

OP 22

Students views on learning anatomy: cadaveric dissections and computer assisted learning

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Objectives: There is considerable and ongoing debate regarding teaching/learning anatomy in medical curricula. This study evaluates the views of the medical students regarding teaching/learning anatomy at FMS, USJP.

Methods: Altogether 285 students of 2006/2007 and 2009/2010A/L intakes completed a simple self administered questionnaire regarding anatomy teaching/learning. Results of 2006/2007A/L intake, who underwent newly introduced integrated systems-based curriculum were compared with those of 2009/2010 intake also undergoing the same curriculum.

Results: Majority of the students - 69.8%(199/285) expressed that the anatomy teaching was adequate and useful [65.2% (88/135) 2006/2007 A/L batch and 74%(111/150) 2009/2010 A/L batch]. 23.5 % (67/285) [26.7% of 2006/2007A/L batch and 20.7% of 2009/2010 A/L batch] found it overloaded but useful.

Students considered cadaver dissections as the most favoured method of learning Anatomy (85.3%)(243/285). Learning from text books (80.4%)(229/285), learning at tutorials (77.5%)(221/285), prosected specimen demonstrations (76.8%)(219/285) and learning from skeletons (75.8%)(216/285) were the other useful methods of learning anatomy. Percentage 52.3(150/285) of students referred the internet and 61.1 % (174/285) used interactive anatomy CD/DVDs. Although a slight increase in referring the internet, 51.1%(2006/2007 A/L) to 54%(2009/2010) and usage of interactive anatomy CD/DVDs, 57.0% to 64.7% was noted, 96.49% students were on the view that the dissection should not be replaced by computer assisted learning(CAL).

Conclusions: Cadaver dissections continue as the most favoured method of teaching/learning anatomy with an upward trend in CAL methods. Dissections should not be replaced by CAL. Majority of students consider Anatomy taught at FMS, USJP to be adequate and useful.