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Original Research Article

FROM UNCERTAINTY TO ADAPTATION: REFLECTIONS OF THE PIONEER MBBS BATCH IN A NEW MEDICAL COLLEGE OVER ONE YEAR

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ABSTRACT

Background: Pioneer MBBS students enrolled in newly established medical colleges encounter unique academic, psychosocial and infrastructural challenges while simultaneously shaping in the institutional culture. This study assessed changes in experiences, perceptions and adaptation among the first MBBS batch during their first academic year.

Materials and Methods: A questionnaire-based longitudinal observational study was conducted among the pioneer MBBS batch of Kalyan Singh Government Medical College during the academic year 2024–2025. A structured and validated questionnaire comprising closed- and open-ended items was administered at two time points, at entry into the MBBS course and after completion of the first academic year. All consenting students were included. Data were analysed using Microsoft Excel and Epi Info software.

Results: A total of 100 students participated. The mean age was 20.8 years, 55% were male and 45% were female. Most students belonged to urban backgrounds (64%) had studied under the CBSE curriculum (77%) and had English as the medium of instruction (96%). Teaching and faculty support received the highest satisfaction score (3.91/5) whereas exposure and learning scored the lowest (2.87/5). Student life (2.98/5) and infrastructure (3.25/5) emerged as areas requiring improvement.

Conclusion: Although pioneer MBBS students demonstrated substantial adaptation and satisfaction with teaching and mentorship, improvements in clinical exposure, infrastructure and student support systems are required to ensure a balanced educational experience in newly established medical colleges.

Keywords: Medical Students, Pioneer Batch, New Medical College, Medico Reflection, Uncertainty to Adaptation.

INTRODUCTION

A pioneer batch in medical college refers to the very first group of students admitted to a newly established medical institution. They are the foundational members who set the traditions, face challenges of a teething college and often enjoy the perks as the college builds its legacy and infrastructure.

Students enter a medical college generally at an age of 17- 19 years. This cohort of student experiences varied psychological characteristics such as feeling of homesickness, peer pressure, parental expectations and language related difficulties and challenges adapting to hostel life.[1] At such a tender age students have to face intense academic pressure, long study hours, high competition, financial burdens, mental stress and professional challenges also.[2] Other than above the First timers face resource challenges as initial facilities labs, mess etc. might be incomplete and no seniors to guide on personal or professional front. But they do have

major role to play as they help to shape the college's culture, identity and future alumni network, often developing a deep lifelong bond with the institution.[3]

This study aims to compare the experiences, perceptions and adaptation of the Pioneer MBBS batch students at the time of entry and after completing one year in a newly established medical college.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

This was a questionnaire-based, observational, longitudinal study conducted to assess and compare the experiences of the pioneer batch of MBBS students at the time of entry and after completion of one year in a newly established medical college. A structured and validated questionnaire was prepared and was converted into Google form [2]. The questionnaire comprised of both closed and open-ended questions. Except the name and identity, the close ended questions comprised of socio demographic variables like age, gender, place of residence, educational background and medium of instruction in school [3,4]. This Google form was circulated through social media platform to phase-I MBBS students of Kalyan Singh Government Medical College.

The study population comprised first MBBS students belonging to the pioneer batch who were enrolled in the institution during the academic year 2024-2025. All students who consented to participate were included in the study.

The questionnaire was administered to the students at two time points:

1. At entry – within the initial weeks of joining the MBBS course
2. After one year – at the completion of the first academic year

Participants were briefed about the purpose of the study and confidentiality of responses was assured. Written informed consent was obtained prior to data collection.

Sample Size: The sample size included all available and consenting students of the pioneer MBBS batch. A total of 100 students participated in the study. Data was entered into Microsoft excel and analyzed by using Epi info software.

RESULTS

Mostly students were between 20-24 years of age and maintained balanced representation of male and female students. Residential status showed predominance of urban background i.e. 63.7 %. Majority of students came from CBSE board curriculum and English medium institutions. Analysis of mean scores across different thematic domains revealed varying levels of student satisfaction and adaptation after one year of enrolment. Key areas that were analyzed are Teaching & Faculty, personal growth, infrastructure, student life, exposure and learning.

Table 1: Demographic and general details of participating students

Variable	Category	Percentage (%)	Interpretation
Age (years)	Mean: 20.8	-	Respondents are mostly in their early 20s, indicating an undergraduate cohort
Gender	Male	55%	Near-balanced gender representation
	Female	45%	
Place of Residence	Urban	64%	The majority of urban settings
	Semi-urban	21%	Moderate representation
	Rural	15%	Limited but notable rural presence
Educational Background	CBSE	77%	Most are studied under the national curriculum
	State Board	10%	
	ICSE	3%	
	Others (AMU, UP Board, etc.)	10%	Some diversity in academic background
Medium of Instruction in School	English	96%	Nearly all English-medium educated
	Vernacular	4%	Small fraction from non-English schooling

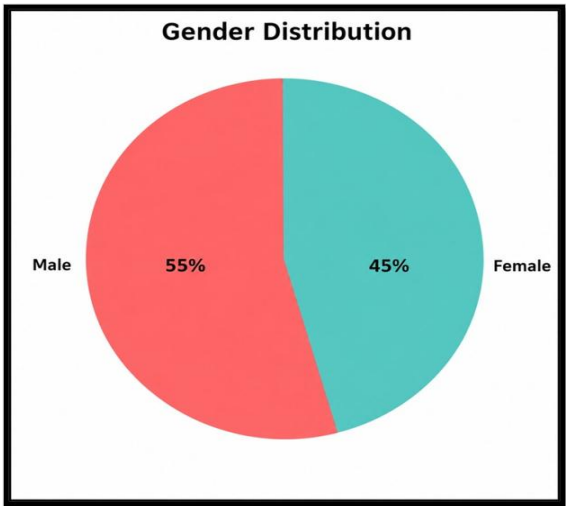

Figure 1: Gender distribution of participants

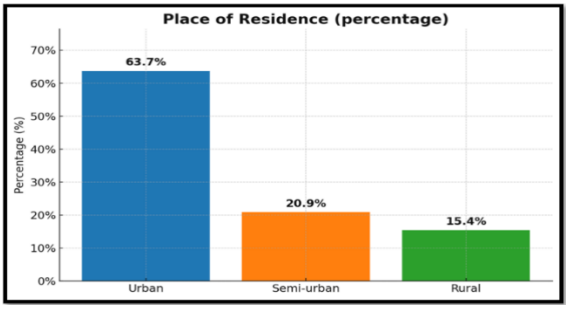

Figure 2: Graph depicting place of residence as their upbringing background

Teaching and faculty support emerged as the strongest performing domain with mean score of 3.91out of 5, indicating high levels of student appreciation for the quality of teaching , effective pedagogy.

The domain of personal growth demonstrated a moderate level of development with a mean score of 3.45 out of 5 reflecting improvement in students' confidence, communication skills and study habits.

Infrastructure related satisfaction showed mean score of 3.25 out of 5, indicating that students perceived institutional facilities such as laboratories, lecture halls and library resources as generally adequate, though inconsistencies and limitations were noted, particularly in terms of modernization and availability.

In contrast Student life recorded a below average mean score of 2.98 out of 5, highlighting the concerns related to hostel facilities, extracurricular activities and overall peer environment. The lowest mean score was observed in the domain of exposure and learning 2.87 out of 5, pointing towards the inadequate clinical and laboratory exposure. Students reported limited hands on learning and insufficient practical exposure.

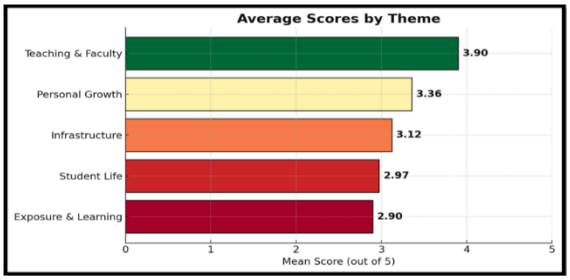

Figure 3: Graphical representation of participant response to the various categories of questionnaire

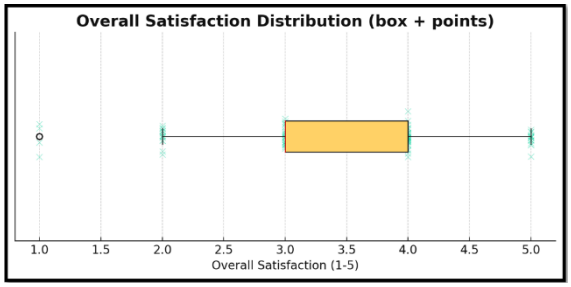

Figure 4: reflects the overall satisfaction of participants on Likert scale

This box- and- whisker plot illustrates the distribution of overall satisfaction scores among first batch students of on a five point Likert scale. The median score of 3.5-4 depicts that majority of students reported moderate to high levels of satisfaction with their overall experience in the medical college after one year.

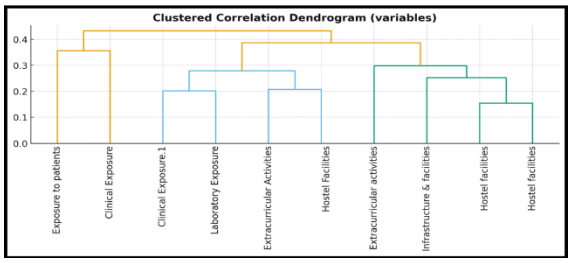

Figure 5: Clustered Correlation Dendrogram of Student Experience Variables

The clustered correlation dendrogram reveals two distinct dimensions shaping students' overall experience. The first cluster groups together Exposure to Patients, Clinical Exposure, Clinical Exposure.1 and Laboratory Exposure, indicating that students who perceive strong learning opportunities in one form of practical or clinical exposure tend to rate other related areas highly as well—forming a coherent "Academic Exposure" dimension. The second cluster combines Extracurricular Activities, Hostel Facilities and Infrastructure & Facilities, suggesting that social engagement, living conditions, and campus infrastructure are closely interlinked in shaping students' perceptions of the "Campus Environment". Together these clusters highlight that satisfaction.

DISCUSSION

In our present study students express high satisfaction with teaching and faculty engagement, averaging 3.9 out of 5. This reflects strong pedagogy and a sense of mentorship that students genuinely value.[4,5] Building on this strength, the college could encourage faculty–student mentoring programs, peer learning groups and even student-led clinics to deepen this positive impact.[6,7]

In this study, many students feel that classroom knowledge is not translating into practical experience. This is shown by the average score of 2.87 in exposure and learning. Introducing early ward postings, simulation-based sessions and structured clinical exposure could help bridge this divide and make learning more applied and engaging.[8]

Study revealed that the areas of student life (2.98) and infrastructure (3.25) divulge concerns around hostel facilities, extracurricular opportunities and administrative responsiveness. Students appear to crave a more vibrant, participatory environment. Creating student councils for hostel management, improving recreational spaces, and supporting clubs could help nurture a stronger sense of belonging.[6,9,10]

With the scores of 3.4 to 3.6 for confidence and communication skills this study indicates, that despite academic and environmental stressors, students are developing resilience and adaptability. These are vital professional traits and can be further reinforced through mentorship programs, wellness workshops and structured feedback sessions that celebrate progress and effort.[7, 10]

CONCLUSION

The present study highlights the evolving experiences of pioneer MBBS batch students during first year in a newly established medical college. Students consistently praise the high calibre of instruction, supportive mentorship and deep level of faculty involvement. This strength forms a strong foundation for academic growth and can be further enhanced through structured mentoring programs.

Despite positive academic experiences, students expressed dissatisfaction regarding exposure and practical learning opportunities. Limited hands- on learning and insufficient clinical exposure emerged as important concerns requiring early interventions. The findings reveal dissatisfaction related to student life and infrastructure. Strengthening these facilities is required as these aspects play crucial role in shaping the overall learning environment and student well being. [6, 7]

Overall, the study reflects a transition from uncertainty to adaptation among the first MBBS batch students. While academic support systems appear to be strong, improvements in clinical exposure, infrastructure and student life are necessary to ensure a more balanced and enriching medical education experience in a newly established medical colleges.

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