



AETCOM: A NEW ENTRANT IN THE MEDICAL CURRICULUM

Medical Education

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ABSTRACT

In this ever-changing era, medical education faces new challenges that keep up erupting now and then. We have to adapt to such changes to be compatible with the 'survival of the fittest' theory. Here in this article, we are focussing on one such recent addition that is AETCOM (Attitude, Ethics, and Communication) in the medical curriculum that all medical trainees should be aware of. The purpose of this article is to highlight the significance of AETCOM thereby explaining it in detail.

KEYWORDS

AETCOM; attitude; ethics; communication

INTRODUCTION

AETCOM (Attitude, Ethics, and Communication) is the latest module added to the medical curriculum of the undergraduate training program as part of Competency-Based Medical Education (CBME) so as to turn 'Indian Medical Graduate (IMG)' to 'International Medical Graduate'. AETCOM module is meant to strike a balance between the five identified roles of an IMG which includes Clinician, Leader & Member of the health care team, Communicator, Life-long learner and Professional right from the 1st professional year of training. It can serve as a guide to facilitate faculty and institutions in implementing a longitudinal program that will help students acquire the necessary competence in the attitude, ethics, and communication domains.^[1] The idea behind the addition of this new concept is to make medical science more comprehensive, meaningful, and relevant so that medical graduates can cater to the health needs of society in a better way. The world is full of competitive challenges in every field of study and hence there is a dire need to constantly upgrade ourselves to survive.

Competencies Related To Microbiology In The Undergraduate Curriculum

An undergraduate student should understand immunological mechanisms and the role of microbial agents in health and disease, infection control measures, laboratory diagnostic tests and their interpretation, antimicrobial therapy, control, and prevention of infectious diseases.^[2]

Problem-based Learning (PBL)

Problem-based learning (PBL) is a crucial tool for teaching-learning (TL) programs as suggested by the Medical Council of India (MCI).^[3] In this students are given various case scenarios and active discussion is done on various aspects of the case that help in building up the problem-solving skills of the medical students.

What do students and faculties think? (feedback)

Vijayasree and colleagues from Telangana, India studied first-year MBBS students' perception of AETCOM and found in their feedback analysis (from 100 students) that majority of them (92%) think that AETCOM module will definitely improve their communication skills with the patients.^[4] In another cross-sectional study done by Bhattacharya et al from Maharashtra, India, 100% (79 in number) of first-year MBBS students enrolled in the study believed that communication skills training is essential.^[5] In a study from West Bengal, India in which the perception of faculties (96 participants) towards the AETCOM module was assessed, it was found that sixty percent of faculties strongly agree inclusion of AETCOM competencies in competency-based medical education is beneficial.^[6]

AETCOM modules-brief overview

The AETCOM document is divided into 5 sections and 2 appendices. There are 54 AETCOM competencies approved by the Academic Committee, MCI including 39 core and the rest non-core competencies that be assessed formatively. Discussion of a physician's role and responsibility to society and the community that she/he serves, medico-legal, socio-cultural, economic, and ethical issues, teamwork, importance of documentation, maintaining confidentiality in patient

care, and self-grooming are few of the core competencies that students are made aware of. The number of learning modules and hours allotted for learning them throughout the duration of the undergraduate curriculum has been tabulated in Table 1.^[1]

Table 1. Learning Modules For Different Professional Years^[1]

Professional year	Number of modules	Number of hours	Key areas addressed
Year I	5	34	communication, physician's responsibilities, doctor-patient relationship, handling cadaver.
Year II	8	37	communication, bioethics, health care, teamwork, empathy.
Year III	5	25	communication, disclosure of medical errors, confidentiality, fiduciary duty (bioethics).
Year IV	9	44	communication, medico-legal and ethical conflicts, empathy, doctor-patient and doctor industry relationships, ethics, patient autonomy, dealing with death, and medical negligence.

CONCLUSION

AETCOM is a new and vibrant topic that has its own relevance amongst both teachers and students in the medical fraternity. If we understand and inculcate its meaning thoroughly, only then it can be used in practice which is the need of the hour in today's competitive era.

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Conflicts Of Interest

There are no conflicts of interest.

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