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## A study on Patients' approach towards the presence of medical student during consultation in outpatient department (OPD) in a medical college

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### Abstract

**Background:** Patients' consent to being part of medical education is often taken for granted. Formal consent is not taken usually and patients are mostly unaware of teaching activities.

**Objectives:** To know the patients' approach towards the presence of medical students in Out Patient Department (OPD) and factors influencing it.

**Methods:** Cross-sectional descriptive study was conducted among 111 patients in broad speciality OPD at Dr. Pinnamaneni Siddhartha Institute of Medical Science & Research Foundation. Data was collected using predesigned questionnaire.

**Results:** 60 % patients had previous encounter with medical student. 88.3% allow medical student to observe, 87.4% allow them to examine and 90.1% feel it is important for their training. There is a statistically significant difference in the co-operation of married and unmarried patients concerning students' general appearance and behavior (P value 0.001).

**Discussion:** Even though Patients' approach towards medical students' presence is appreciable, nearly half of them expect politeness and respect.

**Keywords:** Patient's Approach, Out Patient Department, Medical Student, Medical education

### 1. Introduction

Clinical medicine is a practical field related to human being and requires certain skills in psychomotor and affective domain along with cognitive development. To acquire these skills, real patient encounter is important [1-3]. Patients have contributed to medical teaching since the beginning of medicine. Great masters have transmitted their knowledge around the diseased or in outpatient clinics. The observation of the behavior of teachers during appointments and the direct contact with patients provides students essential opportunities for their scientific and humanistic development [4]. (4) Patient based teaching is an ethical issue and requires patient's consent and cooperation [5, 6]. It becomes important to pay close attention to the patients' feelings and responses toward the presence of medical students in OPD because patients should determine to what extent they are willing to share their privacy with medical students in attendance [7, 8]. Presence of students during consultation in outpatient clinics results in interference in privacy and consultation process [9]. There is a pressure over health care providers and hospital managers in changing climate of health services to evaluate the services in view of patient's expectations and their mismatch can result in patient's dissatisfaction [10, 11]. These days medical education has been shifted more to the outpatient settings (ambulatory teaching) from hospitals [12]. The vital role that patients serve in the training of medical students has not been given much consideration in some parts of the world. Studies from developed and some low- and middle- income countries have shown that patients are generally willing partners in the training of medical students [13]. To find out the patient's attitude towards involvement of medical students during OPD consultation, many studies had been conducted abroad, but on literature search, to the best of authors' knowledge, hardly there was any study found in India to cover this aspect.

### 2. Materials and methods

A cross sectional descriptive study was conducted in the broad speciality outpatient departments (OPD) at Dr. Pinnamaneni Siddhartha Institute Of medical science & Research

Foundation hospital, Chinnoutpalli of Krishna district of Andhra Pradesh in June 2017. The objectives of the study were to know the overall patients' approach towards the presence of medical students during consultations in OPD and the factors influencing it.

Data was collected from the patients who attended the OPD by using pre designed interviewer administered questionnaire which consists of demographic details & details related to the patients' acceptance, reaction and permission of medical students' presence in the OPD. Ethical approval was obtained from Institution Ethical Committee (IEC) of Institutional Research Cell (IRC) of Dr. Pinnamaneni Siddhartha Medical Sciences and Research Foundation before conducting the study. Written informed consent was taken from patients before collecting the information. Patients who gave consent to participate in the study were included. A total of 251 patients were approached, of which 111 gave consent and participated in the study.

The questions were asked on interview basis by the investigator. Only completed questionnaires were utilized for study. The study sample comprised all patients in broad speciality. Anonymity and confidentiality of respondents

was maintained and participation was voluntary. Nine patients who refused to participate are not included in the study and they refused because of -language problem, ill health or lack of time. Descriptive statistics was used to present frequencies and percentages and statistical significant difference was noted with the application of chi X2 test with a two-tailed p value < 0.05.

The aim of this study was to determine the overall views of patients towards the presence of medical students during the consultation with their doctors in general practice and hospital outpatient settings.

### 3. Results

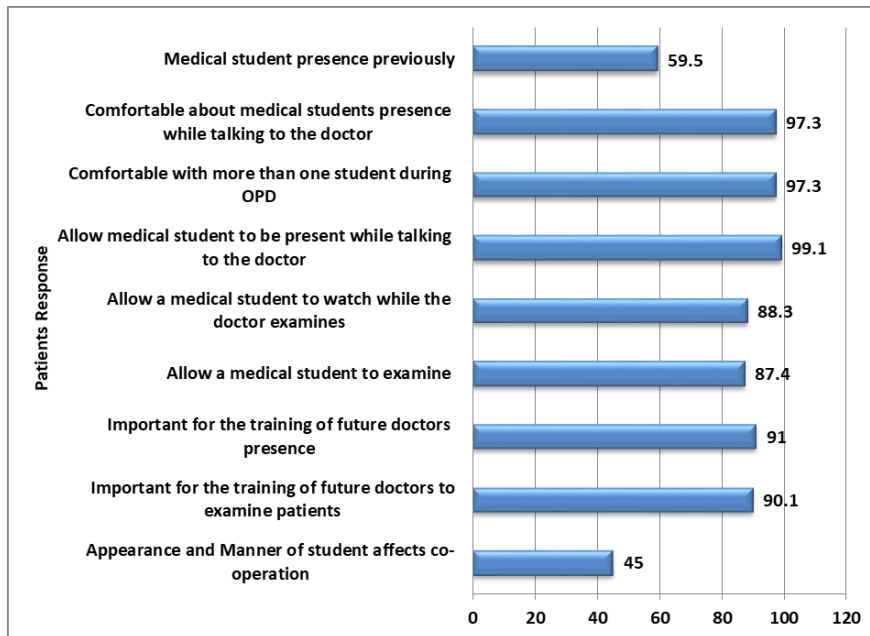
Majority (34.2 %) of the study participants were in the age group of 15 to 30 years. Female study participants were more i.e. 61.3 %, majority are Hindus i.e. 77.5% and as per the caste OC & BC are equal i.e. 36.9 % followed by SC & ST i.e. 17.1% & 9 % respectively. Most (39.6 %) of the participants were illiterates. As per the residence of participants, both urban and rural participants are equal. Nearly 51.4 % of participants were unskilled workers. 90.1 % of study participants were from nuclear family. Majority of the participants were married i.e. 76.6 % (Table 1).

**Table 1:** Socio demographic details of study participants (n=111)

Variable	Frequency	Percentage
<b>Sex</b>		
Male	43	38.7
Female	68	61.3
<b>Age</b>		
15-30	38	34.2
31-45	30	27.0
46-60	27	24.3
>60	16	14.4
<b>Education</b>		
Illiterate	44	39.6
Primary	9	8.1
Secondary	7	6.3
Intermediate	20	18.0
Degree	10	9.0
PG and Above	21	18.9
<b>Occupation</b>		
H maker	27	24.3
Skilled	10	9.0
Student	17	15.3
Un Skilled	57	51.4
<b>Residence</b>		
Rural	56	50.5
Urban	55	49.5
<b>Religion</b>		
Hindu	86	77.5
Muslim	3	2.7
Christian	22	19.8
<b>Caste</b>		
OC	41	36.9
BC	41	36.9
SC	19	17.1
ST	10	9.0
<b>Type of family</b>		
Nuclear	100	90.1
Joint	10	9.0
Three Generation	1	.9
<b>Marital Status</b>		
Single	21	18.9
Married	85	76.6
Widow	5	4.5

**Fig 1** shows the details of patients’ response. Nearly 60 % of patients had the presence of a medical student previously when they have come to see a doctor. 108 (97.3%) study participants feel comfortable about medical students being present while they are talking to the doctor about their problem and the same percentage 108 (97.3%) of patients feel comfortable with more than one student during OPD. 110 (99.1%) were willing to allow medical student(s) to be present while they were talking to the doctor about their problem. 98 (88.3%) would allow a medical student to watch while the doctor examines them. 97(87.4%) of study participants would allow a medical student to examine them when the doctor is supervising them. 101 (91%) of patients feel that the presence of medical students when they are talking to their doctor is important for the training of future doctors and 100 (90.1%) of study participants feel that medical students examining patients is important for their training. But only 50 (45%) participants felt that the general appearance and behaviour of student will affect their co-operation.

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**Fig 1:** Receptiveness of Patients regarding presence of medical students in OPD (n=111)

Table-II shows statistically significant difference between married and single patients and their co-operation when

medical students are present, relating to their general appearance and behavior during consultation.

**Table 2:** General appearance & manner affecting co-operation from the patient

Co-operation from patient	Marital status			Total
	Single	Married	Widow	
Yes	16 (76.2%)	34 (40.0%)	0 (0.0%)	50 (45.0%)
No	5 (23.8%)	51 (60.0%)	5 (100.0%)	61 (55.0%)
Total	21 (100.0%)	85 (100.0%)	5 (100.0%)	111(100.0%)
Pearson Chi-Square:13.201 <sup>a</sup>	Df 2		P value.001	

**4. Discussion**

The gladness of patients to contribute to the learning of medical students was almost unanimous. Our study showed that patients attending Dr. Pinnamaneni Siddhartha Medical College and Research Foundation Teaching Hospital, Chinnoutpalli are generally favorably disposed to the presence of medical students in the hospital. This finding confirms reports from previous studies reporting that patients are positively disposed toward the presence of medical students in teaching hospitals across Middle Eastern, European, and other countries. Majority of the study participants (34.2 %) were in the age group of 15 to 30 years. Female participants were more i.e. 61.3 %, which is similar to study done in Nigeria Adebayo PB, et al<sup>(14)</sup> where females were slightly more than males (55.8% vs. 44.2%). Majority belong to Hindu religion i.e. 77.5%. Most of the participants were illiterates that are 39.6 % had tertiary education (72.5%). Concerning residence of participants, both urban and rural participants are equal

when compared to study done in Pakistan by Khan MLZ et al<sup>(15)</sup> where Urban were more i.e. 300 (73 %). 51.4 % of participants were unskilled workers but when compared to the study done by Adebayo PB, et al<sup>(14)</sup> 51.4% were currently employed. Majority of the participants were married i.e. 76.6 %. (Table 1) when compared to study done in Brazil by Jaqueline Berwanger *et al.*,<sup>[4]</sup> 114 (57%) participants were married; 32 (16%) were single; 29 (14.5%) were in stable relationships; 11 (5.5%) were divorced, and 14 (7%) were widows or widowers. Table 2 shows the response details of patients. Nearly 60 % of patients encountered medical students’ presence previously when they had been to see a doctor but when compared to the study done in Saudi Arabia by Iqbal Bukhari *et al.*,<sup>[16]</sup> it is more i.e. 92.1%. 108 (97.3%) study participants feel comfortable about medical students being present while they are talking to the doctor about their problem and the same percentage 108 (97.3%) of patients feel comfortable with more than one student during OPD.

110 (99.1%) were willing to allow medical student(s) to be present while they are talking to the doctor about their problem. 98 (88.3%) would allow a medical student to watch while the doctor examines them. 97(87.4%) of study participants would allow a medical student to examine them when the doctor is supervising them. 101 (91%) of patients feel that it is important for the training of future doctors and 100 (90.1%) of study showed that the 97.5% patients' perception to the politeness, thoughtfulness and respect of medical students during the appointment was agreeable.

## 5. Conclusion

The study confirms that patients' attitude to medical students is favorable. Almost all of the patients are co-operative towards the presence of medical students in the OPD. Most of them felt that it was important for their training and they were co-operative towards medical students examining them under the supervision of the senior doctor. However, there are areas of limitations as medical students are less positively accepted in certain situations like their general appearance and politeness they show towards the patient. In conclusion, it is a welcoming fact that almost all patients have no objection towards the presence of medical students in OPD and the restriction that surfaced in my study was also slight and understandable. This shows that doctor-patient communication skills, behavior and attitude of students towards the patients should be taught in the curriculum before the student is posted in the clinical departments. This not only provides a better learning to the future doctors but also gives a promising environment to the patient. Privacy and confidentiality are basic rights, thus we need to give utmost care in providing privacy to patient.

## 6. Conflict of interest

There are no conflicts of interest.

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