The Comparison of Community –based Education Programs in Faculties of Tabriz University of Medical Sciences

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ABSTRACT

Introduction: Training in a real work environment, within community is an effective method of education. Continuous evaluation of community based education courses is essential for both maintaining and improving their quality. **Methods:** In a cross-sectional study, 100 students who had passed community based education courses along with 15 faculty members teaching the same courses have been randomly selected in the faculties of Tabriz University of medical sciences. A researcher-designed questionnaire consisting questions of educational program, learning settings, teaching and assessment methods, used for data collection. The data was analyzed using SPSS16. **Results:** Community based education among the students of Health and Nutrition, Dentistry, Para medicine, Pharmacy, Medicine, Nursing and Rehabilitation faculties scored 39.46±6.59 (average), 78.20±1.37 (very high), 52.78±14.41 (high), 19.48±5.29 (low), 61.942.2±2.2 (good), 43.97±16.82 (average) and 64.90±3.45 (high), respectively. **Conclusion:** The research results showed that community based education had different quality levels in different departments.

Introduction

Significant evolutions in technology and basic medical sciences during the last three decades, the increased focus of WHO and governments on "Health for All" program and the considerable emphasis on prevention required more attentions for changing in medical education.[1] Emphasis on qualitative indicators, improvement of higher education and training graduates with acceptable, ethical, scientific and operational capabilities are among the main goals of Second Five-Year Plan in Iran.[2] The policies regarding the training medical graduates should be coordinated with the recent changes and challenges in today societies such as the growing expectations of patients and the emphasis on primary health care. Medical education should transit from patient-based education towards community-based education.[3] Community oriented medical education focuses on population groups and communities and takes society health care needs into consideration.[4] Richards and Folup have studied ten medical faculties which were the members of the network of community oriented medical education institutes. They appointed five indicators to determine community orientation of universities of which one was the use of community and health system settings for education.[4] Tabriz University of Medical sciences as one of the pioneers of medical education in Iran is well

aware of the main mission of the health care system and is trying hard to utilize effective training methods and train health care professionals with the required capabilities that are in accordance with the real needs of the society and current standards in order to provide, maintain and improve public health care and fulfill community needs. It is essential to monitor and evaluate educational programs in order to measure their success rates, determine their strengths and weaknesses, and adjust them to the expected criteria and standards. As a result, the researchers have intended to study community based education programs and methods in different faculties of Tabriz University of Medical Sciences.

Methods

A cross sectional study was done on randomly selected students who have completed community based courses, academic staff and community based instructors. Sample size was calculated through Cochran formula and estimated 100. The data was collected using a questionnaire designed by the researchers. The questionnaire content validity was confirmed by the academic experts. The questionnaire was then handed over to 20 respondents chosen from the statistical population in order to calculate

its reliability. Cronbach's Alpha test was used to estimate the questionnaire reliability which was calculated as 86%. The data was analyzed using SPSS, independent t-test and one way ANOVA. Central statistical measures including mean value and standard deviation were also calculated.

Results

The results indicated a significant difference between various studied faculties regarding five major indicators (p=0.000) with the maximum and minimum values of 94.61±4.14 and 19.48±8.82, respectively. Other faculties scored good or average. Table 1 show the score values of different faculties according to the research predetermined indicators.

Table 1. Score Values of Faculties by Indicators*

	Well-Designed Program	Learning Context	Training Methods	Evaluation and Test methods	Other Educational Indicators	Mean Scores
Faculty 1	55.5	51.85±3.64	70.83	77.22±3.15	59.25±4.33	94.61±4.14
Faculty 2	77.7	92.59±3.2	95.83	77.75±1.32	74.07±2.34	83.60±9.86
Faculty 3	77.76±2.3	44.4±4.52	70.83±4.63	44.73±2.58	70.37±3.2	66.90±12.77
Faculty 4	64.28±16.26	42.32±10.24	55.95±13.64	48.41±21.28	53.43±10.64	52.87±8.23
Faculty 5	34.72±23.14	31.48±21.41	66.66±11.35	44.4±11.13	42.59±17.37	43.97±13.77
Faculty 6	50±4.19	41.66±5.85	42.70±7.30	25±6.64	37.96±9.01	39.46±18.9
Faculty 7	11.11±7.85	31.48±2.61	10.41±2.94	22.22±7.85	22.22±5.23	19.48±8.82
University's Mean Value	52.94±23.99	47.96±20.95	59.03±26.86	47.81±21.16	51.41±18.48	57.27±26.21

*Results by the names of faculties have been sent to the heads of faculties and responsible departments.

Discussion and Conclusion

According to the study and evaluation of community based education in different faculties of Tabriz University of Medical sciences, faculties 1, 2 and 3 have achieved the highest overall scores, respectively. Community based education in faculties 1 and 2 was evaluated as very good. Despite its overall high rating (very good), faculty 1 scored 55.5 in the first area (well-designed program) which means its community based education program needs some reconsideration. Students of faculty 1 evaluated educational resources and units as average. Faculty 3 scored 44.4±4.52 and 44.73±2.58 in learning context and evaluation and test methods, respectively; thus it needs reconsideration in these areas. Students of faculty 3 evaluated training by the staff (learning context) and written exam administration methods (evaluation and test methods area) as average.

In the three mentioned faculties, the area with the highest score was training methods. According to almost all the students of 1, 2 and 3 faculties, the teachers and instructors utilized new and diverse training methods and applied learning instructions and theories in their training methods. Community based education in faculty four scored 52.87±8.23 which was evaluated as good. Students of faculty 4 evaluated it as good in three areas including well-designed program, training methods and other indicators; while it was evaluated as average in two areas of learning context and evaluation and test methods.

Community based education in faculties of 5 and 6 was evaluated as average. According to the scores, students of Faculty of Health and Nutrition thought that evaluation and test methods were not effective and evaluated the remaining areas as average.

In faculty 7, the lowest score belonged to learning context and well-designed program. A similar research was conducted by Dr. Vahid Zamanzadeh in 2006 in which clinical training in faculty 7 was evaluated from the perspective of academic staff. In this research, learning context and well-designed program were evaluated as good and excellent, respectively.[5]

According to the results and the need to further improvement of community based education in faculties, the following suggestions are made:

- Annual analysis and reconsideration of community based education programs.
- Getting feedbacks on community based education programs as well as observing and studying related processes and documents by experts.
- Further analysis of the causes of problems and suggested solutions.

Competing interests

None to be declared

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