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Original Research Article

Perception of Medical Students towards Mentorship Program at Medical College

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Abstract

Background: Mentorship is an essential educational tool fostering professional and personal growth among medical students. This study evaluates the perception of second-year MBBS students toward the mentorship program conducted in the Department of Pathology, MGM Medical College, and Navi Mumbai.

Aim: The aim of the study is to evaluate the perception towards mentorship programe.

Methods: A Prospective cross-sectional descriptive study was conducted at a MGM medical college for six months among 80 students, of which 60 valid responses were analyzed. Data were collected using a structured off line Form comprising 25 Likert-scale and open-ended questions. Quantitative data were presented as percentages, and qualitative responses were analyzed thematically.

Results: The majority of respondents expressed positive perceptions toward the mentorship program, highlighting mentor accessibility, communication, and support. Over 90% agreed that mentorship improved academic engagement, stress management, and confidence.

Conclusion: The mentorship program significantly enhanced academic and personal development. Students recommended maintaining consistent mentor-mentee meetings for sustained impact.

Keywords: Mentorship, MBBS, Pathology, Undergraduate education, Perception, Medical education.

Introduction

Mentorship has emerged as an essential pillar in modern medical education, providing structured academic guidance, emotional support, and professional direction to medical student. It represents a dynamic relationship between a faculty mentor and a student mentee, designed to promote holistic development through personalized attention, encouragement, and feedback. In medical training, where students face rigorous academic schedules, frequent assessments, and emotional challenges, mentorship acts as a vital link bridging personal growth and professional competency. Globally, mentorship programs have been proven to improve student satisfaction, academic performance, and overall well-being.

They foster critical attributes such as empathy, professionalism, and communication skill qualities emphasized by the World Health Organization (WHO) as essential for medical graduates [1]. Recognizing this, the National Medical Commission (NMC) introduced the Competency-Based Medical Education (CBME) curriculum in 2019 [2], highlighting mentorship as a key component. The NMC's Module on Mentorship and Professionalism underlines the importance of consistent mentor–mentee interaction to nurture reflective learning, emotional resilience, and ethical behavior.

Medical students in India often experience immense academic and psychological pressure. The shift from pre-clinical to para-clinical subjects, especially during the second year of MBBS, marks a critical transition in their educational journey. Subjects like Pathology require conceptual clarity, practical application, and analytical interpretation of disease processes. Many students struggle during this phase due to increased workload, new laboratory components, and the demand for integrated learning. At this stage, many students may struggle with time management, stress, and

self-confidence. A mentorship program provides an avenue for personalized support, allowing students to discuss academic difficulties, personal issues, and career aspirations in a confidential and non-judgmental environment. Several studies conducted in Indian medical colleges (e.g., Thomas et al., 2021[3]; Rathi et al., 2023 [4]; Kumar et al., 2022 [5]) [have shown that structured mentorship positively influences student motivation, attendance, interpersonal communication, and academic performance.

Moreover, mentors act as role models, promoting ethical conduct, empathy, and professionalism values essential for medical practice. However, the success of mentorship programs depends heavily on mentor commitment, institutional support, and student engagement. The Department of Pathology holds a unique position in the MBBS curriculum as it integrates basic science with clinical medicine. Students learn about mechanisms of disease, diagnostic principles, and laboratory correlations that form the foundation for clinical decision-making. The subject requires analytical thinking, integration of theoretical knowledge with microscopic interpretation, and understanding of disease mechanisms.

During this phase, students are often transitioning from didactic learning to interpretive reasoning. Hence, mentorship during the second year becomes particularly valuable in fostering academic confidence and mental well-being. Present study was conducted to evaluate the perception towards mentorship programe.

Materials and Methods

Inclusion Criteria:

- Second year MBBS students allotted to mentors in pathology department.
- Students willing to give informed consent.

Exclusion Criteria:

- Individuals not willing to give informed consent.
- Opt-out or prolonged absenteeism (< 75% attendance)

Sample Size: Second year MBBS Undergraduates – Minimum 60 (considering 20% dropout, non-compliant from 80 students assigned to 10 faculty members acting as mentors).

Type Of Study: Descriptive cross-sectional study.

Period of Study: 1st June 2025 to 30th November 2025.

Study Design, Place & Period: This is a prospective Descriptive cross-sectional study conducted at Mahatma Gandhi Mission's Medical College, Kamothe, and Navi Mumbai. The duration of the study is six months, starting from 1st June 2025 and ending on 30th November 2025.

Data Collection and Participants: The mentorship programme was implemented for second-year MBBS students. A total of 80 students were assigned to 10 faculty members acting as mentors. Prior sensitization sessions were conducted for mentors (faculty) towards the mentorship programme.

Monthly mentorship sessions was held over the Six-month period, minimum four out of six meetings were compulsory to be part of the study. Each mentor interacted individually with their assigned mentees during every session. The focus was on: Academic guidance, especially for students with lower performance. Details of students with low performance was noted. Providing support for any personal issues (Hostel, Mess etc) was shared by the mentees. Subgrouping analysis of hostelite and non-Hostelite was done.

Outcome Measures and Evaluation: Structured feedback was collected from the mentees using a standardized questionnaire, rated on a scale of 1 to 5, to assess the perception towards mentorship programme. Standardized questionnaire reference from Naga Guhan et al. [4]

Statistical Analysis: Data were analyzed using SPSS. Descriptive statistics and appropriate tests were applied; $p < 0.05$ was considered significant**.**

Observation and Results: A total of 51 second-year MBBS students participated in the survey assessing their perception of the mentorship program in the Department of Pathology. The responses revealed an overwhelmingly positive attitude toward the initiative across academic, personal, and extracurricular domains.

Nutritional and Lifestyle Guidance: Most students agreed that mentors supported them in maintaining good health during their busy schedules. 68% agreed and 26% strongly agreed that mentors guided them on managing nutrition during hectic schedules. 70% agreed and 26% strongly agreed that mentors gave dietary advice during examinations. Only about 4% disagreed, indicating strong appreciation for lifestyle guidance.

Extracurricular Encouragement: Mentors were found to play a vital role in motivating students beyond academics. 66.7% agreed and 27.5% strongly agreed that their mentors encouraged them to explore extracurricular interests.

68% agreed and 28% strongly agreed that mentors helped them balance extracurriculars with academics. This shows that the mentorship program contributed to holistic student development.

Table 1: Student's feedback for mentorship program (n=51)

Question	Strongly disagree		Disagree		Agree		Strongly Agree	
	Count	%	Count	(%)	Count	%	Count	%
My mentor was accessible and available during mentorship	0	0	2	3.9%	28	54.9%	21	41.2%
My mentor communicated regularly with me	0	0	1	2.0%	32	62.7%	18	35.3%
My mentor assisted me with my career queries	1	2.0%	6	11.7%	29	56.9%	15	29.4%
Mentorship program assisted me in improving my course work performance	0	0	3	5.9%	33	64.7%	15	29.4%
Mentorship program assisted me with my understanding of academic routes to achieve career goals	0	0	2	3.9%	31	60.8%	18	35.3%
My mentor demonstrated reasonable interest and concern towards me	0	0	2	3.9%	30	58.8%	19	37.3%
My mentor's behavior and attitude is an example of professionalism	0	0	3	5.9%	29	56.9%	19	37.3%
I learned at least one important lesson about my career or professionalism from my mentor	0	0	3	5.9%	31	60.8%	17	33.3%
I recommend this mentorship program for future professional or personal development	0	0	2	3.9%	32	62.7%	17	33.3%
Overall, the mentorship program was effective and beneficial to me	0	0	1	2.0%	31	60.8%	19	37.3%

Confidence and Motivation: An impressive 72% agreed and 26% strongly agreed that mentors helped build confidence through participation in various activities. This reflects the mentors' supportive approach in improving students' communication and leadership skills.

Academic and Library Support: Mentors effectively promoted academic improvement and independent learning:

64.7% agreed and 29.4% strongly agreed that mentors encouraged regular library use for self-study. 62.7% agreed and 31.4% strongly agreed that mentors guided them in exam preparation using library materials. Similarly, 64.7% agreed and 31.4% strongly agreed that mentorship helped them develop better reading and study habits.

Subject Understanding and Concept Clarity: When asked open-endedly whether mentorship helped them understand Pathology or related topics better, 38 students (74%) responded positively with comments such as "Yes, all the pathology lectures and practicals were well planned to clear the concepts." "Yes, mentorship improved my confidence and understanding of the subject." A few respondents (about 5%) indicated no noticeable change, mainly due to irregular attendance or personal factors.

Suggestions for Improvement: Out of 30 students who gave suggestions, the majority wrote "No suggestions," "All good," or "Very good program." Some constructive feedback included: "Mentorship programmes should be held more regularly and on a one-to-one basis." "Please make mentors more frequently available." These comments indicate overall satisfaction with minor suggestions for increased session frequency and individualized attention. Overall, over 90% of students expressed satisfaction with mentor accessibility, academic and emotional support, and the overall effectiveness of the mentorship program.

The high proportion of "Agree" and "Strongly Agree" responses demonstrates that the program successfully fostered academic growth, confidence, balanced lifestyle, and holistic learning among second-year MBBS students.

Table 2: Student's feedback for Non-academic (n=51)

Question	Strongly disagree		Disagree		Agree		Strongly Agree	
	Count	%	Count	(%)	Count	%	Count	%
Mentorship encouraged sports participation	0	0	1	2.0%	35	68.6%	15	29.4
My mentor motivated me to maintain physical fitness through sports	0	0	2	3.9%	33	64.7%	16	31.4
I could discuss hostel issues freely (for hostelite students)	0	0	3	5.9%	34	65.7%	15	28.9
My mentor helped me adjust to hostel life (for hostelite students)	0	0	2	3.9%	34	67.7%	15	28.6
My mentor understood and supported my daily commute & home-related stress (for day scholars)	0	0	3	5.9%	34	66.7%	14	27.4
I was able to discuss time management issues as a day scholar	3	5.9 %	3	5.9%	33	64.7%	12	23.5
I was able to share mess-related concerns with my mentor	1	2.0 %	2	3.9%	35	68.6%	13	25.5
Mentor guided me on managing nutrition during hectic schedules	0	0	2	3.9%	35	68.6%	14	27.4
I received tips from my mentor on maintaining diet during exams	0	0	2	3.9%	36	70.6%	13	25.5%
My mentor motivated me to explore extracurricular interests	1	2.0 %	1	2.0%	35	68.6%	14	27.4%
My mentor helped me balance extracurriculars with academics	1	2.0 %	1	2.0%	35	68.6%	14	27.4%
My mentor helped me build confidence through participation	1	2.0 %	0	0	37	72.5%	13	25.5%
My mentor encouraged me to use the library regularly for self-study	1	2.0 %	2	3.9%	33	64.7%	15	29.4%
I was guided on preparing for exams using library materials	1	2.0 %	2	3.9%	32	62.7%	16	31.4%
Mentorship helped me develop better reading habits	1	2.0 %	1	2.0%	33	64.7%	16	31.4%

Discussion

The present study was conducted among second-year MBBS students to evaluate their perception of the mentorship program implemented in the Department of Pathology at MGM Medical College, Navi Mumbai. The findings revealed that an overwhelming majority of students expressed positive perceptions toward the program across academic, personal, and professional domains. These results highlight that mentorship programs play a pivotal role in shaping medical students' academic success, self-confidence, and holistic development.

Academic and Professional Growth: The current study demonstrated that more than 90% of students agreed that their mentors were accessible, approachable, and provided academic as well as career guidance. Most respondents (over 85%) agreed that the mentorship program enhanced their course performance and helped them understand the academic routes required to achieve their career goals. These findings align with studies by Thomas et al. (2021) [3] and Rathi et al. (2023) [5], who reported that structured mentorship programs significantly improve student performance, motivation, and confidence in medical learning. The role of the mentor in providing career advice was also well recognized in this study, as 86% of students agreed or strongly agreed that their mentor guided them regarding career options. This reflects an essential aspect of mentorship emphasized by the National Medical Commission (NMC) under the Competency-Based Medical Education (CBME) curriculum [2], which encourages faculty mentors to guide students in both professional and ethical aspects of medicine.

Interpersonal Support and Professionalism: An equally important outcome of this study was the high level of satisfaction regarding mentors' professionalism and behavior. Nearly 94% of students acknowledged that mentors served as role models, demonstrating empathy, discipline, and professional ethics. Such attributes are vital in medical education, where students often emulate mentor behavior as part of their professional

identity formation. A study by Patel et al. (2020) [6] also emphasized that consistent mentor behavior contributes to the development of professionalism and reflective learning among undergraduate students. Students reported that mentors showed genuine concern and maintained regular communication, which strengthened the mentor–mentee relationship. This personal connection has been shown to reduce academic stress and foster emotional resilience, as discussed by Singh et al. (2021) [7], who observed that mentorship significantly decreases burnout among medical undergraduates by improving coping mechanisms and self-efficacy.

Holistic and Non-Academic Benefits: Beyond academics, the mentorship program in this study had a substantial positive influence on non-academic aspects such as nutrition, time management, and extracurricular activities. About 94% of respondents agreed that mentors provided advice on maintaining nutrition during hectic schedules and exams, while over 90% agreed that mentors encouraged sports and extracurricular participation. These findings indicate that the mentorship program supported a balanced approach to student well-being addressing physical health and lifestyle management in addition to academic concerns.

Furthermore, a large proportion of students acknowledged that mentorship enhanced their confidence, time management, and interpersonal skills. This aligns with findings from Sharma et al. (2020) [8], who reported that mentorship in medical colleges improves soft skills, self-esteem, and peer interaction. The program thus fulfilled the broader objectives of the CBME curriculum, promoting not only academic competence but also emotional and social maturity.

Student Feedback and Recommendations: Qualitative feedback further supported the quantitative findings. Most students expressed satisfaction with the existing mentorship structure and described it as “very good,” “well-planned,” and “a great initiative.” A few students suggested increasing the frequency of meetings and providing more individualized mentor–mentee interactions. These suggestions reflect a desire for deeper engagement and continuous mentor availability key aspects highlighted in WHO (2020) [1] recommendations for sustainable mentoring frameworks in medical education.

Students’ endorsement of the program’s continuation in future batches indicates the program’s overall effectiveness and acceptability. The high levels of satisfaction and positive feedback suggest that mentorship has become an integral support mechanism in their medical training journey.

Implications and Future Scope: The results of this study reinforce that mentorship is not merely an academic intervention but a multifaceted educational strategy that contributes to personal growth and professional readiness. For greater effectiveness, mentorship programs should be conducted at regular intervals with smaller mentor–mentee groups to allow personalized interaction. Periodic evaluation and mentor training workshops can further enhance mentor communication skills and consistency in approach.

Future studies may incorporate longitudinal designs to assess the long-term impact of mentorship on academic performance, professional conduct, and postgraduate career choices. Additionally, faculty reflections can be included to explore mentor perspectives and challenges, allowing for a more comprehensive understanding of mentorship dynamics in medical education.

Conclusion

The mentorship program was highly appreciated by students, improving academic performance, confidence, and overall well-being. It proved to be an effective support system in medical education.

These findings reaffirm the importance of structured mentorship as an integral component of competency-based medical education and highlight the need for its sustained implementation and regular evaluation in all departments.

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