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MCQ or Short Answers Question: Students Preference.

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ABSTRACT

In the recent years lot of controversy and debate is going on as to whether MCQ paper is to be included in the university exam or not and also as faculty and in basic sciences dept we are facing lot of problems in controlling the students from absenting from college. So we conducted opinion poll among UGs and PGs of our institute and derived from that and our views and recorded the data.

Keywords: MCQs or short answers exam

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INTRODUCTION

Multiple choice questions and short answer questions are two types in university exam pattern other than essays. Some university adapts short questions and some university adapts multiple choice questions and the trend keeps on changing. Some of the teachers are of opinion that there are lot of ambiguity in mcq questions and students can blindly choose the correct option and can score marks without knowing the subject.

Short answer questions are another type which gives us the true index of student's subject knowledge and a lot of debate is going on as to which one would be the preferred type for the university exam. So we wanted to analyse and assess the student's opinion and choice between the two types of exam pattern for the undergraduate (MBBS) and also post graduate students of all disciplines. .

J. NORCINI 2009 stated that indicate that MCQs are more efficient, reliable and valid than patient management problems [1].

A minimum 6 internal assessment exams are conducted in all the three basic sciences departments and almost every month the students are facing exam. For this sake we wanted to know which will be preferred day for writing the Internal assessment examination (Saturday or Monday). i.e. that is week end or week beginning. Both these points are taken up for this study and tabulated.

AIM AND OBJECTIVES:

- To analyse the preferred method in conducting exam-mcq or short notes.
- To analyse the preferred day for conducting the Exam (Saturday or Monday)
- To compare the same study with undergraduate and post graduate students.

MATERIALS AND METHOD

A group of 150 -1 st year MBBS students and around 66 post graduate students of Sree Balaji Medical College and Hospital were taken up for the study. A questionnaire was prepared and students were asked to give their opinion without their names,so that they will be free to express their views and biasity can be avoided.The following data were included in the questionnaire and the model is given below.

QUESTIONNAIRE:

Course: 1st MBBS
Batch : 2013-14.
Students preferring mcq pattern
Students preferring short answer questions(2 marks).
Students preferring both.
Students preferring internal exam on Saturday
Students preferring internal exam on Monday.

OBSERVATION AND RESULTS

No of Students Preferring	MCQ	Short questions.	Both	Internals on saturday	Internals On Monday
Under Graduates (150)	100	20	30	25	125
Post Graduates (66)	30	33	3	66	0

DISCUSSION

This study was conducted in the department of anatomy of Sree Balaji Medical College where we included 150 First year MBBS under graduate students and 66 Post graduate students of all basic medical sciences.

In this study among 150 undergraduate students most of them 100(66.66%) preferred MCQ type of questions and 20 (13.33%)of them preferred short questions and 30(20%) of them preferred both .In the post graduate group, 30 (45.45%)of them preferred MCQ out of 66, and 33(50%) preferred short questions and only 3 (4.54%)of them preferred both.

Usually in our department the internal assessment test is conducted on weekdays. Most of the students avail leave on the previous day. In order to avoid this scenario, we wanted to know which is the preferred day for conducting Internal Assessment among both undergraduate and post graduate students. There is an absolute difference in the opinion between the undergraduate and post graduate students.Among undergraduates most of them wanted the exam to be conducted on Monday(125 out of 150) and among post graduates all of them wanted it on Saturday only.

Karen Scouller 1998, observed Students were more likely to employ surface learning approaches in the MCQ type of examination and felt MCQ examinations will not help in assessing knowledge-based (lower levels of) intellectual processing. Poorer performance in the MCQ examination was associated with the employment of deep learning strategies. In contrast, students were more likely to employ deep learning approaches when preparing their assignment essays which they perceived as assessing higher levels of cognitive processing. Poorer performance in the assignment essays was associated with the employment of surface strategies.Present study coincides with his studies [2].

Donald R. Bacon (2009) examines two widely used methods for assessing marketing learning outcomes: multiple-choice tests and short-questions. The multiple-choice format was found to yield equivalent reliability and validity in a shorter amount of test-taking time. Present study coincides with time factor of his study but challenges the reliability because having deep knowledge and without knowing the subject also one can blindly choose the correct option and still can score good marks.Hence the student,s view is not unbiased.Short answer questions will help in examining them on wide range and make them answer only from their acquired skill in subject [3].

As to conducting exam on Monday,one can avoid the cutting classes by students,on the previous day, if it happens to be a working day. Pgs might feel differently because most of them might want the Sunday to be holiday which will facilitate their learning process.

CONCLUSION

Even though most of the under graduates prefer mcq type exam, the depth of knowledge can't be assessed in this and also they can choose anyone from the given option without knowing the subject in depth. For writing short question they must know the subject but can cover wide range and deeply too. But In mcq the time factor will be short and assessment can be done within this short spell of time. However for the assessment of knowledge, students can be subjected to both patterns in internals. The preferable day will be Saturday for post graduates and Monday for under graduates. This may be because most of the undergraduate students require a whole previous day to prepare for the exam and this way absenting on the previous day is avoided, while all the post graduates are house holders and wants an day off after the test to spend with their families. Whatever it may be, before deciding the type of exam and day of internals, all the above points should be borne in mind

REFERENCES

- [1] J Norcini stated that indicate that MCQs are more efficient, reliable and valid than patient management problems, 2009.
- [2] Karen Scouller. Michael Prosser Studied about active involvement seen while preparing for Mcq, 1998.
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