

Brief Communication

Educational Needs Assessment through the Poll in Kermanshah University of Medical Sciences in 2011

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(Received: 27 Sep 2011 Accepted: 7 Oct 2012)

Abstract

Introduction: Since educational empowerment of the faculty members of universities of medical sciences depends on our understanding of their educational needs. The present study aimed to investigate the educational needs of the faculty members of Kermanshah University of Medical Sciences in 2011 in order to plan the appropriate training workshops.

Methods: In this descriptive study, the poll was used to accomplish the abovementioned objective. A questionnaire was designed and delivered to the faculty members to fill out, and then was returned to education development center after being completed. Descriptive statistics to determine educational needs of the faculty members.

Results: Our findings indicated that from all the returned questionnaires, 60% from medical faculty and the rest from other faculties, most educational needs in the view of the faculty members included creativity and innovation, and professional ethics workshops.

Conclusion: With regard to the activities of education development centre, it seems that the individuals involved in education have different needs compared to the previous years and are interested in learning new materials.

Keywords: Needs assessment, Education, Workshop.

Citation: Iranfar Sh, Khodaei M, Bahrehbar F, Abasi P, Setareh S, Jalilian N. Educational needs assessment through the poll in Kermanshah University of Medical Sciences in 2011. *Educ Res Med Sci.* 2012; 1(2): 83-86.

Introduction

Needs assessment is, in fact, the underlying foundation of education. The more it is strong, the more the education structure is firm and invulnerable. In the realm of education, needs assessment is considered as one of the basic and essential components of planning, and curriculum developers worldwide in all educational organizations

are required to present convincing reasons for developing their curriculum and instructions. Needs assessment is defined as collecting and analyzing data based on which the needs of individuals, groups, organizations, and societies are identified. Usually, every educational program is designed and implemented in order to change the present condition. Various

techniques are used for needs assessment, including Delphi technique, Fishbowl technique, rainfall thoughts, feedback, organization analysis, function evaluation, job analysis, and task analysis. The faculty members are the most crucial investment of every educational institution. Empowerment of the faculty members in terms of teaching, research, and leadership leads to the fulfilment of the broad objectives of the educational institution (1).

Empowerment is a process that prepares the faculty members to play diverse educational roles and strengthens them in terms of productivity and being up-to-date (2). Usually, the faculty members of medical sciences universities start teaching after they obtain specialty, while many are not familiar with teaching methods, curriculum, and assessment, and have not experience in research (3, 4). Education Development Centre (EDC) started in the country in order to familiarize the faculty members of medical sciences universities with different aspects of education. One of the responsibilities of these centres in all universities is empowering the faculty members in terms of education, and the first step to be taken to accomplish this objective is needs assessment. EDC of Kermanshah University of Medical Sciences (KUMS) determines the educational needs of the faculty members every year through various methods such as poll, for its curriculum. The present study was an attempt to determine the educational needs of the faculty members and survey of their changes in faculty member's training unit in KUMS 2011.

Methods

Using previous studies on needs assessment and collecting viewpoints of the faculty members of KUMS, a questionnaire was designed that included different areas of planning, teaching methods, and assessment. Making sure about the face and content validity, the questionnaire was sent to all the faculty members. The first part of the questionnaire consisted of demographic information like academic rank, department, and faculty, and the second part included workshops, participation record, participation need, and priority identification, using numbers 1 to 10. Almost half of the faculty members returned the questionnaire after completing it. Data analyzed by SPSS software version 18 through. Descriptive statistics to determine educational needs of the faculty members of KUMS

Results

Total of 101 faculty members participated in the needs assessment; 60% from faculty of medicine, 15/2% from faculty of nursing and midwifery, 9/5% from faculty of health, 7/6% from faculty of pharmacology, and the rest from faculty of paramedics. Considering the total number of members in each faculty, the highest percentage of participation belonged to faculty of nursing and midwifery and faculty of paramedics. In faculty of medicine, the highest participation percentage belonged to department of basic sciences, and to department of obstetrics and gynecology among clinical sciences groups. The highest rate of participation belonged to workshops on exam design, new methods of student evaluation, curriculum, and teaching methods in large groups 75.9%, 65.3%, 64.8%, and 60.3%, respectively. The highest need, however, was devoted to workshop about creativity and innovation (66/3%), and professional ethics (65/1%) with the highest priority (41/7%) (Table 1). The highest need for all workshops belonged to medical faculty which mostly included workshops about critical thinking, methods and techniques of clinical teaching, journal club based on evidence-based medicine, educational technology, and curriculum. The result indicated that schools such as nursing and midwifery, health, paramedics, and pharmacology have the lowest need for workshops.

Discussion

The findings of the present study indicated that the faculty members of KUMS tended to participate in workshops such as needs assessment, creativity and innovation, critical thinking, and professional ethics. Prioritization of educational and research activities is one of the most important responsibilities of the faculty members. However, this action seems to be unscientific act if performed without having the enough knowledge about the process of needs assessment. This is the reason, why workshops on needs assessment were one of the top priorities for the faculty members. In addition, the reason that the faculty members need critical thinking is that critical thinking and reasoning power are essential skills for those who work in clinical and health care environments. Clinical staff and physicians have to be able to interpret and combine the patient's information and find a proper solution for clinical problems by applying correct information (2).

The characteristics that have been considered as indicators of professionalism include self-sacrifice, respect, honesty, truthfulness, conscientiousness, honour, excellence, and accountability. The nature of

the health care system in which the physicians work, diagnosis and treatment technologies, type of financial contracts between physician and patient, and distributions of diseases in the society are factors that

affect the tasks that physicians are expected to carry out in every period to demonstrate their commitment to society (5).

Table 1. Distribution of participation need and priority for workshops in KUMS

Workshops	Participation need (%)	Participation priority (%)	rate of participation
Creativity and innovation	66.3	54.1	23.1
Professional ethics	65.1	58.3	28
Educational needs assessment	62.5	59.0	20.5
Critical thinking	61.9	55.3	18.2
Preliminary evidence based medicine	60.8	30.9	60.8
Advanced evidence based medicine (health policy making)	58.0	51.2	14.1
Methods and techniques of clinical teaching	55.8	54	44.2
Communication skills	52.4	48.8	30.7
Guidance and advice	53.0	47.6	35.5
Advanced evidence based medicine (clinical application)	51.8	46.5	31.5
Teaching in small group	50.6	47.8	48.8
Teaching in large group	47.7	42.5	60.3
Journal club based on EBM	47.7	49.5	38
Educational technology	46.3	41.5	50.7
New methods of student evaluation	43.4	38.1	65.3
Question design and test evaluation	41.5	38.1	75.9
Program evaluation	35.6	41.6	35.6
Curriculum (lesson plan and course design)	23.8	40.2	64.8

In the current world, professional ethics is one of the necessities that have attracted the respondent. On the other hand, another issue of concern for the faculty members is clinical education. It seems that, with regard to the problems faced by students i.e., medical training, the faculty members have realized the importance of this issue. As one of the objectives of development centres in university is promoting the faculty members' capability in education, any achievement in this part can be considered as success for these centres. While one of the major duties of the faculty members is involvement in lesson planning, clinical and basic sciences faculty members reported the lowest need for course planning preparation (6). It seems that, the faculty members possess complete mastery of lesson planning activities. It is better to hold workshops about curriculum, different types of evaluation, and other educational workshops for the newly employed faculty members. Further, it was

found that faculty of nursing and midwifery had the lowest need and faculty of medicine had the highest need for workshops. This can be expected, however, since medical lessons, unlike those of paramedics, lack educational subjects. Thus, it is recommended that, this difference in needs be taken into account for various majors when planning for the workshops.

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