



RESEARCH ARTICLE

ASSESSMENT OF NEED OF FORENSIC MEDICINE EXPERTISE IN DAY TODAY MEDICAL PRACTICE AND TEACHING CURRICULUM IN MEDICAL COLLEGES IN INDIA

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ABSTRACT

Medical education that too in the subject of Forensic Medicine and Toxicology is very important as far general medical practice is concerned. A Doctor has to be trained to meet demands of the State and Central government rules regulations and Legal obligations of Doctor. Once upon in recent past there was hue and cry as to reducing teaching of this subject to choice of the undergraduate or not necessary at all. Hence there is need to establish how important is teaching of Forensic Medicine and Toxicology to all the undergraduates across the country. Hence this subject of Assessment of Need of Forensic Medicine expertise in day today Medical Practice and Teaching was elected and done among the professionals in practice. Nine questionnaires' were prepared and given to participants to answer yes or no. Results were tabulated, percentage calculated and analysis was done. Almost all medical practitioners stated teaching of Forensic Medicine and Toxicology subject is essential should be mandatory in under graduate curriculum with clinical posting to casualty under this subject. So that every medical practitioner shall get confidence in dealing with medico-Legal cases in day today practice.

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INTRODUCTION

Evolution of medical practice and its branches has its millions of years of history, ancient times ill defined systems of indigenous medical practice were practice without any evidential value. As the civilization progressed identification of various systems of medical practice came in to existence. That too in western countries evidence based medical art called Allopathy was developed, which is well established and is the rule as well as the practice of the day. Development of modern science and ramifications of this allopathic Medical practice in to various branches (General medicine, Surgery, Obstetrics etc) came in late 18th century. However specialization in Legal aspects of medical practice begin little late in Early 19th century. In India, till now the subject Forensic Medicine remains unknown for most of the law enforcing agencies Prosecution and Judiciaries as a Separate expertise by itself unlike in western countries. Only in late 19th century the subject Forensic Medicine got separated from its parent subject of Pathology that too only in teaching institutions. In practice this subject still needs to be identified as expertise by itself. The number of Forensic Medicine experts available are only usually in Medical Colleges for MCI recognition purpose as minimum requirement.

Till day this subject remain as institution can show deficiency of the faculty in this subject as adequate number is not available. Hence this study was under taken to point out the need and importance of Forensic Medicine subject in the society of Medical Practitioners.

Objective: To know the importance of Forensic Medicine expertise in day to day medical practice.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Study was conducted under IMA KSB Karnataka in the year 2010-11 with ethical clearance from BLDE Universities Shri BM patil Medical College Vijaypur Karnataka. Total of 9 questionnaires' were prepared as the yard sticks to collect information from the subjects, with objective of expected answer in yes or no format.

Subjects; Registered Medical Practitioners (Private and Government as well) with minimum MBBS qualification within undivided District Bijapur Karnataka.

Inclusion criteria; RMP with MBBS basic qualification

Exclusion criteria: RMP other than Allopathy practitioner's. Random selection of subjects was made from medical practitioners of BLDE university, District Health office, Indian

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Medical Association Bijapur. and District hospital Bijapur. The subjects selected in random manner by attending the meetings of various institutions, informed oral consent was obtained. The one page questionnaire format was issued for them to mark / score out and at the end to write their names and Registration number. Thus collected information were compiled, Tabulated Percentages are calculated and analysis was done.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Total number RMP with MBBS qualification participated were 55 irrespective of sex and post graduate qualification. Do you think Forensic Medicine teaching is use full to Doctors in medical practice. Out of 55 subjects participated all (100 %) have answered yes, stating that teaching of this subject is essential for Medical practice. Do you think that present pattern of teaching and Practical demonstration at Under graduate level is adequate?. All 55 subjects have answered the question, 39 (70.90 %) of them have stated that there is in adequate teaching and exposure to Forensic Medicine at Under graduate level. Question as to reduction of teaching hours and merging of this subject with community Medicine is correct. 87.27% (48) subjects out of 55 have stated that it's is incorrect or wrong to merge this subject this subject with any other subject or reduce the teaching hours to Forensic Medicine. Whether Mandatory posting to Forensic Medicine and Toxicology during under graduation and House surgeon is necessary or not ?. 98.18 % (54) of participants have stated indirectly that it's necessary for under graduate students / internee's to have mandatory postings in the subject of Forensic Medicine. only one person write against this opinion of out of 55 participants (<https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/pune/High-court-passes-stricture-against-doctor/article-show/14873808.cms...> Dated 09/03/2018.). Question as to handling of Medico-Legal work with confidence by medical practitioners without teaching of Forensic Medicine subject during under graduation . Bombay high court recently passed strictures on him for examining a woman, who complained of rape, without seeking assistance of a female doctor."The medical examination of the victim, in the wee hours on April 1, 2009, was disastrous.

The medical officer had just passed his MBBS and was studying for MS Gynaecology. 90.90% (50) participants in the study have stated that medical practitioners will not get confidence to face medico-Legal cases during independent practice, unless they are trained adequately during under graduation. Compared to knowledge of Medico-Legal aspects of Medical practice of practitioners which is very poor is directly proportional to in adequate exposure to this subject during MBBS course. 74.5% participants have said that Poor knowledge of medico-legal aspects is due to in adequate exposure during MBBS course. Expert medico Legal consultancy to medical practitioners in need of hour and it's necessity during Medical practice. 94.54 % (52) Participants have mentioned that Service of Forensic Medicine expertise is essential in certain cases during medical practice irrespective of specialty in which he/she is practicing. Level of confidence to face Frivolous charges or litigation without knowledge of Forensic Medicine and toxicology; 85.45 % (47) Doctors have stated that there will be lack of confidence among medical practitioners to face Frivolous charges or litigations if they are not trained adequately during under graduation in the subject

of Forensic Medicine. Whether the practitioners are benefited by existing curricular teaching of Forensic Medicine in medical Colleges; 98.18% (54) subjects participated have opined that no doubt existing curriculum of teaching of Forensic Medicine in Medical Colleges is beneficial if not adequate. All the opinions above furnished by the participants are of their own experience and requirement to their knowledge reflecting need of teaching of Forensic Medicine in under graduation is essential and inevitable. Author feels that there is need of increasing teaching hours and posting of under graduates and interns to department of Forensic Medicine for the duration equivalent to any other major clinical subjects. There by laying a road map for attracting aspirants of post graduates studies to prefer this subject for post graduation to reach ultimate goal of having sufficient expertise service available to all the concerned. In one year statistics of District Hospital Vijaypur Karnataka even in presence of one Forensic Medicine expert 50 % cases are being done by specialists other than Forensic Medicine.

Looking at following number of Government Health care delivery Centre in India

- 28,863 Primary Health Centers ([https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Primary_Health_Centre_\(India\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Primary_Health_Centre_(India)) dated 08/03/2018)
- 5410 Taluka/ Tehsil Hospitals (https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tehsils_of_India . dated 08/03/2018)
- 755 District Hospitals (<https://community.data.gov.in/number-of-district-hospitals-functioning-as-on-31st-march-2014/>. dated 08/03/2018)

In all of the above hospitals, the Medical officers are recruited with basic qualification of MBBS and promoted to higher centre based on total number of years of service, irrespective of post graduate qualifications. All the government Doctors, in all the above mentioned Hospitals, are equally responsible to handle all cases of Injury, Poisoning, Brought Unconscious, Alleged sexual assault cases, Age assessment, Drunkenness etc. Along with these cases Medico-Legal post mortem examination is mandatory irrespective of their post graduate / super specialty qualification. It's bitter truth that Forensic Medicine experts are only working at 460 Medical Colleges (as of 2017). Except very few of them (Forensic Medicine Post graduates) who did not get appointment in government or in medical college are working as private general medical practitioners in government or Private set up. In Government medical college most of Forensic Medicine faculty being not available (Post remain vacant) most of times. It's this small group of Forensic Medicine experts conducting medico Legal autopsy accounting to 15-20 % total cases across India. Except in Karnataka state where in state Government permits private Medical Colleges to conduct autopsy (which is good development as far as usage expertise service). Remaining around 80 % autopsy cases are handled by basic MBBS qualified / Post graduates other than Forensic Medicine experts across the country, with minimum Forensic Medicine knowledge / experience gained during under graduation. Now it's very pertinent to remember the statement " What mind does not know, Eye's cannot See" leading to erroneous observations and opinions miscarriage of justice and Infamy to medical professionals in the eyes of Investigating agencies, Prosecution and Judiciary (Ingale, 2012). Often attending

medico-Legal cases is felt to be more cumbersome un rewarding in respect of writing reports, maintaining documents / records and attending the courts with or without meager money that paid as TA/DA / fee to private medical practitioners, government Doctors claim it from their respective departments. Ministry of health / state governments have periodically scheduled training programs at beginning of service, in most of clinical service Doctors, but not for Forensic Medicine subject. Irony is that the Doctor with basic knowledge gained during, under graduation is deemed expert in the eyes of law. Finally A politician or Doctor or Advocate or Judiciary ask Neurologist for their diagnosis and treatment for head ache, but if same person die un natural, only MBBS Doctor is sufficient to do Medico-Legal post mortem examination ?. At the same time, most of the Doctors were of the opinion that If the medico-Legal work is, only done by Forensic Medicine specialist, clinicians will be free to attend there specialty work more effectively in almost all of the Government major institutions like District Hospitals and Medical Colleges.

Conclusion

There is absolute need of better effective teaching of Forensic Medicine during under graduation and create Forensic Medicine expertise man power for consultancy. Increase the number of Forensic Medicine experts to cater better medico-legal services in the form of Collection of evidence in better way, its Presentation in correct format, interpret the findings in good faith, so that the justice is not miscarried.

Teaching and practice of medico-legal work inclusive of Autopsy in all the Private Medical Colleges should be mandatory. (Limitation of this study is number of participants in the form subjects (Doctors) in a given district at that time. Authors who are doing such research work can add to this or dispute the conclusion remarks).

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