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Fall 4-1-2021

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Assessment of knowledge and belief about stuttering among undergraduate medical students

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ABSTRACT

Background: Communication has become increasingly important in today's world. Therefore, it is important to treat communication disorders as part of medical care. Even though it is common in medical practice, communication disorders are not taught as a separate subject in medical schools, Hence, there is a need to educate undergraduate students of medicine about one such disorder i.e., childhood stuttering during the initial phase of their career.

Objectives: (1) To develop a questionnaire to tap on the knowledge, belief, and attitude of stuttering among undergraduate medical students. (2) To assess the knowledge & belief and attitude towards persons with stuttering using the developed questionnaire. (3) To compare the responses of all batches of students of medicine.

Method: A 59 item questionnaire survey was circulated through both online and offline mode among all batches of undergraduate medicine using convenient sampling. The study followed a comparative study design, and 317 undergraduate medical students completed the questionnaire.

Results: Despite the belief in negative stereotypes, a positive attitude towards childhood stuttering was found among medical students presenting a mixed picture (positive and neutral) about the existing knowledge and belief about childhood stuttering. It was revealed that a concrete understanding of childhood stuttering exists among medical students

Conclusion: Collaborative programmes between the fields of Speech-Language Pathology (SLP) and Medicine is necessary wherein the medical students get a deeper understanding of childhood stuttering and misconceptions can be cleared while in medical school.

Keywords: undergraduate medical students, childhood stuttering, knowledge, belief, attitude, collaborative program.