

Perspective of First M.B.B.S students on Mentoring -A Questionnaire-Based Study in two Government Medical Colleges in Telangana.

Dr N.Jagathi Devi¹, Dr A.B. Suguna²

¹ First author: Dr N.Jagathi devi, Associate Professor, Pharmacology, Government Medical College, Nalgonda.

² Second author/ Corresponding author: Dr A.B. Suguna, Associate Professor, Pharmacology, Government Medical College, Nizamabad

Abstract

Introduction: An Introductory workshop on Mentoring was conducted as a part of Orientation course for incoming First year M.B.B.S. students of Osmania Medical College and new Government Medical college in Mahabubnagar of 2016 batch. Following this program, the students were asked to fill a prepared questionnaire to gauge their opinion and preferences on Mentoring. The purpose was to use the data to plan an effective Mentorship, in consultation with students, to better fulfil their requirements.

Objectives: To assess the need of Mentoring, as perceived by First M.B.B.S. students who have just entered the medical college by analyzing their responses to a prepared questionnaire. To compare the attitude and requirements towards Mentoring in two different government medical colleges in Telangana. And finally to plan individualized and effective Mentorship programs, keeping in mind students' requirements.

Methodology: Mentoring program was conducted as a part of Orientation course for incoming First year M.B.B.S. students of 2016 Batch of Osmania Medical College and new Government Medical college in Mahabubnagar. By asking them to answer a simple, straightforward prepared questionnaire (Annexure 1), the students of both colleges were asked to give their individual requirements regarding the need and procedure for Mentoring.

Results: The Questionnaire-based study in the two medical colleges reveals that almost all the First M.B.B.S students feel positively about the need for a Mentor (100% and 98%, in Government Medical College Mahabubnagar and Osmania Medical College respectively). Regarding the areas in which they need help from their Mentors, Study skills(62% and 45%) and Career guidance(45% and 50%) top the list, followed by Communication skills(33% and 42%) and Skill development(28% and 33%). The students preferred senior faculty for Mentoring(48% and 53%). The students also wished to have once a week schedules(63% and 36%), in the form of personal meetings(74% and 67%) in which the agenda will be set by the themselves(38% and 55%). The students also preferred one to one mentoring as opposed to Group mentoring.

Conclusion: The study reveals that majority of students of both Medical colleges prefer to choose their Mentors from senior faculty for special guidance through weekly, one to one personal meetings for their study and career development.

Key Words: Mentoring, First MBBS students, Government Medical Colleges, Questionnaire-based study

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I. Introduction

Mentoring is the process in which an experienced teacher(the mentor) guides the student(the mentee) in not only learning but also personal and professional development. Though Mentorship has been always present, it has been informal or unconsciously done.

Mentoring is a very important part of Medical education. It is now accepted by medical educationists all over the world that a formal Mentorship program helps in the overall development of both mentors and mentees.¹ Although it is acknowledged that mentoring helps in successful career in medicine, the studies related to mentoring from Telangana state, especially from Government medical colleges were scarce.

Mentorship acts as a catalyst in the evolution of a complete medical graduate. Mentoring is especially crucial to the new entrants in medical college who are suddenly exposed to not only a challenging new syllabus but also have to cope with many personal upheavals like separation from parents and stressful new environment. A good mentorship for first year medical students is believed to be a means of humanizing medical education, a means of honing the affective domain, as new entrants are offered support.²

Training in attitude, ethics and communication is the need of the hour. Here mentors play an important role as their values, ethical outlook, communication skills are all transparently seen by the student, for emulation. Students who have had caring mentors are more likely to develop into empathetic doctors. A consensus is now emerging that role modeling is an effective means of teaching professionalism.³

Through the course of evolving from students to interns, mentorship can gain with experience and mutual trust. Mentorship is also an efficient first contact program for creating “professionalism portfolios” for students, which are very useful in gauging their development through medical college.⁴

Objectives: To assess the need of Mentoring in First M.B.B.S. students entering the medical profession by analysing their response to a prepared questionnaire. To compare the attitude and requirements towards Mentorship program of First M.B.B.S students of two separate government medical colleges in Telangana state. And finally to plan individualized and effective Mentorship programs, keeping in mind students needs.

II. Methodology

Medical education unit in Osmania Medical College, organized an Introductory workshop on Mentoring as a part of the Orientation program for incoming First MBBS students of 2016 batch. The purpose was to introduce the concept as well as to elaborate both the benefits and barriers of Mentoring to the medical students.

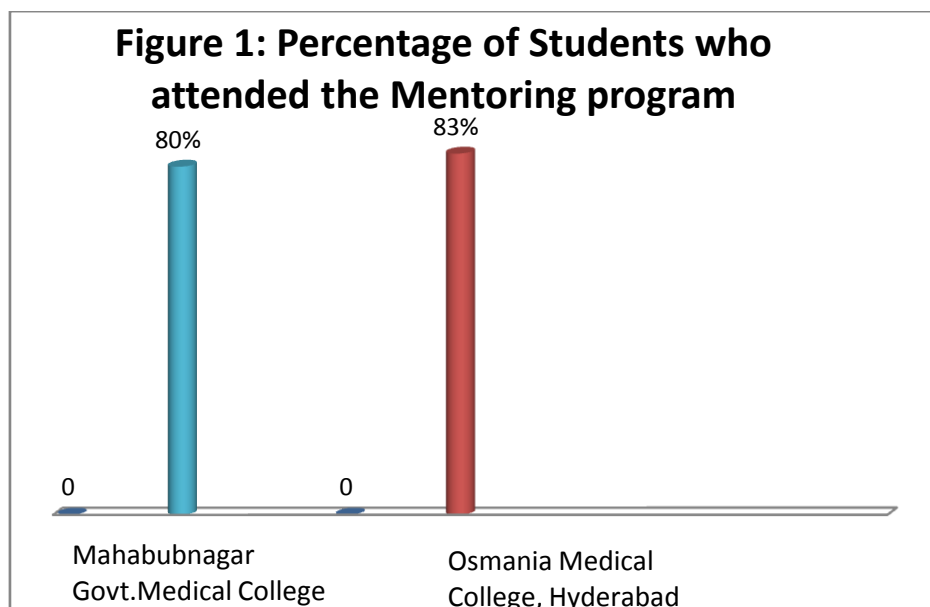
A similar Introductory workshop on Mentoring was conducted for First M.B.B.S. students of 2016 batch in newly established Government Medical college in Mahabubnagar, with guidance from the Medical education unit of Osmania Medical College. After the program, the students were given a prepared questionnaire in order to gauge their preferences for planning an effective Mentoring program.

III. Results

“Need for Mentoring” a Questionnaire based study conducted in Osmania Medical College and Government Medical College, Mahabubnagar for First M.B.B.S students of 2016 batch has shown the following results.

Percentage of students who attended the Introductory Mentoring workshop

198 out of 250 students in Osmania Medical College and 118 out of 150 students in Government Medical College, Mahabubnagar attended the Introductory class on Mentorship.

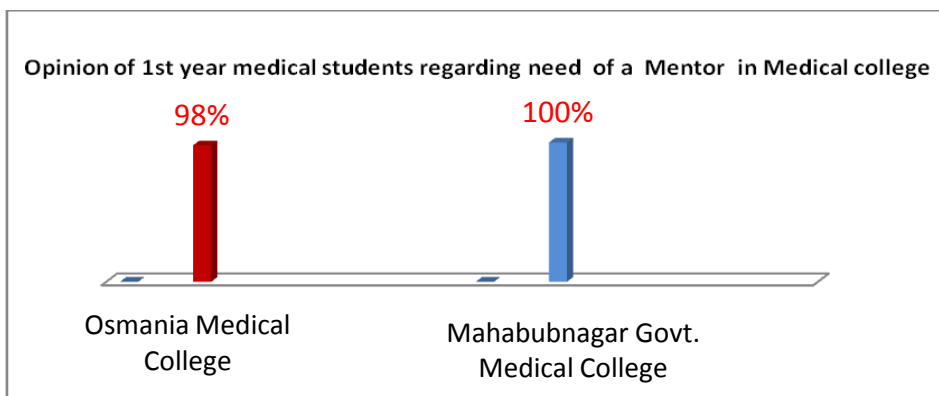


Did the students understand the concept of Mentoring?

This question asked of the undergraduate students. Almost all the students who attended the program understood the concept of Mentoring.

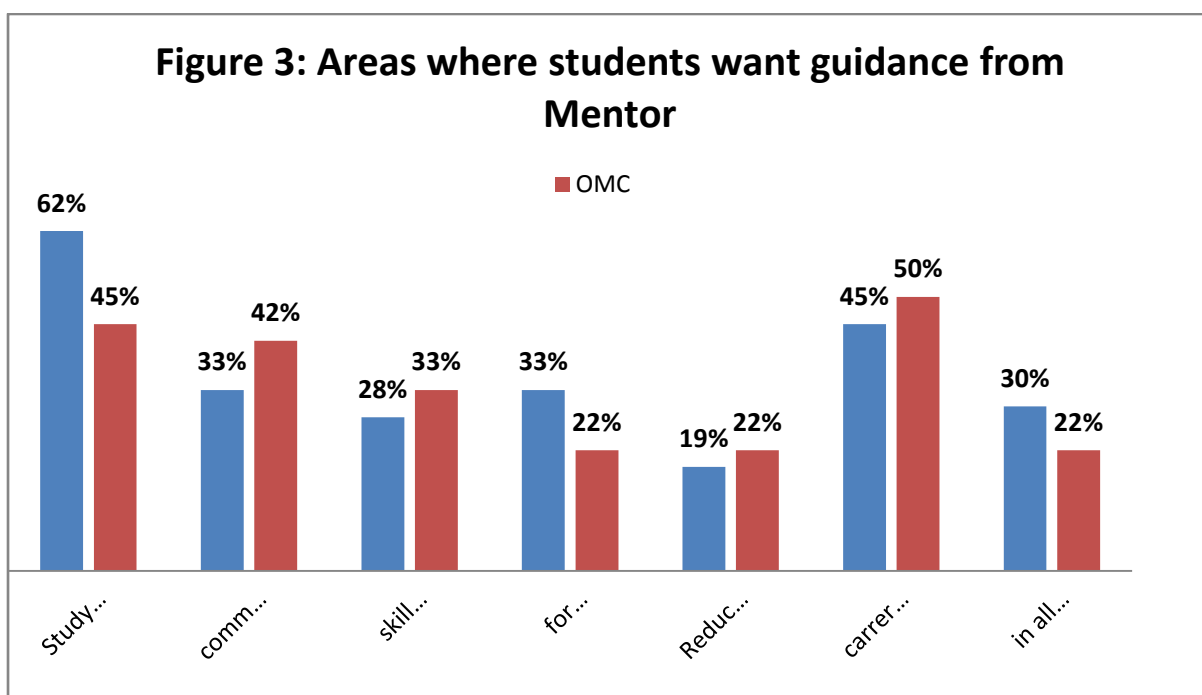
Do students need a mentor in Medical College?

194/198 students (98%) of Osmania Medical College and 118/118 students (100%) medical college, Mahabubnagar responded to this question in the affirmative.



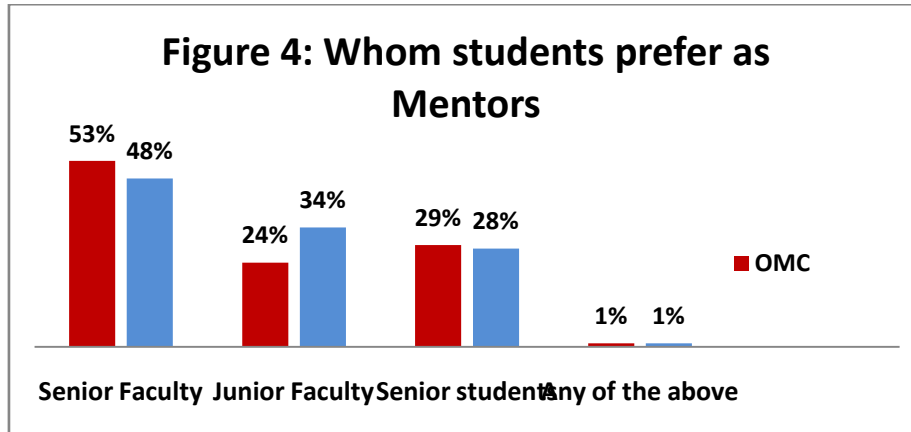
In which areas students need guidance from Mentor?

Most of the students marked multiple answers to this question. Major areas where students want guidance are in study skills and career guidance. Next in their need for guidance is communication skills, followed by skill development, motivation and relief for psychological stress.



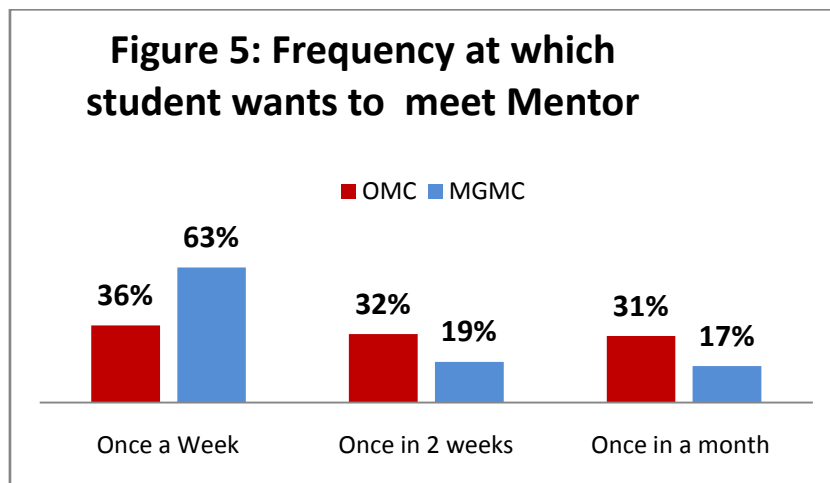
Whom do students prefer as mentors?

The First year medical students of both colleges clearly preferred Senior faculty to be their Mentors(53% in Osmania Medical college and 48% in GMC, Mahabubnagar), followed by Junior faculty and Senior students.

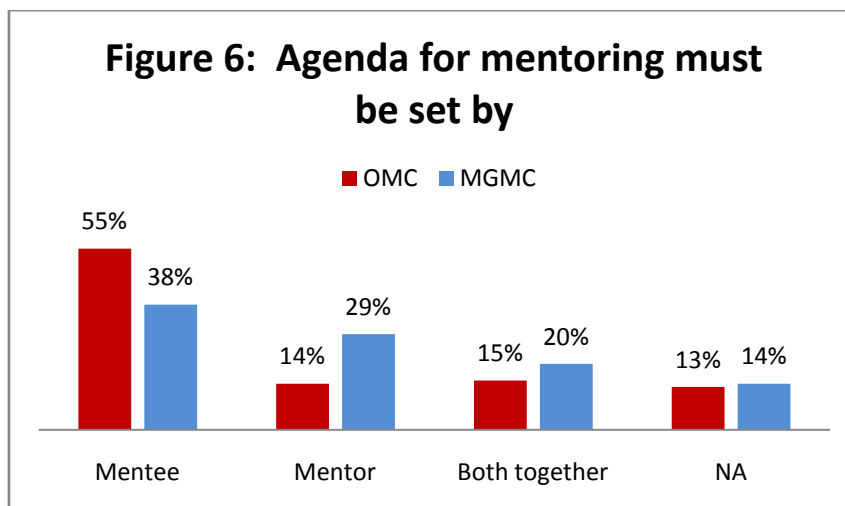


How often do students want to meet their mentors?

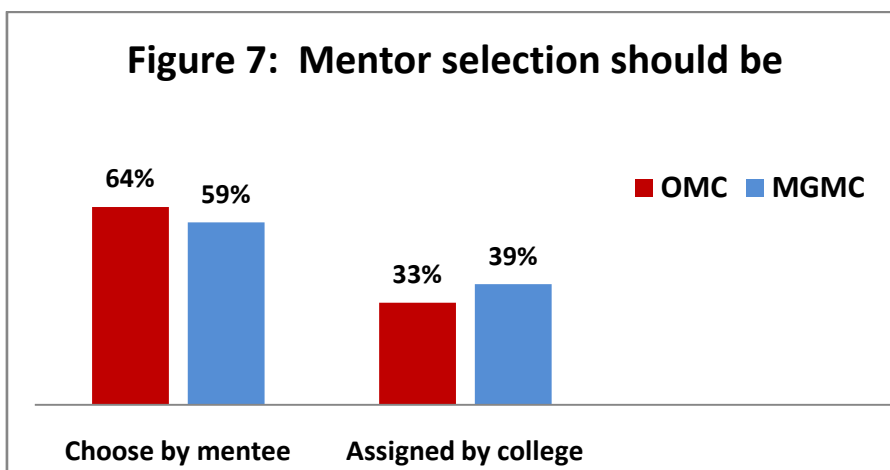
63% of the First years of Government Medical college, Mahabubnagar preferred to meet their mentors once a week, whereas the students of Osmania Medical college were almost equally divided between weekly, fortnightly and monthly meeting schedules.



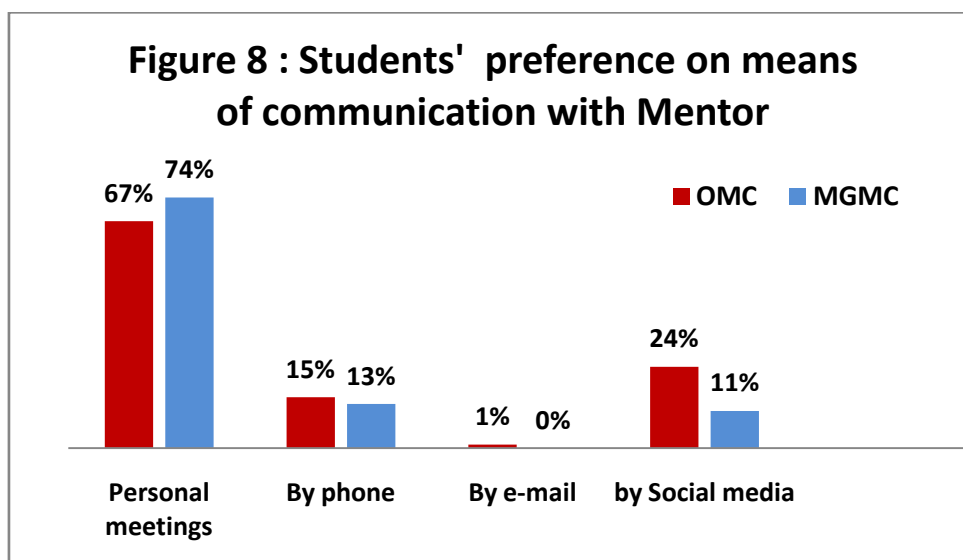
For effective Mentoring, the goals or agenda must be set by whom was the question posed to the students in both the colleges.



The students were also questioned about their preference in choosing their Mentor. Majority wanted to choose their own mentor instead of being assigned a mentor by the college.



Regarding their preferred means of communication with their respective mentors, majority wanted personal meetings.



IV. Discussion

The importance of a robust Mentorship in a medical college cannot be overemphasized. And to ensure the success of such a program, it is important to consult the opinion and preferences of students, who are the main beneficiaries of Mentoring.

In this study, an attempt was made to consult the new medical students about their need and method for Mentorship program. There is increasing evidence that the process of mentoring is mutually beneficial to both the mentee as well as the mentor. Being a mentor leads to both personal and professional development and majority of the mentors in a study vouched for an improvement in their teaching as well as their relations with students.⁵

Mentoring in medical education includes many models like the apprenticeship model, cloning model (based on role modeling), nurturing model and the friendship model.⁶ Previous studies have highlighted the importance of near-peer mentoring as a supplement to faculty-mentoring, especially for First year medical students, by increasing system effectiveness.⁷ Some studies have focused on dual peer mentoring for undergraduate medical students, exploring the perceptions of both mentors and mentees.⁸

Regarding choice of appropriate mentor, students must be encouraged to look for mentors who fit their purpose. In spite of all the advances in medical education, it remains a fact that bullying and harassment remains among many mentors.⁹

Depending on need, each institution should be encouraged to evolve its own mentoring program. There is also a need for continuous assessment of the program by obtaining feedback from both the mentees and mentors, in terms of impact on the career paths of students and the benefit to faculty.¹⁰ "Functional mentoring" is a practical approach that allows measurable results at multiple levels.¹¹

Challenges always exist as in any other teaching-learning method but urgent development and evaluation of formal mentorship initiatives for both mentors and mentees is required.¹²

V. Limitations of the study

The study explores the understanding of Mentoring by First year M.B.B.S students at the time of their inception but does not follow them through the first year and assess the actual results of Mentoring.

It is purely from the students' perspective and does not collect the Mentor's opinion about Mentoring sessions.

VI. Conclusion

The present study makes it clear that medical students definitely need mentors in medical education, especially for guidance in the development of study skills and choosing career options. They also prefer to choose their own mentors from the senior faculty and meet them personally every week.

Thus there is a need for developing formal mentoring programs in government medical colleges in Telangana. To achieve this purpose, the methodology of modern mentoring needs to be updated in the teaching faculty of medical colleges through creative workshops. The Mentorship programs also need regular monitoring and rigorous assessment, based on benefits to both students and faculty.

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