

## Perception of First MBBS Students to AETCOM Module on Doctor Patient Relationship

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### Abstract

**Introduction:** The Indian Medical Council has proposed Attitude, Ethics, and Communication modules (AETCOM) for undergraduate medical students in the new competency-based curriculum. The purpose of this study was to analyse first-year medical undergraduate students' attitudes regarding the AETCOM module on doctor-patient relationships.

**Materials and Methods:** The current cross-sectional study was carried out in the Department of Physiology at Mamata Medical College, Khammam, in the second week of March 2023. The study involved a total of 175 first-year undergraduate (MBBS) students. According to MCI's requirements, the AETCOM Module's teaching schedule consisted of four sessions. All of the students received a Likert scale-based questionnaire at the conclusion of the lesson, and the answers were compiled.

**Result:** There were a total of 175 students among which 70 were boys and 105 were girls. 88% of students strongly agreed that it is useful for gaining patients confidence and for gaining self-confidence, 85% of students strongly agreed that Understanding and respecting patients are a good part of the patient-doctor relationship and 82% of students strongly agreed that it will help in future patient interaction.

**Conclusion:** Students have realised the significance of establishing a positive doctor-patient relationship and its function in effective patient care.

**Keywords:** AETCOM module, Perception, Likert scale.

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### Introduction

Medical education includes knowledge, clinical skills, attitude, and communication. Attitudes are represented through behaviour, and the AETCOM principle holds that modifying a person's behaviour can change his attitude.[1] A structured programme on "Attitude, Ethics, and Communication" has been implemented in the "Competency Based

Undergraduate Medical Education Curriculum 2019." Its goal is to introduce and impart the knowledge and abilities required to be a medical professional and effective physician. This is especially crucial in today's world, where doctors and patients are increasingly at odds. [2,3]

Empathy has a crucial role in professional practise in boosting patient satisfaction,[4,5] higher adherence to therapy,[6,7] better clinical outcomes,[8-10], and lowering malpractice liability.[11] Empathy is defined as "a cognitive attribute characterised by the ability to comprehend the patient's inner experiences and the ability to communicate this comprehension." [12] Several studies have emphasised the importance of developing adequate training approaches to sensitise health workers on the proper mindset, practise, ethics, and communication skills.[13] Some studies also noted that the medical curriculum placed minimal focus on skill training for addressing ethical quandaries. As a result, there is an urgent need to incorporate these soft skills into the curriculum.[14] The purpose of this study was to assess I MBBS students' perceptions of the AETCOM Module on Doctor-Patient Relationship.

### Materials and Methods

It was a cross-sectional observational study conducted in the second week of March 2023 at Mamata Medical College in Khammam, Telangana, with the approval of the Institutional Ethics Committee. The students gave their informed consent, and 175 of the 200 students took part in the study. The AETCOM Module 1.3 (doctor-patient relationship) Teaching Schedule was meticulously designed and arranged. The module's objectives were defined, and four sessions were incorporated in accordance with the standards provided in the MCI AETCOM module brochure.

The event began with an introduction and module information. Following that, students were given a video about the doctor-patient

relationship, which emphasised the professional skills of a doctor as well as empathy in patient encounters. Students discussed the video and gave their opinions. It was followed by an interactive discussion on medical duties and patient expectations. Following that, education on hospital OPD visits and watching doctor-patient interactions was offered. The students were then separated into seven groups of 25 and transported to various OPDs in the hospital, where they watched doctor-patient interactions.

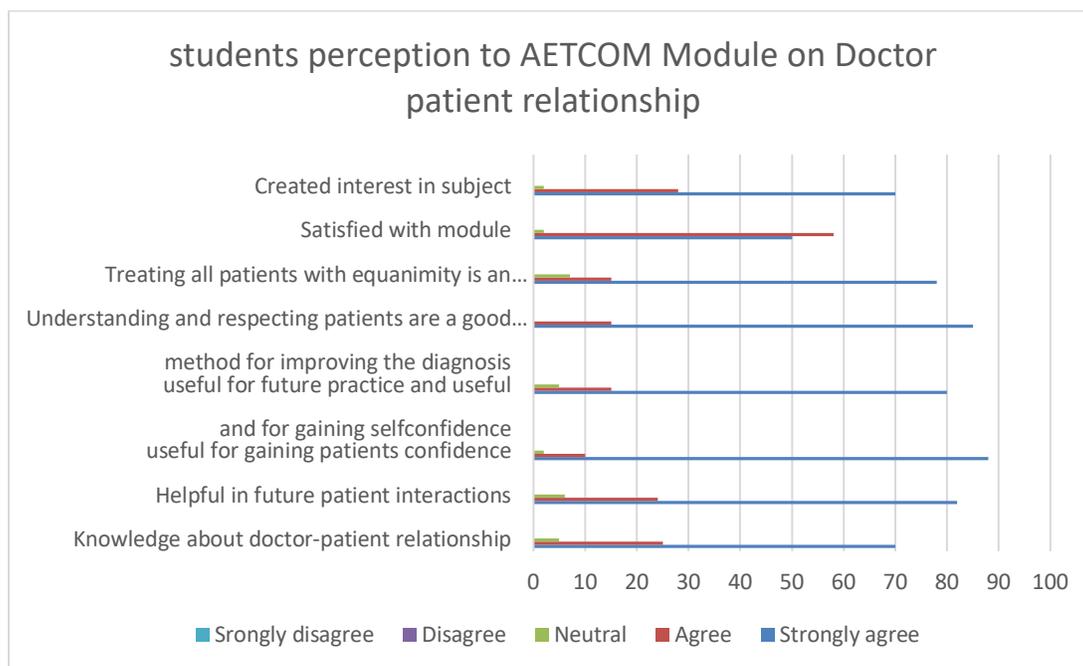
Students in a large group then summarised their reflections on doctor-patient interactions. In the afternoon, students acted out common blunders in doctor-patient interactions based on several case scenarios. Few students who were present as observers were required to reflect on and summarise the role plays. Then, based on the morning sessions, students were assigned to conduct SDL in the last session of the day, with reflections written in their log book. Finally, a Google form link was distributed to students, and responses were collected and examined.

### Results

The study involved 175 students out of a total of 200. The study participants included 70 males (40%) and 105 girls (60%). The questionnaire with 8 questions on perception was given to all 175 students. The questions were graded on a five-point Likert-type scale ranging from strongly disagree (score -1) to strongly agree (scoring -5), with a score of 3 representing neutral or uncertain. For the questions about the perception of the AETCOM session, no student given a strongly disagree or disagree response.

**Table 1: Students response to AETCOM MODULE 1.3**

S. No.	Question (Perception)	Response count in %				
		Strongly agree (%) (5)	Agree (%) (4)	Neutral (%) (3)	Disagree (%) (2)	Strongly disagree (%) (1)
1	Knowledge about doctor-patient relationship.	70	25	5	-	-
2	Helpful in future patient interactions.	82	24	6	-	-
3	useful for gaining patients confidence and for gaining self-confidence.	88	10	2	-	-
4	useful for future practice and useful method for improving the diagnosis.	80	15	5	-	-
5	Understanding and respecting patients are a good part of patient-doctor relationship.	85	15	-	-	-
6	Treating all patients with equanimity is an important aspect of clinical practice.	78	15	7	-	-
7	Satisfied with module.	50	58	2	-	-
8	Created interest in subject.	70	28	2	-	-



**Figure 1: Students perception to AETCOM Module on Doctor patient relationship**

## Discussion

The development of soft skills, knowledge, and practise of medical ethics were disguised in the medical curriculum and learned implicitly by looking at seniors or watching and experiencing circumstances. It was not emphasised in the medical profession's mainstream.

Students suffer from burnout symptoms as a result of the high amount of stress during their medical school, which is a primary cause of low moral professionalism and empathy ratings.[15]

Several studies, including those conducted by Ahsin *et al.*,[16] Mueller,[17] Roberts *et al.*,[18] and others, have emphasised the need of teaching medical ethics and communication as part of the medical curriculum. The inclusion of AETCOM modules in the competence-based medical education curriculum with the goal of explicitly instilling attitude, ethics, and communication skills into the main stream of education is a boon for developing professionalism in young medical graduates.

## Conclusion

Competency-based medical curricula emphasising early clinical exposure and soft skills such as communication, ethics, and doctor's attitude, which are acquired through AETCOM modules, have garnered increasing importance among medical students. Students have realised the significance of building an ideal doctor-patient relationship and its function in effective patient care.

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