

Bullying of Medical Students

Sir,

Mukhtar *et al.* have addressed a very important issue regarding bullying of medical students in a medical school at Lahore, Pakistan.¹ It is surprising that students were not only bullied by their fellows, but by the senior teaching faculty as well. The authors described a situation that creates hurdles to achieve the basic objectives of medical education.

There seem to be certain limitations in the study. The very first question is that why the survey was limited to the first and fourth year students, why not they invited the senior batch (the final year students), and why not they extended this study to other medical schools? There is a large number of medical schools in Lahore city, why did they conduct this survey only in one medical school and conclude their results based on 106 medical students only. The authors did not mention if any written informed consent was obtained from the College Ethical Board. The authors mentioned that a modified version of the British Medical Association's medical student's welfare and education survey form was used for data collection but they did not put any reference to it. The authors also did not mention about what modifications were made and why. The data need to be interpreted with caution in view of the very small number of participants and the lack of a comparison group (e.g., senior classes, postgraduates from other medical schools and another specialty such as Dental etc.).

We believe that medicine is a dignified profession, medical colleges must provide better academic environment to teach the students basic and clinical medical sciences with high moral values to produce five star physicians. The environment of medical education should be conducive to learning. Moreover, administrative bodies must take necessary steps to minimize such bullying incidents from these institutes.

REFERENCES

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Author's reply:

Sir,

We greatly appreciate that the author(s) of the letter have thoroughly gone through the article and offered their worthy comments.

There is no second opinion that the topic of bullying is of crucial importance in the context of medical education and more so if the teaching faculty is involved in such things. We reported what we collected as data and no doubt some results were alarming. The results were based on a sample collected through convenience sampling technique. Students of 1st year and 4th year MBBS were selected as per the sampling technique. A small sample of one medical college convenient to our data collectors in terms of logistics etc. was selected, which surely is one of the limitations of the study. It is also worth mentioning here that all our interviewers were medical students who were trained for data collection on the questionnaire as part of their training.

As far as the ethical issues are concerned, they were addressed in terms of obtaining informed written consents and assuring confidentiality of data. Permission of the institution was obtained before data collection. For the sake of confidentiality the information was withheld by the editor of JCPSP on our request.

The BMA student welfare survey form was used after modifications to tailor it to our circumstances for which we could cite a reference.¹ We had thought it was not necessary after we had made modifications.

We expect that such studies are replicated in other medical colleges, and are also conducted at larger levels owing to the importance of the subject.

REFERENCES

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