

Evaluation of Learners' Attitude towards Medical Professionalism (LAMPS) in a Private Medical and Dental College in Lahore, Pakistan

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ABSTRACT

Introduction: Investing in medical professionalism is investing in the future of healthcare if we want next generation to be equipped with values, behaviours, and attitudes that define the relationship between healthcare professionals and patients and also provide compassionate care.

Objective: To conduct a survey among faculty, post-graduate residents, house officers, and students to assess their perceptions of medical professionalism and identify gaps where additional training and support are required within the next three months.

Methods: A descriptive correlational study was conducted among 300 sample size including faculty, post-graduate residents, house officers, and students of a private medical college through convenient sampling. Duration of 3 months was accustomed to collecting prescribed data through a validated self-assessment tool "LAMPS" was used after getting permission. This questionnaire consisted of five attributes namely Accountability, Autonomy, Integrity, Altruism, and Respect. The data was analysed using SPSS version-25.

Results: The comparison of data showed that faculty and house officers have high values professionalism when compared to the postgraduate trainees and medical students.

Conclusion: There are multiple reasons for this attitude. The most probable reason can be that faculty and house officers are highly paid among these job titles and therefore they are more accountable to their actions to the paying body.

Keywords: Health, Professionalism, Dental Students, Faculty

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INTRODUCTION

Professional identity refers to beliefs, values, and behaviours that define an individual's professional role and identity within a particular field. Strong professional identity is closely related to medical professionalism and includes different attitudes and behaviours that defines the learner's attitudes towards patients (Cruess et al., 2016).

Medical professionalism refers to the attitudes, behaviours, and values that are expected by healthcare professionals in their interactions with patients, colleagues, and the broader healthcare system (Mahajan et al., 2016).

Developing a strong professional identity is essential for healthcare professionals (Al-Eraky, 2015) as it enables them to effectively navigate the complex social and ethical issues that arise in healthcare practice. It also helps to establish trust and credibility with patients and colleagues and provides a sense of purpose and fulfillment in one's professional role.

It is of utmost importance to provide compassionate and ethical care to patients therefore it's our responsibility to assess medical learners' attitudes toward professionalism. At the national level, professionalism is regarded as an integral practice. The unprofessional behaviour could have serious consequences for patient care (Guraya et al., 2016).

Professional development is important and teachers play a vital role in shaping professional ethics to students. Now days professional development is made part of curriculum, which helps in developing students moral reasoning and ethical decision-making (Doukas et al., 2021). Students get positive learning environment if there is professionalism found in their teaching (Doherty and Nugent, 2011). Many authors shed light on professionalism and made conclusion that professionalism should be taught within medical schools involving staff, faculty and students (Passi et al., 2010).

This article aims to generate local data to improve the attributes of professionalism among our faculty members, dental students, house officers and post graduate residents. Therefore, in this study, learners' attitude towards medical professionalism is evaluated using LAMP as a tool. (Al-Eraky et al., 2013)

METHODS

A cross-sectional, descriptive study was conducted through simple random sampling technique. The target population in this study were, dental faculty, postgraduate residents, house officers and students of final year BDS of Lahore Medical and Dental College. Study was completed over the period of three months from February 2023 till April 2023 after getting ethical approval (Ref. no. LMDC/FD/1935/23) from ethical review board of Lahore Medical and Dental College.

A minimum of 300 sample size was calculated using Open-Epi Software, considering a confidence level of 95% and a Confidence limit of 5%. A self-assessment tool validated in 2013 by M Al-Eraki named "The Learners Attitude of Medical Professionalism Scale (LAMPS)" was used with permission (Al-Eraky et al., 2013). The Likert scale was used to record the responses on

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the questionnaire, which consist of 5-point scale consisting of “Strongly disagree, Disagree, Not agree nor disagree, Agree, strongly disagree”.

In inclusion criteria, the dental faculty, postgraduate residents, house officers and students of final year BDS were included in the study. In exclusion criteria, the incomplete forms and those learners who were not willing to participate in the study were excluded. This questionnaire consisted of five domains of professionalism named duty/Accountability, Excellence/Autonomy, Honor/Integrity, Altruism, and Respect. Originally there were 25 items in this questionnaire but in this study, we selected the most appropriate of these 25 items according to the compliance of our population. Therefore, two items from each domain were selected and total of 10 items were included in the questionnaire.

Data Analysis:

The data were analysed by using the software SPSS version-25. Relevant items in each domain were calculated and compared against the job title. The comparison was made between the faculty, post-graduate trainees, house officers and students. The Chi-Square test was used to test the significance of the difference in data. Less than 0.05 p-value was considered statistically significant.

RESULTS

In total number of 300 respondents, there were 86 faculty Member, 104 House officers, 29 postgraduate trainee and 81 medical students.

From the pool of 300 respondents, 80-90% were in high value of accountability/duty among different job titles in which, faculty and house officers have 70-90% of positive response. Whereas, the postgraduate trainee's and medical students showed only 50-80% of positive. As shown in Table 1.

Almost 60-90% of total participants were in high value of Autonomy/ Excellence in which, faculty and house officers have 70-90% of positive response, whereas the postgraduate trainees and medical students showed 50-80% of positive responses. As shown in Table-1.

When integrity was measured, about 80-90% were in high value of integrity among different job titles in which, faculty and house officers have 80-95% of positive response. whereas the postgraduate trainees and medical students showed 70-95% of positive responses. As shown in Table 1.

Among total participants, 40-70 % were in high value of altruism among different job titles in which, faculty showed 60-80% of positive response, students showed 40-60% of positive response whereas, the postgraduate trainees showed 50-60 % and house officers showed only 25-65% of positive response. As shown in Table 1.

In terms of respect, 65-75 % were in high value of respect, among which, faculty and house officers showed the positive response of 85-95% however, the postgraduate trainees and

medical students showed the positive response of 60-95%. As shown in Table 1.

The p-values of <0.001 showed that the data is statistically significant (Table 1).

Table 1: Showing the response percentages for accountability/ duty, Autonomy/ Excellence, Integrity, Altruism and respect attributes of medical professionalism

		Job title				Total	P value
		Faculty	House officer	PG Trainee	Student		
1) Will you encourage patients to contribute to decision-making?	Strongly Disagree	2.3%	1.9%	13.8%	13.6%	6.3%	0.001
	Disagree	8.1%	5.8%	0.0%	0.0%	4.3%	
	Neither Agree nor Disagree	4.7%	17.3%	10.3%	7.4%	10.3%	
	Agree	65.1%	67.3%	41.4%	54.3%	60.7%	
	Strongly agree	19.8%	7.7%	34.5%	24.7%	18.3%	
2) Is it appropriate to discuss patients' cases with colleagues in a crowded elevator?	Strongly Disagree	69.8%	36.5%	20.7%	74.1%	54.7%	0.001
	Disagree	25.6%	59.6%	27.6%	14.8%	34.7%	
	Neither Agree nor Disagree	4.7%	0.0%	24.1%	2.5%	4.3%	
	Agree	0.0%	2.9%	27.6%	8.6%	6.0%	
	Strongly Agree	0.0%	1.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.3%	
3) Will you search for the best evidence available in-patient care?	Strongly Disagree	2.3%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.7%	0.001
	Disagree	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	2.5%	0.7%	
	Neither Agree nor Disagree	7.0%	0.0%	0.0%	2.5%	2.7%	
	Agree	40.7%	71.2%	65.5%	42.0%	54.0%	
	Strongly Agree	50.0%	28.8%	34.5%	53.1%	42.0%	
4) Will you Invest part of your income in attending medical conferences?	Strongly Disagree	0.0%	1.9%	13.8%	9.9%	4.7%	0.001
	Disagree	22.1%	1.9%	0.0%	2.5%	7.7%	
	Neither Agree nor Disagree	11.6%	21.2%	44.8%	32.1%	23.7%	
	Agree	54.7%	65.4%	41.4%	49.4%	55.7%	
	Strongly Agree	11.6%	9.6%	0.0%	6.2%	8.3%	
5) Is it appropriate to give wrong information to a patient to protect a colleague?	Strongly Disagree	41.9%	34.6%	20.7%	51.9%	40.0%	0.001
	Disagree	54.7%	55.8%	41.4%	33.3%	48.0%	
	Neither Agree nor Disagree	3.5%	5.8%	24.1%	9.9%	8.0%	
	Agree	0.0%	0.0%	13.8%	4.9%	2.7%	
	Strongly Agree	0.0%	3.8%	0.0%	0.0%	1.3%	
6) Is it appropriate to hide information about fatal diagnoses to avoid patient disturbance?	Strongly Disagree	37.2%	26.9%	62.1%	39.5%	36.7%	0.001
	Disagree	41.9%	53.8%	37.9%	35.8%	44.0%	
	Neither Agree nor Disagree	16.3%	13.5%	0.0%	21.0%	15.0%	
	Agree	4.7%	3.8%	0.0%	0.0%	2.7%	
	Strongly Agree	0.0%	1.9%	0.0%	3.7%	1.7%	

7) Will you cancel a family appointment for an urgent patient's need?	Strongly Disagree	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	4.9%	1.3%	0.001
	Disagree	0.0%	3.8%	13.8%	0.0%	2.7%	
	Neither Agree nor Disagree	22.1%	30.8%	27.6%	12.3%	23.0%	
	Agree	62.8%	55.8%	58.6%	48.1%	56.0%	
	Strongly Agree	15.1%	9.6%	0.0%	34.6%	17.0%	
8) Will you turn down a home visit to a disabled patient due to a busy clinic?	Strongly Disagree	5.8%	5.8%	13.8%	17.3%	9.7%	0.001
	Disagree	52.3%	17.3%	34.5%	11.1%	27.3%	
	Neither Agree nor Disagree	23.3%	40.4%	0.0%	40.7%	31.7%	
	Agree	18.6%	34.6%	51.7%	27.2%	29.7%	
	Strongly Agree	0.0%	1.9%	0.0%	3.7%	1.7%	
9) Will you provide respect to the roles of all members of the healthcare team in the department?	Strongly Disagree	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	2.5%	0.7%	0.001
	Disagree	3.5%	0.0%	0.0%	3.7%	2.0%	
	Neither Agree nor Disagree	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	2.5%	0.7%	
	Agree	36.0%	73.1%	65.5%	25.9%	49.0%	
	Strongly Agree	60.5%	26.9%	34.5%	65.4%	47.7%	
10) Is it appropriate to give priority to some patients based on social status or nationality?	Strongly Disagree	60.5%	48.1%	34.5%	71.6%	56.7%	0.001
	Disagree	25.6%	50.0%	27.6%	13.6%	31.0%	
	Neither Agree nor Disagree	7.0%	0.0%	37.9%	9.9%	8.3%	
	Agree	3.5%	0.0%	0.0%	2.5%	1.7%	
	Strongly Agree	3.5%	1.9%	0.0%	2.5%	2.3%	

DISCUSSION

In the context of healthcare, professional identity is closely linked to medical professionalism and encompasses the attitudes and behaviours that are expected of healthcare professionals in their interactions with patients, colleagues, and the wider community. Hence, education of professionalism is critical in the construction of a required professional character (Forouzadeh et al., 2018).

This study was designed to access the values of professionalism among the faculty, postgraduate trainee's, house officers and medical students of a private medical and dental college by using a valid instrument called LAMPS (Learner's attitude towards medical professionalism). Five attributes of professionalism were analysed in this study named 'Duty/Accountability, Excellence/Autonomy, Honor/Integrity, Altruism, and Respect'.

Our results showed that the value of autonomy or excellence, duty/ accountability, respect and integrity was high among faculty and house officers when compared to post graduate trainee's and medical students. Whereas, value of altruism was high in faculty, then in students, then postgraduate trainees and least in the house officers. Our study shows similar results to another study conducted at Arabian Gulf University which showed that the students and postgraduate trainee were in low values of professionalism (Al Gahtani et al., 2021).

In another study done in a private medical college of Pakistan showed that students and faculty have dissimilar opinions of certain attributes of professionalism (Rasul et al., 2021). In that study the 'Honor/ Integrity' was the most valued attribute whereas 'Excellence/Autonomy' was the lowest valued attribute. This study was contradictory to our study in which the found the most valued attribute was 'Respect' and the lowest valued attribute was 'Altruism' whereas 'Honor/Integrity' and 'Excellence/Autonomy' was at same level. In a study held in another medical college of Pakistan showed that there is insignificant difference in values of second year and final year medical students because professionalism is not a part of curriculum (Aleem et al., 2020). In another study, final year students show higher value in some attributes of professionalism (Findyartini et al., 2022).

The reason of low values of professionalism among postgraduate trainee and medical students could be excessive workload on them in terms of studies, clinical rotations and quota completion etc (Javed.k., 2023). Which could have a negative impact on development of professional values (Al Gahtani et al., 2021). The high values in faculty and house officers could be the that private medical colleges have funds to invest on faculty development programs, also they can invest in collaborative conferences which guarantee more excellence for the faculty (Ahmed et al., 2022). The private collages also organize workshops for faculty and House officers which help them in gaining the values of professionalism. Also, the annual appraisals for faculty on the basis of their performances increases their motivation towards excellence.

Moreover, the faculty also plays an important role in developing professionalism among the house officers as they are the fine and polished products of the institute, they probably gained the value of excellence from their teachers. On the other side the post graduate trainees and medical students are still in the phase of learning the acts of medical professionalism which are in practice in the institute.

For remedial purpose, workshops should be conducted in all colleges to teach professionalism and also professionalism can be incorporated to the taught curriculum to establish the values of professionalism in medical collages (Forouzadeh et al., 2018). A professional development is critical for healthcare professionals to provide good quality of patient care and also to circumn

CONCLUSION

The results of the study showed that faculty and house officers are at high values of professionalism whereas post graduate trainees and students are still deprived of professional values. There are multiple reasons for this attitude. The most probable reason can be that faculty and house officers are highly paid among these job titles and therefore they are more accountable to their actions to the paying body.

FUTURE DIRECTIONS

The study helped to find the gap in medical professionalism among the faculty and students of a private medical college. It will help to guide them on different attributes of

medical professionalism according to the needs identified in this study.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The main limitation of the study is that it is conducted in only one private medical more private as well as government medical colleges of different cities of Pakistan should be incorporated into the study to get the exact status of medical professionalism among the medical professionals of Pakistan.

DECLARATION OF INTEREST

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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AUTHOR'S CONTRIBUTION

1. **F.I.:** Created concept and design of the research, prepared initial draft, collected data, interpreted the results and generated discussion and conclusion.
2. **M.K.:** Data collection and Proof reading.