.98 in the control group). There was also significant difference between the two groups in regard to mean score of the personal characteristics (4.36 ± 1.26 in case group vs. 4.76 ± 1.08 in control group, $P=0.023$). The obtained mean scores for method of teaching and personal characteristics of the students was significantly higher according to the students who had a score below 10 for at least 1 course. Mean scores of method of teaching and environmental & educational problems were significantly higher according to the students who had a score between 10-12 in at least one course ($P<0.05$).

Conclusion: In conclusion, the factors such as instructors' teaching method, students' personal characteristics and their living conditions, sex and high school grade point average have significant effects on academic failure and probation. Attention to these factors in planning educational programs has a critical role on decreasing the rate of students' academic probation and failure.

Key Word: Academic probation, Medical Students, Academic Failure, Teaching Methods, Evaluation

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