

Is Online Assessment the Panacea for E-Learning During this Pandemic? -Medical Students' Outlook

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ABSTRACT

Ever since the COVID-19 lockdown, teaching and assessment methods in medical education have been shifted to virtual lines. Students' feedback provides the perfect criteria for analyzing the effectiveness of online assessments. The present study has been done to evaluate the fruitfulness of online assessments from students' point of view. After taking informed consent, keeping the identity anonymous, a self-developed questionnaire with ten questions were provided to the students by google form. The responses were evaluated. 120 students participated in the study (75girls, 45boys) with age ranging from 17-23 years. 63.3% students selected pen & paper examination option as the best suited for the theoretical knowledge. 54.5% replied that objective tests can be done online. 59.1% found the advantage to see the grade and revise immediately after the online test. Most of them replied in their own words, that more time has to be allotted for online assessment which is needed to upload their documents.

To conclude, majority of the students opined that online assessment may not be the panacea for e-learning during this pandemic. They expressed their inclination more towards the traditional pen & paper examination.

KEYWORDS: Online assessment, medical students, feedback, pen & paper examination

INTRODUCTION

"Feedback is the breakfast of champions". Students analyse what and how to learn based on how they will be assessed. The primary purpose of feedback is to help the faculty to identify the strengths and weaknesses of their teaching and evaluation methods⁽¹⁾. The quality of teaching evaluation has been elaborated by Biggs ⁽²⁾. COVID-19 pandemic has transformed the entire teaching learning methodologies to online learning. Online assessment in medical education offers many advantages over traditional forms of assessment⁽³⁾. Novel technologies have been on the rise to implement unpredicted online teaching and assessment methodologies in the new Competency Based Medical Education. The integration of e-learning into medical education will make the educators to be more involved as facilitators of learning and assessors of competency⁽⁴⁾. Assessment should be challenging and appropriate methods have to be used from the perspectives of impact on learning

⁽⁵⁾. Schuwirth and Van der Veulton ⁽⁶⁾ described that assessment can have both intended and unintended consequences. Though the students were evaluated online since the lockdown, a perfect feedback from the students themselves will provide the actual realities in the implementation of online assessment. The present study has been designed to understand and evaluate the online assessment from students' perspective.

MATERIALS & METHODS

The study group comprised of 120 MBBS students from phase-1, 2019-20 batch. There are 75 girls and 45 boys with age ranging from 17-23 years. After taking informed consent, a self developed questionnaire was circulated via google forms. The results were analysed and represented graphically.

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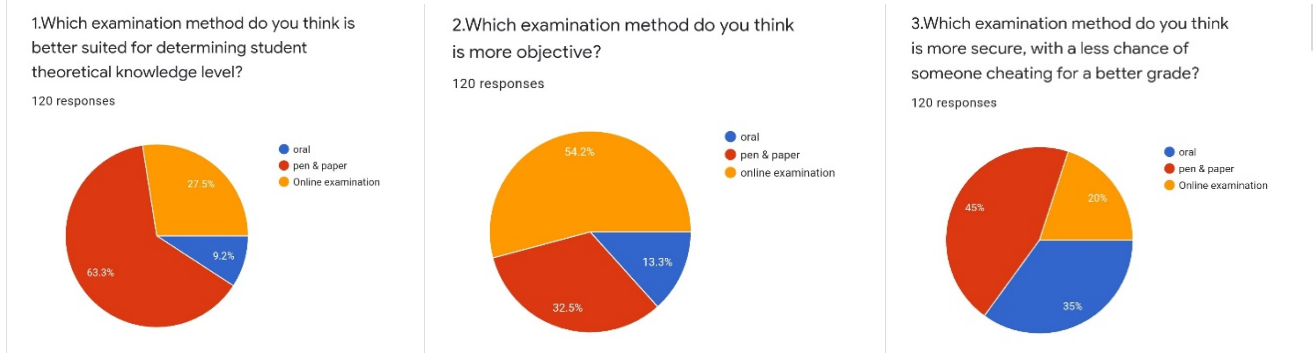
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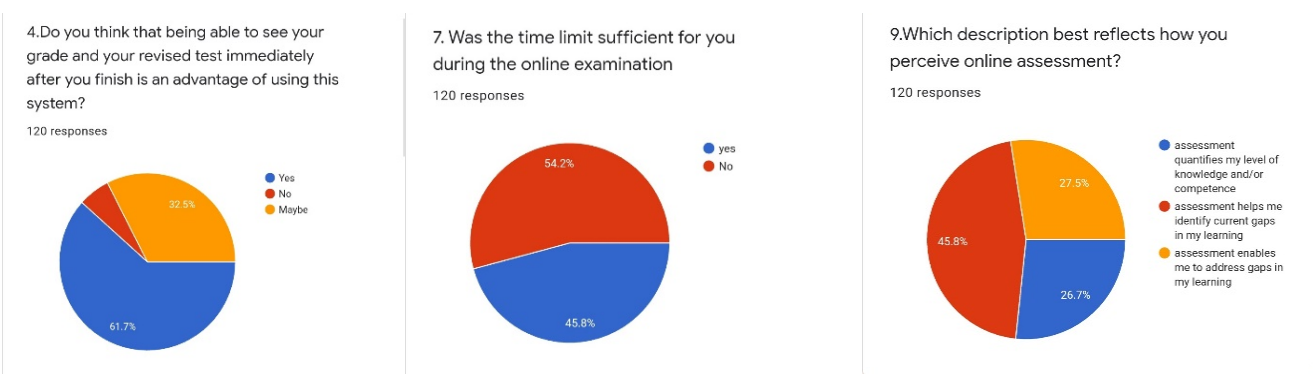
RESULTS

The following graphs depict the responses given by the students of phase-1 MBBS.

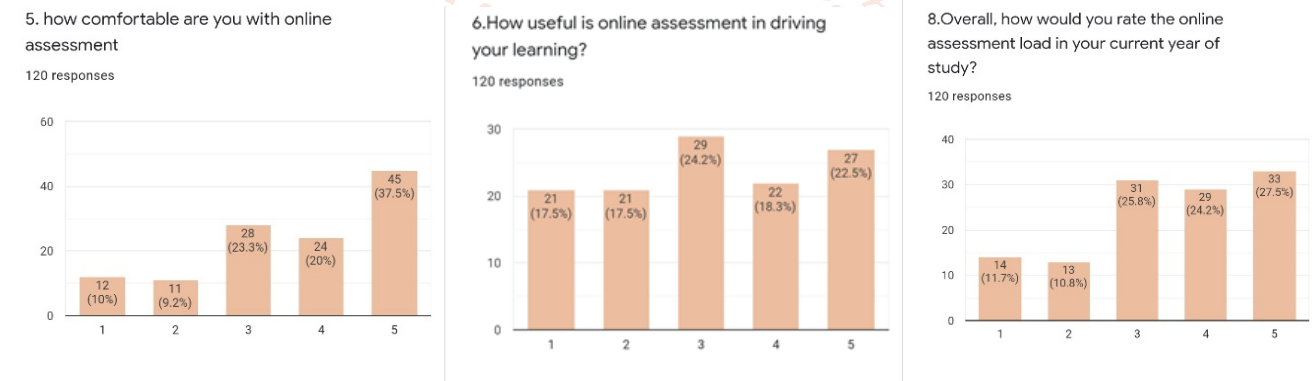
Graph 1: pie charts from google forms for questions 1, 2 & 3



Graph 2: pie charts for the questions 4, 7 & 9



Graph 3: bar chart for the questions 5, 6 & 8



DISCUSSION

Online learning has been the current trend in medical education to implement ideology of the competency based medical education during this pandemic. Continuous assessments has to be done to improve the efficiency of online learning. Teachers effectiveness in delivering the lectures play a major role in the receptivity of the student which in turn reflect on their results. Dunkin⁽⁷⁾ listed out different ways of assessing teacher’s effectiveness which include student achievement measures, on-the-job evaluation, performance measures, and use of portfolios. Judis⁽⁸⁾ added other sources of information may be from peers, administrators, and teachers self-evaluation. Few studies show the students’ inclination towards online assessments. Kumar et al⁽⁹⁾ concluded that online assessments could be conducted in medical schools regularly. Students were facing the traditional examination methods till now but the pandemic situation has subjected them to online assessment. Frenk et al⁽¹⁰⁾ explained that though online assessment is still relatively new, it may become the mainstream over the next decade. The present

study has been conducted to evaluate the students’ opinion towards online assessment methods. Interesting results have been reported in this study. 63.3% students selected pen & paper examination option as the best suited for the theoretical knowledge. 54.5% replied that objective tests can be done online. This shows the inclination of medical students towards traditional examination methods. The present study reflects the opinion of medical students of phase-1 from a private medical college. This can be further evaluated from medical students from all the phases and from different universities as well.

CONCLUSION

Phase 1 MBBS students opine that online assessment may not be the panacea for the unpredicted online learning pursued by them during this pandemic. They expressed that whatever they have learnt online can be assessed by traditional pen & paper examination to check their theoretical knowledge. As far as objective type is concerned, they preferred online assessment.

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