

Description of the Five-day Orientation Program for Enrolling Undergraduate Medical Students for the Academic Year 2022 at Gandaki Medical College in Pokhara, Nepal

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Introduction

Orientation programs for new students are considered beneficial because they aid them as well as the teachers and acclimate them to the learning environment. Additionally, it aids medical students in overcoming various challenges they encounter when adjusting to a new academic setting. Orientation sessions are held in a variety of medical colleges and are widespread worldwide. This paper discusses the five-day orientation program held at the Gandaki Medical College Teaching Hospital and Research Center, Pokhara, Nepal for the newly admitted first-year undergraduate medical students of the 2022 academic year. The institution, teaching-learning activities, respective curricula, and faculty members were introduced to the new students.

Keywords: orientation program; medical education; medical students; teaching-learning activities.

INTRODUCTION

A person's fundamental attitude, belief, or feelings with regard to a given subject or problem are referred to as their "orientation".¹ A new program or new organization benefits from an orientation at the outset to ensure its success.² Orientation programs (OPs) for new students are considered beneficial because they aid them as well as the teachers and acclimate them to the learning environment.³ Students shift from the safe haven of an overprotected existence and spoon-fed learning to an independent life

and self-learning, and this transition causes stress. As a result, these OPs assist students in becoming acquainted with many facets of their university.¹⁻⁵ These orientations are usually conducted at the beginning of medical college.

Any student attending a medical institution must put in a lot of effort and commitment. Most students find their first year of college difficult because of the intense coursework, limited free time, high parental expectations, fear about bullying, humiliating teachers, loneliness, and a host of other issues.⁶ All of these factors together

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Table 1. Program schedule of orientation sessions for the first year medical students.		
Topics	Facilitator	Time allocated
Day 1		
Inauguration	Moderator	15 minutes
Welcome speech	Chief Administrative Officer	15 minutes
Overview of hospital and clinical skills	Medical Superintendent	15 minutes
Introduction to Gandaki Medical College and Health Sciences courses	Principal	15 minutes
Interaction of parents with coordinators	All the coordinators	1 hour
Overview of Basic Science courses	Basic Science Coordinator	1 hour
Rules and Regulation in medical school	Member from Disciplinary committee	30 minutes
Day 2		
Stress and coping mechanism in health profession students	Faculty from Psychiatric Nursing	1 hour
Financial management	Bank Manager	1 hour
Medicine and Humanity	Administrative Officer	1 hour
Discipline, Punctuality and Organization	Head of Department of Pharmacology	30 minutes
Day 3		
An overview regarding health systems and policies in Nepal	Faculty from Department of Community Medicine and Public Health	1 hour
Learning approaches and learning styles	Member from Department of Medical Education	30 minutes
Tools and technologies in learning	Member from Department of Medical Education	30 minutes
Small Group Learning	Member from Department of Medical Education	30 minutes
Assessment system- I	Examination Officer	30 minutes
Assessment system -II	BDS Coordinator	30 minutes
Day 4		
Overview of Clinical Course	Clinical Coordinator	30 minutes
Health professionals - patient relationship and professional ethics	Member from Department of Medical Education	1 hour
Research fundamentals	Member from IRC	30 minutes
Scope of medical and allied subjects	Member from Department of Medical Education	30 minutes
Library service	Library officer	15 minutes
Sports activities in college	Sports Coordinator	15 minutes
Day 5		
Overview of MBBS, BDS, Nursing, and allied courses	Respective coordinators	2 hours
Tour of clinical complex	Medical Superintendent	2 hours

might result in high pressures and a high number of student dropouts during the first year of their course.⁴ As a result, considerable effort must be made to help the learners adjust to their new environment.

Medical colleges use orientation week to introduce students to the requirements of the medical profession in addition to providing them with all the information they need about their new program, curriculum, faculty, medical school campus, etc. Numerous medical institutions in Nepal offer one- to seven-day orientation sessions to prospective students.⁷ At KIST Medical College in Lalitpur, all first-year students are provided with a week-long OP that introduces them to the curriculum, teaching and learning activities, and faculty members.⁸ Since 2010, GMC has been offering a one-day OP to new students on the first day of their enrollment in the course. Although this program has been ongoing for the past six years, our institute had yet to host it for an entire week and we took the initiative this time. The OP's objective was to familiarize students with the college's curriculum and the hospital's facilities and working environment.

METHODS

The Gandaki Medical College Teaching Hospital and Research Center (GMCTHRC), located in Pokhara, was founded in 2007 AD with the purpose of imparting quality medical education to the students from different parts of the world. GMCTHRC is affiliated to Tribhuvan University, which currently offers Bachelor in Medicine, Bachelor in Surgery (MBBS), Bachelor in Dental Surgery (BDS), Bachelor of Nursing Science (BNS), Bachelor of Science in Medical Imaging Technology (BMIT), Bachelor of Science in Medical Lab Technology (BMLT), Bachelor of Public Health (BPH), Bachelor of Pharmacy (BPharma), and graduate programs in various

departments.

For the newly enrolled first-year MBBS, BDS, nursing, and paramedical batch of 2022, a five-day orientation program was held from September 4 to September 8, 2022, under the leadership of the Medical Education Department of GMCTHRC. A month before the students arrived, the program's planning was initiated. There were 125 medical undergraduate students present for the program. Due to the fact that the students were unfamiliar with one another and the school, the orientation began with an ice-breaking activity. The OP was really interactive, and the atmosphere was friendly. The resource people answered the attendees' questions.

The college's chief administrative officer, principal, medical superintendent, coordinators of various courses, all of the faculty members, and all of the new students and their parents were present for the program's inauguration. A welcome speech was delivered after the lighting of the lamp and Saraswati Vandana prayer which was followed by introduction of the management committee, administrative staffs and faculties.

To help the students focus on a broad social sense of responsibility to the society and service to the disadvantaged, the themes were arranged so that the first day's emphasis was on a basic introduction about the course and the college. The Medical Superintendent of the college provided a summary of the Gandaki Medical College and Teaching Hospital as well as the clinical skills that the students will be learning. The college's principal commented on health science courses from a bird's-eye perspective. Additionally, there was a brief session when parents and the coordinators of the individual programs interacted and provided comments. Coordinators of different programs gave a brief description of the their respective courses.

The second day's program aimed to nourish them with a comprehensive view of medicine and assist them in coming to see the practice of medicine as a divine duty. The following themes were taught on the second day: discipline, punctuality, and organization. The topics included: stress and coping mechanisms in health professional students; communication skills and counseling; medicine and humanity. The third day of the study week had a variety of speakers who discussed a range of subjects, including an introduction of Nepal's health system and policies, learning methodologies and learning styles, tools and technologies in learning, small-group learning, and evaluation systems. We focused on the learning methods and assessment with a thought that they will motivate the students to engage deeply in their classrooms as well as outside classrooms.

The clinical course overview, the patient-health professional interaction and professional ethics, the basics of research, and the range of medical and allied subjects were the main topics of the fourth day of orientation. The pupils were also given an overview of the college library so they would know how to use the services. They were also exposed to sports activities in college. Finally, the last day of orientation was devoted to discussing the purpose, structure, and available learning materials for the various programs. To help the students get acquainted with their new environment, tours of the college campus and the nearby teaching hospital were also organized.

The facilitators of the program were professors from various departments, members of the Department of Medical Education and administrators. Lectures, tasks for small groups, observations, and group activities were all part of the sessions (Table 1). The Department of Medical Education chose the topics for five-days considering the psychology of the students,

problems that aid in stress management, teaching and learning strategies and orientation to the undergraduate course as well as hospital facilities.

The new students' written feedback as well as verbal comments and ideas were collected at the session's conclusion for consideration in future sessions. The schedule had to be adjusted frequently to meet the needs of different faculties. The reported audiovisual issues had been fixed and for some suggestions concerned authorities were notified. Hopefully, the new initiative will be able to meet the expectations of students. We have the plan to continue with this kind of orientation with some modifications.

The gaps in the orientation program were understood by determining what other subjects the students needed clarification on, allowing for continued development in subsequent years. The orientation program was well-liked by the students, and the majority of the research indicated that it was crucial for the medical industry.²

CONCLUSIONS

If properly executed, orientation sessions are tremendously beneficial to the new students. They can interact with their classmates, professors, and other students in a fantastic setting. However, it is also a great chance for the faculties and staff to learn and adapt their teaching contents and strategies moving forward. South Asian medical educators can think about creating an orientation program for students utilizing a variety of teaching and learning techniques.

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