

UNDERSTANDING THE ROLE OF CERTIFICATION IN MEDICAL EDUCATION: PERSPECTIVES OF EDUCATORS

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ABSTRACT

Objectives: To explore the perception of the medical faculty attending Certificate course in Health professional education (CHPE); to identify its beneficial factors & those domains which need further improvement.

Materials and Methods: A cross sectional study was done including participants of three CHPE courses organized by Khyber medical University. This study was conducted at the Institute of Health Professions Education and Research (IHPER), Khyber Medical University Peshawar. A pre-validated questionnaire was filled by the participants. Duration of study was three weeks. The first of the questionnaire was regarding age, gender, teaching experience & teaching disciplines of participants. Second portion comprised of perceptions regarding teaching needs, methodology, assessment, communication skills & different aspects of course content.

Results: Amongst the participants there were 36 males (61%) & 23 females (39%). The age of the participants ranged from 25 – 55 years with a mean of 43 years. Amongst teaching disciplines 40 (67.8%) participants were from different clinical disciplines & 19 (32.2%) were from basic sciences. The motivation factor for attending CHPE was personal interest in professional growth (55.90%). Majority of the participants reported the course relevant to their needs and helpful in improving their capabilities as a teacher.

Conclusion: The study showed the importance of CHPE for faculty development for clinical & basic science health professionals. The strategies used for instructions during the course were valued by the respondents. Participants reported a positive change in their knowledge of teaching methods & improvement in communication skill.

Key words: CHPE, Continuous Medical Education (CME), Continuous professional development (CPD), Medical Education, perception

INTRODUCTION

Practice of medicine has changed a lot in the past ten years, with the role of doctors being redefined. Flexner report published in 1910¹ revolutionized medical education in USA. A strange situation has

arisen in our country where medical colleges are springing up like mushrooms and it has drastically affected the standards of our medical education².

The role of a health care provider is to provide health information, act as a role model, plan curriculum and facilitate teaching & health care provision³. As a teacher, health care professionals should be having good communication skills, know-how of working in a team, effective role in disease prevention and at the same time should have better

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managerial skills⁴. To undertake such tasks, trained faculty is needed to tackle all these roles. Medical education has seen tremendous transformation in the 21st century, compelling educators to adopt novel approaches to maximize learning⁵. To achieve these goals medical professionals need to undergo continuous professional development (CPD).

CPD is the process by which doctors keep themselves updated by looking into the needs of patients, health care system and their own professional development^{6,7}. Benner proposed that medical schools should have certified trained Medical Educationists, a situation we are now working for⁸. Faculty being a strong foundation of medical education is called upon to perform various roles. Developing faculty for these roles is an important endeavor. Important factors for faculty development are supportive leadership of the institution, faculty motivation, ac-

knowledgement of the faculty to identify their need & showing willingness to change⁹

World Federation of Medical Education (WFME) have outlined standards for medical education and requires institution to uplift and develop their faculty, if standards are to be maintained^{10,11}. Worldwide different teaching and training programs are conducted for CPD and faculty development. The framework for CPD in Pakistan was developed in 2001¹², but overall there used to be very less input and participation of institutions in Pakistan. Khyber Medical University is one of the few Medical Universities to have started a basic certificate course in health professional education, with the purpose to provide a basic level of training and teaching for medical faculty¹³.

The objectives of this study were to know the motivation factors to join the CHPE program and to

Table 1: Perception of the participants after completion of CHPE

Questions	S.Agree	Agree	Uncertain	Disagree	S.Disagree	Mean
My interest in health education Increased.	44.1	35.6	18.6	1.7	-	4.44
Program was helpful in improving my teaching	47.5	42.4	6.8	-	3.4	4.31
Program content was relevant to my curriculum planning needs	47.5	32.2	13.6	6.8	-	4.20
Program content was relevant to my curriculum teaching needs	44.1	40.7	8.5	6.8	-	4.22
Program content was relevant to my assessment needs	42.4	40.7	16.9	-	-	4.25
Program helped to refine my teaching Methods	52.5	40.7	3.4	3.4	-	4.42
Have used the learned material from my course	33.9	45.8	18.6	1.7	-	4.12
My communication skills have improved	23.7	47.5	23.7	5.1	-	3.90
Better understanding of developing MCQ's	35.6	57.6	6.8	-	-	4.29
Better understanding of developing SAQ's	25.4	62.7	11.9	-	-	4.14
Better understanding of developing OSCE	28.8	57.6	13.6	-	-	4.15
Better understanding of developing study Guide	28.8	59.3	8.5	3.4	-	4.14
Course is relevant to my teaching practice	42.4	39.0	18.6	-	-	4.24
Duration of course is appropriate	8.5	35.6	30.5	25.4	-	3.27
Course contents are sufficient	13.6	54.2	22.0	10.2	-	3.71
Time spent on each session is appropriate	8.5	45.8	15.3	30.5	-	3.32
Considered to be a benefit to my institution	23.7	66.1	8.5	1.7	-	4.12
The course met my needs	18.6	66.1	8.5	6.8	-	3.97
I am satisfied with overall course experience	22.0	62.7	11.9	3.4	-	4.03
I have recommended the course to my Colleagues	30.5	44.1	16.9	8.5	-	3.97

observe the perception of CHPE certificate course and its different modules. The second objective was to explore its beneficial factors and those domains which need further improvement.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

This study was conducted at the Institute of Health Professions Education and Research (IHPER), Khyber Medical University Peshawar on students of CHPE programme (three batches), having enrolled 40 students in each batch in Khyber Medical University (KMU). Ethical approval was granted by IREB of MTI HMC (No. 1238 dated 16 March 2023 for this cross-sectional study using a purposive non-probability sampling technique. Duration of study was three weeks. A total of 120 participants who had completed the course were part of the study. Those who did not respond or were having teaching experience less than one year were excluded from the study.

A pre-validated questionnaire used in “Teachers perception of a short course on faculty development at Khyber Medical University, Pakistan” (14) was used in this investigation. First portion of the questionnaire was about demographics of the participants like age, gender, teaching discipline, & teaching experience and motivation factor to join CHPE. Second portion consisted of twenty items to be rated on 5-point Likert scale (from strongly agree to strongly disagree) to get feedback. Data collection was carried out over a period of three weeks and was done through distribution of questionnaire & e-mail. Descriptive analysis was done using SPSS version 20.

RESULT

Out of 120, 65 participants responded (54%). Six participants were excluded from the study for not qualifying the inclusion criteria. Out of the remaining 59 participants, 36 (61%) were males and 23 (39%) were females. The age of the participants ranged from 25 to 55 years with a mean of 43 years. Regarding teaching disciplines, 40 (67.85) participants were from different clinical disciplines and 19 (32.2%) were from basic sciences. For teaching experience, the duration ranged from 1 to 25 years with a mean of 7.59 years and SD 5.366. The strong motivation factor for attending CHPE was personal interest in professional growth (55.9%). Figure -1

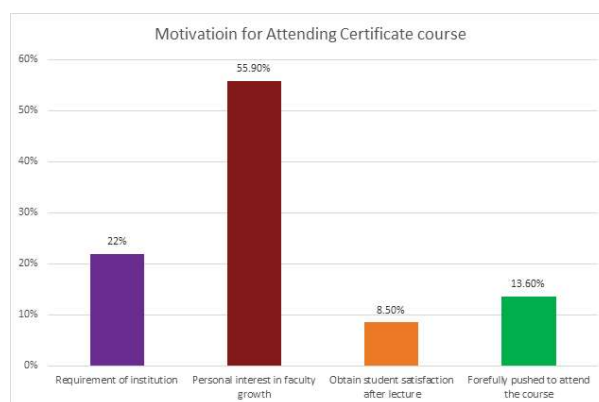


Fig 1: Various motivation factors for attending CHPE course

shows different motivation factors for attending CHPE course.

The perception of participants about increase in the interest in health profession education, improvement in teaching skills, communication skills, teaching practice, meeting one’s educational needs, better understanding of course contents, structuring of course content and assessment methods etc is shown in Table -1.

DISCUSSION

Faculty development is an important element of medical education. Its significance has become paramount in this era of transformation. A doctor or researcher was considered a good teacher based on his primary clinical or research qualification till recently¹⁵. It is evident from our results that teaching faculty is interested in courses that enhance their capabilities as a teacher.

Such courses for faculty development should be arranged periodically to enhance the quality of teaching methodologies and facilitate faculty growth¹⁶. Our study showed very encouraging results from the diverse range of clinical and basic faculty. Faculty growth was categorized as the most important and motivating factor for joining the certificate course as 55.9% of our participants were motivated by their interest in faculty growth. This is in accordance with studies done by Jamil B, Siddiqui Z & Shah N^{14,17,18}. Benor DE emphasized this twenty years ago and is still relevant⁸. The majority of our participants (79.7%) expressed that their interest in health professional education has increased which is a strong motivational factor for pursuing a higher qualification in Medical education, as shown by a

study done by Waters & Wall¹⁹.

Faculty development goals should not be confined to just teaching new techniques in teaching, curriculum planning, assessment and communication. They should also assess the faculty usage & implementation of those techniques in their own institutes²⁰. Half of the participants were uncertain regarding duration of the course and were of the opinion that the duration of the course should have been longer, for better coverage and pacing of their learning needs. A similar pattern was seen in a previous study done in Pakistan by Mahsood N²¹. A study done in Switzerland, by Junod P showed similar results to ours, in which majority of the participants gave positive response regarding improvement in their communication skills by attending such courses. They reported a refinement of their teaching methods, which was going to have a beneficial effect on their teaching skills as well as patient doctor relationship²².

The constraints inherent in our study stem from its lack of representativeness across all participants in the CHPE course. Despite the distribution of questionnaires via email to 120 participants spanning three distinct batches, accompanied by two reminders, a significant portion of the chosen cohort exhibited a notable lack of responsiveness, with nearly half of them choosing not to engage in the survey.

CONCLUSION

This study underscores the significance of Continuing Health Professional Education (CHPE) as a pivotal tool for enhancing the professional development of faculty members engaged in clinical and basic science disciplines. The instructional methodologies employed throughout the course garnered positive appraisals from the respondents. Furthermore, participants conveyed a favorable shift in their understanding of teaching methodologies, coupled with an enhancement in their communication skills. In light of these findings, it is recommended that institutions tailor periodic workshops, seminars, and refresher courses to their individual contexts and requirements, fostering ongoing faculty development.

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