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Analysis of dimensions influencing the knowledge and attitude, and comparison of responses in undergraduate medical students towards antibiotic resistance and antimicrobial stewardship program

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Background: As future practitioners, undergraduate medical students have a key role in the antimicrobial stewardship program. But at present, there is not much data about their knowledge and perception of antibiotic resistance and antimicrobial stewardship program.

Methods: This was a cross-sectional questionnaire-based survey administered to the pre-final and final year undergraduate medical students of a tertiary care institution.

Result: One hundred and ninety-seven students participated in our study constituting 70% response rate. The mean knowledge score of pre-final and final year students was 4.56 ± 1.62 and 5.33 ± 1.72 ($p=0.0016$) respectively. 37 pre-final and 57 final year students ($p=0.04$) knew the correct definition of antimicrobial stewardship. Majority of the participants (66 prefinal year and 80 final year, $p=0.001$) perceived antibiotic resistance as a public health problem. Principal component analysis revealed the greater role of attitude-related questions.

Conclusion: Good knowledge and positive attitude are paramount for the effective implementation of the antibiotic stewardship program. Our study revealed the knowledge gap exists among the undergraduate students about the rational use of the antibiotic stewardship program. It was also revealed that the role of attitude playing a more significant role than knowledge for the proper understanding of the program. A sustained effort is required to make them aware of the rational use of antibiotics by incorporating the knowledge and practice of the antimicrobial stewardship program into their study curriculum.

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