

## **METHODS OF LEARNING ANATOMY OF A BATCH OF SRI LANKAN DENTAL STUDENTS**

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Students' perceptions and experiences of learning anatomy are important in reforming curriculum and designing study materials. The aims of this study were to find out the learning methods and learning resources used by students in learning anatomy and students' perception on "best approach to learning anatomy".

This study was carried out among first year dental students (74) of University of Peradeniya, Sri Lanka. Students' learning methods (LM) were studied using a Likert-style questionnaire. The perception on "best approach to learning anatomy" and "learning resources" used by students were investigated using two open-ended questions.

The response rate was 80%. Three predominant types of LM applied by students were identified: (i) memorising (05) 8.5% (ii) understanding and memorising (23) 39% and (iii) visualizing and understanding (31) 52.5%. Regarding the best approach to learning anatomy, all students suggested more than one approach. Forty-six students indicated that reading was needed before practical work. Forty-one stated that dissecting and identifying anatomical relations in the cadaver were needed. Twelve students mentioned that studying anatomy in relation to clinical scenarios was interesting. Other modes were reading textbooks and studying good diagrams (27), discussing with others (17), making short-notes (14), observing prosected specimens (13) and attending lectures (10) and tutorials (09). The commonest learning resources were colour atlases (51), followed by textbooks (44), short-notes (21), computer and internet based material (19).

Our results indicate that this sample of students exercise all 3 types of LM while the predominant type is "visualizing and understanding". Students suggest multiple learning approaches as the best approach to learn anatomy. Majority of students believe that prior reading before dissections and guidebooks with good diagrams and pictures are important in successful learning.