

## Importance of an Orientation Program for Medical School Students: -Survey in a Jeju Medical School-

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(Received May 2, 2013; Revised May 9, 2013; Accepted May 16, 2013)

### Abstract

**Background:** Jeju National University Medical School organized a week long medical school orientation program for new students in 2011–2012 called “Pre-Medical School Course” (PMS) to study the importance of an orientation program for new medical students. The main purpose of this program was to orient the newcomers to the medical school undergraduate program and encourage them to actively participate in most school activities.

**Objective and Methods:** We conducted a survey at Jeju National University Medical School to study student response to PMS immediately after the course and 1 year later. We present an analysis of student feedback.

**Results:** Most students (98%) were satisfied with the PMS immediately after the course in 2011; however, when the same survey was conducted on the same students exactly 1 year later, a severe decrease in satisfaction was seen. Most students wanted an emphasis on hospital experience from the start of medical school.

**Conclusion:** New students arrived at the medical school with many expectations and found the orientation program to be extremely important. However, this importance decreased in these students 1 year later. This raises several questions. Is the orientation program really not important or are professors and deans who have already completed medical school underestimating the importance of orientation programs for budding doctors? (J Med Life Sci 2013;10(1):39–43)

**Key Words :** Medical student, Orientation program, Medical school

### Introduction

The medical education system has drastically evolved over the last few years. New medical education delivery methodologies and techniques are developed on a daily basis and are localized for every school<sup>1)</sup>. These techniques are rapidly evolving to improve overall understanding and grasp of medicine and quality of patient care services. It has become gradually important for the more traditional medical schools to adapt to these new techniques and methodologies and implement them to their education systems. An important part of this process is offering a student orientation at the beginning of medical school. The Korean medical education system is undergoing a massive transformation, learning from the Western world and moving towards what is more modern and new. Many medical schools are developing different teaching methods to follow

this modern trend. Starting in 2008, Jeju National University Medical School requires that undergraduate students seeking admission into the medical school have a degree certificate, just like in American medical schools. Every February, Jeju National University Medical School conducts a week-long orientation program called the “Jeju Pre-Medical School Course” (PMS) for the 40 newly admitted students. The PMS is intended to help students of different backgrounds understand the practicalities of life in the medical school. The program is managed by the student council and medical school professors. The PMS helps to harmonize the relationships among students and professors. During the program, students have the opportunity to explore the hospital and take a basic emergency resuscitation course, such as cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR)<sup>2)</sup>. This research was conducted to understand student satisfaction with the current PMS. We conducted a student feedback survey right after the PMS and then 1 year later on the same students who attended the PMS in 2011. The PMS was held at the end of February 2011, and the survey was conducted immediately thereafter.

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This work was supported by a research grant from Hyochon Academic Research of Jeju National University in 2011.

## Methods

The following is the content and time distribution of the PMS, distributed over a week:

1. Self-introduction (1 hr)
2. Medical school introduction: training goals and objectives and exposure to the medical school's organization (2 hr).
3. Exposure to medical terminology: classes, examinations, and awards (3 hr)
4. Diary writing (2 hr)
5. Jeju Island history and tour: museums and 4.5. 3 Park (4 hr)
6. Athletic meets: football, basketball, 400-m relay, and other games (3 hr)
7. Emergency Resuscitation Program: CPR (3 hr)
8. Hospital tour, including outpatient registration, emergency room, radiology department, operation room, and intensive care unit (ICU) (4 hr)
9. Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory (MMPI) test to get to know the students better (2 hr)
10. Self-management: stress/management course (1 hr), medical school life management course (1 hr), healthcare (1 hr), and 5-km marathon.
11. Interpreting medical documents, such as medical newspapers or medical disquisitions, and leading professional discussions (2 hr)
12. Discussion of medical related articles (2 hr)
13. Socializing and interacting with senior students (2 days)

The following day after the orientation, students were asked to fill out this survey. In 2011, 40 freshmen participated in the survey. In 2012, 39 students (1 absent student) who participated in the survey the previous year retook the survey. The survey questions were the same as the year before. There were 5 basic questions on the survey:

1. Was PMS helpful?
2. Was PMS scheduled appropriately?
3. Which program did you like the most during PMS?
4. What should be the most essential program in PMS?
5. Did you actively participate in the PMS?

For questions 1, 2, and 5, we used a 5-point scale calculation method consisting of very strongly agree (5 points), strongly agree (4 points), agree (3 points), disagree (2 points), and strongly disagree (1 point). The results of the survey were analyzed with the help of bar graphs.

## Results

The following are the results of the surveys conducted in 2011 and 2012:

1. Was PMS helpful?

In 2011, 98% of the freshmen said it was helpful. In 2012, only 59% said that it was helpful (Fig.1).

2. Was PMS scheduled properly?

In 2011, 69% said it was scheduled properly. In 2012, the score lowered to 30%(Fig.2).

3. Which program did you like the most during PMS?

Hospital experience was the most favored followed by athletic meets(Fig.3).

4. What should be the most essential program in PMS?

Visiting medical facilities, friendly athletic meetings, cultural activities, and socializing with seniors was followed by osteology classes (Fig. 4).

Did you actively participate in the PMS?

In 2011, 93% said yes. In 2012, 76% said yes(Fig.5).

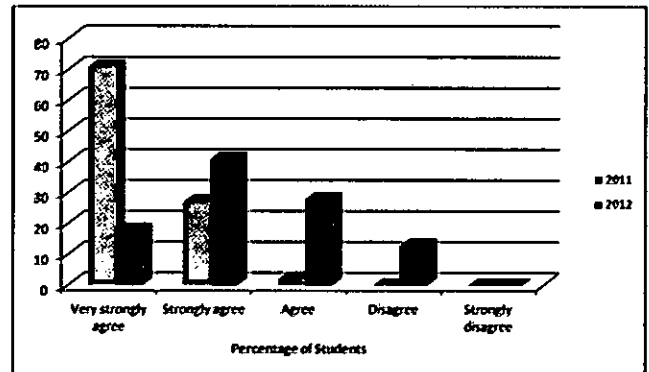


Figure 1. Was the PMS program helpful?

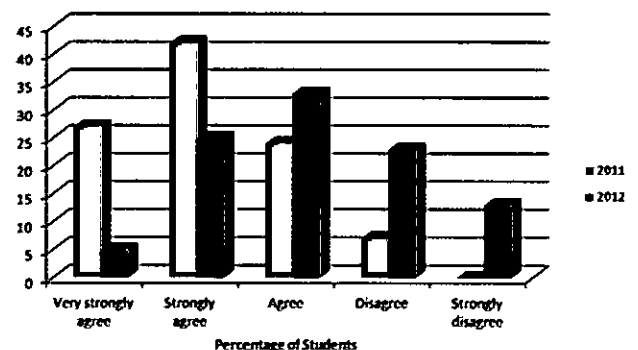


Figure 2. Was PMS scheduled appropriately?

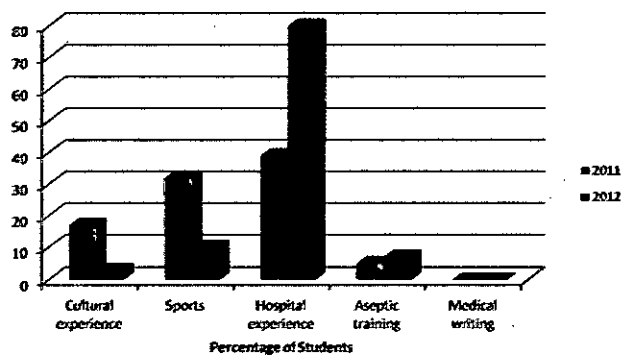


Figure 3. Which program did you like the most during PMS?

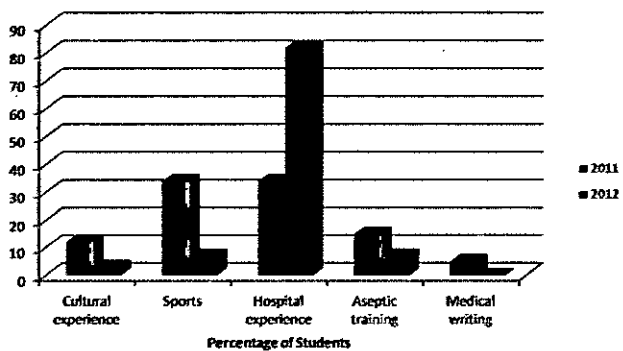


Figure 4. What should be the most essential program in PMS?

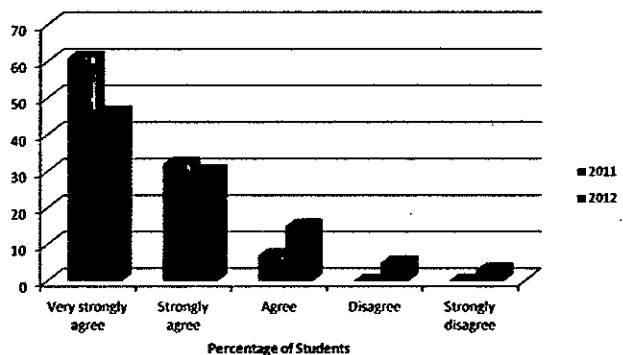


Figure 5. Did you actively participate in the PMS?

## Discussion

To orient students to the medical education system at various strata, Jeju National University Medical School holds an annual PMS. The students not only learn about graduation requirements but also become oriented to understand and familiarize themselves with the environment around the school and hospital. The program includes an introduction to medical facilities and medical education, CPR,

medical terminologies, searching medical articles and interpreting them, and learning the importance of athletic meets. In 2011, the program was managed by 20 professors, 41 freshmen, 5 assistants, and 3 administrative workers. The program cost 11,641,800 Won (approximately 10,300 USD). To encourage students to participate, the school scored and graded participation and gave awards to high scoring students. In the following sections, we discuss some of the important components of the PMS.

### Introduction to the School and Medical Center

This helped the students better understand the school, its organization, aims, and visions, course details, and graduation requirements.

### Exposure to Medical Terminology and Procedures

This is one of the main programs in the PMS. It helped to test and develop an interest in the basic understanding of medical terms. First, the students were given tests on which the average score was 57.2. This was followed by lectures by professors and then another 6 tests and quizzes were conducted. The students were then scored based on the following weight for each component: pretest (20%), tests (40%), and quizzes (40%). The average of the final scores was 65.5. New students also learned CPR and basic medical terminology with the help of anatomy models. In addition, the school conducted a course on aseptic training based on World Health Organization guidelines.

### Medical Ethics

New students learned basic medical ethics that are not as strongly stressed upon in all medical schools as required. The students were asked to discuss their expectations of medical education, what contributions they want to make to medicine, and how they can use their previously obtained knowledge from their degree course for the benefit of medicine. The school awarded well-prepared presentations.

### Interpretation of Medical Articles

This program was conducted to improve students' basic medical knowledge. The school gave random medical articles to students who then had to prepare presentations on the topic. Again, the best presentations were awarded.

### Understanding Medical Services

This program consisted of 4 activities:

1. Outpatient registration: Groups of 4 students registered as patients in the outpatient department and visited the

doctors in the clinics to present their complaints. This helped the students understand what the patient might experience and what problems might be faced in the process of visiting a doctor (1 hr).

2. Emergency room: Groups of 4 students transported patients as medical helpers.
3. Students had a chance to wield the wheelchairs and patient beds to better understand the problems that might arise in the transportation of patients.
4. Groups of 8 students helped move beds in and out of the operating and recovery rooms.

The students also had a chance to explore other areas of the hospital, including the emergency room, ICU, operating rooms, rehabilitation clinics, imaging and diagnostics room, nurses' stations, mental health care center, and general check-up room.

#### Exposure to Local Culture

The students visited museums and 4.3 Park in Jeju Island to understand the culture and traditions of the people living on the island.

#### Personal Management

To better understand the students and match them with a suitable professor, an MMPI test was conducted. The school also delivered stress management and self-management lectures, taking into consideration the high stress that is seen in medical students 3-8).

The students participated in the survey right after the PMS program and then 1 year later. With the 2011 survey results, the medical school made short-term plans. With the 2012 survey results, the medical school drew a long-term conclusion. There was a gap between the 2 survey results: in 2011, most students were satisfied with the program but in 2012, student satisfaction dropped significantly. The purpose of Jeju National University Medical School for conducting the PMS is not only to help freshmen students adjust well to the school but also to change the medical education system. The school believes that it is difficult for students to learn medical ethics if the school only concentrates on teaching clinical medicine. The ideas developed by and the visions of the students before they become doctors may have a huge impact once they start practicing medicine. The school encouraged the students to understand patients' problems by giving them chances to experience the difficulties that patients may face when they are in the hospital.

Our study clearly shows that in 2011, most students felt that the PMS was extremely important and helpful for them to orient to the medical school and medical education (Fig. 1) and that appropriate time was given for the orientation, although a small number of students were not satisfied with the schedule and thought that it was too tightly scheduled (Fig. 2). Fig. 3 shows that a large number of students thought that the hospital experience was the most important component of the PMS followed by athletic meets. Most of the students in 2012 wanted more hospital exposure. Fig. 5 shows that the students participated actively in the orientation program.

A large number of students in 2012 considered hospital experience to be the most important component of the PMS (Fig. 4). Their desire for more hospital experience clearly shows that they want to be associated with clinical experience and patient care right from the beginning of their medical education. We also found it difficult to recruit professors to help organize the program. We believe that more professors should participate in the development of the course to create a better PMS.

### Conclusion

Not many schools have extensive orientation programs like the one we organized at Jeju National University Medical School probably because their administrations do not consider them important. After finishing medical school and being involved in rigorous clinical training for years, we may forget that the transition phase from college to medical school is critical and can sometimes be time consuming, stressful, taxing, and difficult for the students. Administrators should not forget the importance of orientation programs. We should give it due time and support with resources for helping students transition smoothly from college to medical school. Exposure to hospital experience can also improve student interest in these orientation programs and medical school curriculum.

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