

# From Bedside To Class Room – A Peer Led Initiative



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## INTRODUCTION

Very often students complain that the relevance of what is taught is unclear and learning is undertaken simply to pass examinations. The realization that BASIC SCIENCES ARE IMPORTANT often dawns too late and there is a mad scramble to the finish line, attempting to understand basic sciences while trying to master the intricacies of clinical medicine. The integrated curriculum provides students with opportunities to apply didactic knowledge to personal development<sup>1</sup>, but the process is complex and is hindered by instructors who are insecure when curriculum moves from a teacher centered to a student centered programme<sup>2</sup>. In truth, the strength depends on the quality and ability of instructors to promote active discussion<sup>3</sup>. To encourage participation and clinical correlation in the basic sciences, we decided to pilot a peer led seminar involving final year and year two students in the faculty. The aim was to increase awareness of the relevance of basic sciences and assess student satisfaction.

## METHODS

All students in the reproductive system module attended a peer led session on hydatidiform mole. The session was run by a group of final year and year 2 students on a voluntary basis. The final year students presented a case of hydatidiform mole emphasizing focussed areas that required basic science knowledge in the topic. The year 2 students presented the basic science correlates with an interactive session involving the audience. All presentations were vetted by resource persons from the clinical and pre-clinical disciplines to ensure achievement of the necessary learning outcomes. Resource persons were also available at the session. Student satisfaction with this method of teaching was measured with a questionnaire. In year 3 the same cohort of students was given a test on this topic. This was early in the 5<sup>th</sup> semester. Performance of those who had completed the obstetric and gynaecology posting was compared with those who had not.

## DISCUSSION

Alternative methods of teaching which achieve the learning outcomes are required to meet the challenges of education. Peer assisted or led teaching sessions are one such method. In our study this method of teaching and learning found favour with the students (77%). This could be due to the fact that the activity is less threatening to the student and conducive for learning.<sup>4,5</sup> Students seemed to have a good recall of the topic. Understandably re-exposure in the clinical year resulted in better performance in the test.<sup>4,6,7</sup> 56% indicated they would prefer a lecture. At the end of the session, only about 65% felt that this session would improve their ability to interact effectively with patients. The former reflects difficulties in introducing new teaching learning activities. The latter is probably reflective of the fact that the session was basically theoretical.

## CONCLUSION

Peer assisted or led sessions are an acceptable method of teaching and learning. It is clear that this method of learning finds favour with both tutors and tutees. Our study also indicates that student retention of knowledge with this method is good and that it has no adverse effect on the performance of tutor. However, these sessions need to be planned and moderated effectively and it should be noted that uniform acceptance of newer methods of instruction may be lacking. Further work in this regard is required.

## FINDINGS

A total of 141 students participated. This method of was favoured by 88%. Overall 81.5% of students passed the test. There was no adverse impact on the academic performance of the final year students who indicated that the session was a good form of review for them as well.

Table 1: Perception of students on the VIIPS

Student Perception	Mean*	SD
The session conducted in semester 4 was interesting.	3.57	0.818
It helped me to have better understanding of the condition of Molar Pregnancy.	3.6	0.804
It made me learn how to approach a patient with the said condition.	3.22	0.817
It helped me to demonstrate a constructive and critical thinking process.	3.3	0.748
It helped me to become capable of identifying learning objectives of basic sciences and relate them to clinical case scenarios.	3.31	0.76
As a result of this peer-led session I am better able to effectively evaluate a clinical case of molar pregnancy.	3.35	0.823
I believe that this peer teaching will make me capable of applying knowledge to new situations to solve problems and reach decisions.	3.4	0.84
More sessions of similar types are acceptable as teaching learning activity in Phase 1.	3.45	0.911
This makes us better learners with interaction from the seniors.	3.38	0.93
I am more confident with patient interaction after this session.	3.17	0.887
I think I will be able to perform better in Clinical Phase with such interactive learning sessions.	3.36	0.86
I prefer the lecture method as compared to PBL	3.11	1.118

\* mean score based on 5 point Likert scale

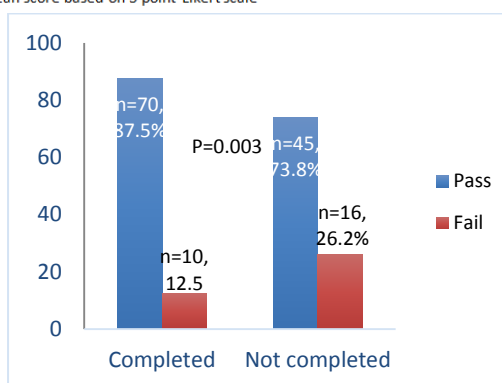


Fig. 1 Comparison of test results between students

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