STUDENT PERCEPTION OF TRUE/FALSE TYPE MULTIPLE CHOICE QUESTIONS (MCQ) AS A METHOD OF EVALUATION IN FORENSIC MEDICINE

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Multiple Choice Questions (MCQ) are an important component in the process of evaluation in Forensic Medicine. Compared to evaluation by long essay type questions and viva-voce examinations, MCQ ensure objectivity and are reliable. High quality MCQs conforming to existing guidelines on MCQ construction is a convenient method of assessing all three cognitive levels of knowledge of large numbers of students.

Thus medical students' perceptions of the currently used MCQs in Forensic medicine are explored with a view to revising and improving the existing bank.

A questionnaire was administered to 174 students of the 2001/2002 batch and 178 Students of the 2000/2001 batch with the intention of documenting students' views on current MCQs.

The response rate was 67.89 % (239). Analysis of the responses to the questionnaire revealed that a vast majority (86.06 %) of students perceived MCQs as an important evaluation tool. A majority of students also had no objections to the frequency of the MCQ assessments (82.30 %) or the time allocated per question (82.86 %). The majority endorsed the view that the questions were clinically relevant (68.91 %) and that reading material in addition to the recommended textbooks and lecture notes were needed in answering forensic medicine MCQs (70.90 %). However, it was disturbing to note that a nearly half the number of students have had problems with understanding MCQs (42.86 %). Most students also indicated that the Forensic Medicine MCQs only evaluate recall ability (76.11 %).

MCQs would remain a major component in Forensic Medicine examination. Thus a mechanism has to be developed to improve the quality of this evaluation tool.