

ORIGINAL ARTICLE

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## Small group mentoring program for the 1st year Medical students at Medical College: Perceptions of Mentors and Mentees

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Received: 03-07-2025

Accepted: 23-07-2025

Available Online: 05-08-2025



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### ABSTRACT

**Background:** Newly entered medical students are facing many challenges like the stress of complex medical course, adaptations to new environment, emotional immaturity. Therefore, mentorship program was introduced to support them for their academic and personal development.

**Aim of the study:** To evaluate the experiences of students and faculty enrolled in a new mentoring program

**Research objectives:**

1. To conduct student and faculty sensitization for mentorship program.
2. To analyze perceptions of faculties enrolled in new mentorship program
3. To analyze perceptions of students enrolled in new mentorship program.

**Materials and Methods:** A mentorship program was designed for 1<sup>st</sup> year MBBS (Bachelor of Medicine and Bachelor of Surgery) students. Sensitization program for mentorship is conducted for faculty members of GMERS Medical College, Himmatnagar and 1<sup>st</sup> year MBBS students. Eight to ten students are allocated to one faculty (Mentor). Assistant professor, Associate professor and Professor Cadre of faculties are appointed as mentor. Regular meetings of the mentors and students are organized (one meeting per month). At the end, feedback using an open-ended questionnaire and Likert's scale are taken from faculties as well from students by Google forms.

**Results:** A total of 22 faculties and 80 students have completed the feedback questionnaire. The mentors considered this program helpful in their teaching, and communication skills. Most of the mentees felt that this program helped them and academically and relieving stress. It was a good way to develop a strong student-teacher relationship. All the mentors and mentees were satisfied with the mentorship program.

**Conclusions:** The newly introduced mentorship program helped in the overall development of mentors and mentees. Both mentors and mentees were satisfied with this program and considered this as a successful intervention.

**Keywords:** 1<sup>st</sup> year MBBS students, mentee, mentor, mentorship program

### INTRODUCTION

**Problem:** Newly entered medical students are vulnerable to the challenges of the medical course. Recently admitted 1st year medical students routinely face different types of pressure, such as the need to adapt to a new environment and create a social network. They need cope up with the stressful nature of medical training dealing with and assimilating vast amounts of scientific content in the first years of medical school.

Therefore many medical colleges have implemented student support and counseling system. After need analysis of students and faculty, a small group mentoring program can be started.

Much emphasis has been placed on mentoring in undergraduate medical education which may be structured or informal designed for personal or academic development and made available to the entire student body or merely to underrepresented minorities.

Recently Mentoring program for students is emphasized in new CBME Curriculum. At our Institution, A new mentorship program is introduced with the aim to support the first-year medical students and to enhance their personal development. The present study describes the findings of perceptions of students and faculties enrolled in a new mentoring program.

### Material and Methods

Institutional ethical committee approval is taken before commencement of study.

Study design – Prospective educational interventional

Selection and Description of participants

- Study is planned for the period of 6 months. Study populations was 1<sup>st</sup> year medical students (200 students)
- Sensitization program for mentorship is conducted for faculty members of GMERS Medical College, Himmatnagar and 1<sup>st</sup> year MBBS students.
- 8 to 10 students are allocated to one faculty (Mentor).
- Regular meetings of the mentors and students are organized (one meeting per month).
- At the end, feedback using an open-ended questionnaire and Likert's scale are taken from faculties as well from students by Google forms.

Statistics : Quantitative data analysis done in percentage and thematic analysis of qualitative data done.

### RESULTS

**Table - 1 Pretest and post test of sensitization program for mentors.**

| Question  | T Value            | P Value            |
|---|--------------------|--------------------|
| Q.1 Mentorship program is required for the medical student  | (0.21 & It; 2.07)  | 0.83               |
| Q.2 Mentorship program can be started at our institute for medical students                       | (0.49 & It; 2.07)  | 0.62               |
| Q.3 Mentorship program is beneficial for medical students   | (2.61 & It; 2.07)  | 0.01 (Significant) |
| Q.4 The mentorship program can be started initially for the 1 <sup>st</sup> year medical students | (1.3 & It; 2.07)   | 0.18               |
| Q.5 Faculties can be able to give enough time for mentorship program                              | (1.2 & It; 2.07)   | 0.22               |
| Q.6 Mentorship helps the students in improvement of their study performance                       | (0.72 & It; 2.07)  | 0.47               |
| Q.7 Such program helps to reduce the stress level in students.                                    | (01.29 & It; 2.07) | 0.2                |
| Q.8 Such program help to strengthen Student teacher relationship.                                 | (1.33 & It; 2.07)  | 0.19               |

### Perception of mentors – Likert's scale (Image 1)

22 Mentors have submitted their response to open ended questioner by Google forms.

They have expressed their positive response towards initiative of new mentorship program.

- ❖ Factors motivating for mentors
  - ✓ They can help the students especially for their study, in stressful situations.
  - ✓ Transition of their initial phase of carrier
  - ✓ Challenges to solve the unexpected problems of the students
- ❖ Benefits of regular participation
  - ✓ Can motivate the students
  - ✓ Receive direct feedback from the students
  - ✓ Filling communication gaps
  - ✓ Helps to understand students psychology
  - ✓ Help to modify study techniques
- ❖ Problems related to program activity
  - ✓ Time management

- ✓ Time should be more for interaction
- ✓ If done by the teachers of the same academic year, more effective
- ✓ Lack of interest from the students
- ✓ Academic performance of students is difficult to access
- ❖ Comments /critics/suggestions
- ✓ Good program for overall progress of students
- ✓ Student mentor interaction time should be more
- ✓ Feedback from the students should be taken and shared with faculties to increase motivation
- ✓ Keep continue for all the students
- ✓ Introduce as mandatory training in curriculum

### Perception of mentee– Likert’s scale (Image 2)

80/200 mentee have submitted their response to open ended questioner by Google form. Overall perception of students, towards new mentorship program is good, supportive, motivating for them

- ❖ Factors motivating for mentee
  - ✓ Get encouragement, guidance, tips and support for study
  - ✓ Reducing stress
  - ✓ Motivating mentors raises confidence and problem solving abilities
  - ✓ Share their problem with mentors and try to get solutions
  - ✓ Supportive nature of mentors
- ❖ Benefits of regular participation
  - ✓ Proper direction and guidance for study
  - ✓ Improvement in reading and marks
  - ✓ Relieve stress
  - ✓ Manage time to study properly
  - ✓ Problem can be shared with mentor and get the advices and suggestions to solve.
  - ✓ Improve self confidence
- ❖ Problems related to program activities
  - ✓ Majority of students have responded as no any problems
  - ✓ Mentor not available for meeting
  - ✓ Sometimes mentor listen the problem but there is no any action regarding to that problem.

### DISCUSSION

91% (20/22) of participated mentors have perception that the program is useful, It can be placed in curriculum and it is helpful in reducing stress level of students. 87% (19/22) mentors have perception that the program is helpful in improving study performance of students, resources are available and it is feasible.

40% (80/200) students have submitted their response.

96%(77/80) of students have perception of usefulness of program, feasible for them and feel helpful in improving their study performance. 95% (76/80) of students have perception that it can be placed in curriculum and its helpful in reducing stress level.

The short term report of newly started mentorship program is designed for 1<sup>st</sup> year MBBS Students, indicates that both participating mentors and mentees have shared their positive opinion of the program.

Students’ response highlighted the supportive role of mentors.

### [3] Images:

- ❖ Perception of mentors – Likerts scale
- ❖ Perception of mentee – Likerts scale

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