

Can instructor-provided notes enhance learning in medical students?

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Dear editor

We read with great interest the article by Gharravi¹ on the use of instructor-provided notes during lectures. We would like to add our reflections as medical students. The study highlighted the benefits of a guided note-taking approach, improved quality of notes, greater student satisfaction, and better exam results. This approach can provide a standardized platform for education and ensures the learning of correct content for examinations.² It can be a more active way to engage millennial learners. But the question remains, to which extent should this approach be implemented in the medical curriculum?

We agree that subjects that require a deep understanding should utilize instructor-guided notes to a degree. What remains to be explored is whether or not this style of learning can be applied holistically across a curriculum. In a study by Chen et al,³ over half of the students felt that lecture-guided notes negatively influenced their lecture taking. The study by Gharravi¹ showed a similar opinion. With 19.35% of students recommending this learning for biochemistry courses and 87.09% suggesting the notes require revision,¹ it is important to appreciate that lecture-guided notes do not address all of the shortcomings of self-directed note-taking.

Our exposure to lecture-guided notes has been limited, but they have been useful throughout our study. It has been used predominantly as an adjunct in the teaching of clinical sciences. We believe that the curriculum should incorporate a selection of teaching methods which cater for the needs of millennial students. Case-based teaching coupled with didactic lectures has been shown to increase depth of knowledge and integrate different concepts to maximize understanding.⁴ We hold the view that the implementation of multimedia can further improve the learning experience; video recordings have been shown to be beneficial. They enable students to study content in their own time and can help them perform better in examinations.⁵ This method of applying multiple learning theories in a curriculum has the potential to establish a more balanced pedagogy.

There are many benefits of using lecture-guided notes in educational institutions. The extent to which it should be applied in the medical curriculum is where the discussion lies. We encourage an approach that caters for all students and subjects. Lecture-guided notes can be provided as an optional adjunct whilst ensuring the medical curriculum includes a wide range of teaching styles. We feel it is important to provide a multi-faceted approach; one that champions a more personalized and student-centered educational process.

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Disclosure

The authors report no conflicts of interest in this communication.

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Author's reply

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Dear editor

This letter is in response to the letter by Munad-Ar-Rehman Mohammad et al, which argued that in my paper (Gharrai, 2018)¹ the question remains, to which extent should instructor-provided notes be implemented in the medical curriculum? Because anatomy education is stressful and time-consuming for both teachers and students, results of my article recommended instructor-provided notes for anatomy teaching and learning.²

The authors argued that in my paper 19.35% of students recommended instructor-provided notes for biochemistry

courses and 87.09% suggested the notes require revision. But in the Result section of the manuscript, I stated that "The majority of students (87.09%) responded that the anatomy part of the instructor-provided notes gave more helpful tips than the histology and embryology parts. Also, 87.09% of the students suggested that the anatomy portion of the instructor-provided notes needs to be revised. A total of 80.65% of the students recommended this learning method for physiology and 19.35% for biochemistry courses."¹ I think the authors made conclusions based on some parts of the results, but not all the parts.

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