




Does Absenteeism Affect Academic Performance? An Insight from UK Based Medical Student [Response to Letter]

This article was published in the following Dove Press journal:
Advances in Medical Education and Practice

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Dear editor

Firstly, we would like to thank you for the opportunity to respond to the points raised by Rishikesh Gandhewari and Kalyan Vemulapalli and their effort to clarify aspects of our findings concerning their suggestions. We also thank the Gandhewari and colleagues for their interest in our study of “Does Absenteeism Affect Academic Performance Among Undergraduate Medical Students? Evidence from “Rashid Latif Medical College (RLMC).” Although to the best of our knowledge, we could not find their published research finding regarding that subject.

In the letter to the editor, Gandhewari notes their concern with the other worldwide teaching methods employed, including problem-based learning, team-based learning, and video-recorded technologies. We agree that these methods have a beneficial impact on the performance of students. But it must be recognized that Pakistani medical schools have large cohorts, and it is, therefore, impossible to cater to individual learning style preferences within these sizeable groups that are in accordance with Nevins et al 2016.¹ Similarly, Khanal et 2019² stated in their conclusion that cultural determinant of different learning methods preferences varies by sex and nationality among undergraduate medical students. Moreover, they stated that medical students are more diverse in their learning styles. However, in our study, the primary objective was focused on the influence of gross lectures (both theory and practical classes) on the academic performance of the students rather than the teaching methods.

Nevins and his coworkers also highlight that the problem of absenteeism including medical schools is becoming increasingly common both in the UK and worldwide.¹ They also stated that the un-favorable learning environment and excessive socialization between students is cited as core reasons for absenteeism. That’s why the conclusion drawn by Gandhewari and her colleagues might have an alternative perspective from our study.

Furthermore, the authors suggest incorporating the different reasons for absenteeism among Medical students. We also agree that this, as well as other factors such as psychological, distress due to examination and participation of students, just from private medical college will also be contributed as confounders that have an impact on the final assessment of performance but all these attributes have already been mentioned in the limitation of our study,³ “That due to partial availability of data we are unable to include these factors in our current study and will address them in our upcoming publication.”

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Disclosure

The authors report no conflicts of interest in this communication.

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