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# Moot Court for Teaching – Learning of Court Procedures in MBBS Students in Central Region of India - An Educational Interventional Study

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## Abstract

**Background:** As a doctor we all need to attend the court of law either as a first treating doctor or treating doctor of a speciality or as subject expert as an expert witness.

There are many incidents reported and also we experience as a part of society and medical institutes, where a doctor tries to avoid attending a case having legal implication either poisoning or some injury by any means so that he/she can avoid attending the court.

Usually it's not because the doctor feels incompetent in treatment but most of the time it is the apprehension to attend the court.

It was also observed that when a doctor goes to court for a few times they will become more confident and comfortable, but first experience remains more or less same. It gave us an idea that if Indian medical graduates, can get some practical experience during MBBS (even in simulation situation) e.g. "moot court1" with the theory class on legal procedure, this apprehension can be removed or minimised and in future they will not be hesitant to attend cases with legal implication.

### Primary Objective:

Students will get more practical knowledge about court procedures.

### Secondary Objectives:

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1. Future IMG will become more confident in court
2. Future IMG will not hesitate to attend medico-legal cases in future during their professional life.
3. Introducing moot court to the students as simulation technique for the court procedure.
4. To assess the effectiveness of moot court in comparison of didactic lecture on court procedure by comparing pre and post-test about the topic.

**Methodology:** It is an Educational interventional study.

Convenient sample technique was used for sampling method, in which 130 students of Phase III part 1 MBBS, of MIMS & R, Bhopal (MP), participated. Informed consent was obtained. Data collected by pre and post-test and paired t-test was used to analyse them.

**Results:** On observing in pre and post-test of the sample size 99 and using paired samples t-test (with 95% Confidence Interval of the Difference) mean value in post-test increased from 13.63 to 17.34, showed the improvement in the knowledge of the students about topic. In the study Std. Deviation decreased from 3.14 to 2.47. Std. Error Mean decreased from 0.32 to 0.25. In the study t-value is 12.1770 and P value is <0.0001.

**Conclusion:** Overall this study shows that "Implementation of the Moot court as a simulation technique for teaching - learning of court procedures" is beneficial for improving the knowledge of the students about the court procedures.

**Keywords:** Court Procedure, Medicolegal cases, Moot Court

## Introduction

As a practicing physician it is also a moral responsibility of all the medical practitioners to respond to the summons/warrants etc. whenever required.

But it is very common to see that Doctors tries to avoid any case having legal implication. Even when forensic PG attend first court evidence they also feel a little bit anxious, even though as forensic PG students, they have guidance from the senior teachers and prepared for the case under their guidance.

So it is very much understood how all newly graduates must have felt, for attending the court as an expert witness, without any practical expert guidance for only "How to Act in Court".

In "Court room exposure to medical students: a practical approach to legal procedures in Indian scenario" by Gupta Sanjay<sup>2</sup> et al also concluded that the average knowledge level improved significantly.

After discussing this type of scenario with forensic medicine and other subject experts, in formal as well as informal meetings, it became evident that practitioners have this dilemma because during MBBS, as a student they attend the theory classes on the legal procedures in the subject of forensic medicine

but practical knowledge or exposure to real court procedures are not part of the curriculum till now. Hence, implementation of moot court as a simulation technique can be helpful for the students to get more practical knowledge about court procedures.

At first as a Pilot Project, we prepared a moot court<sup>1</sup> as simulation technique for better learning of the court procedure with student of the II MBBS (batch 2017 PCMS, Bhopal), then presented this "moot court" in a Dental college in a fellowship programme<sup>3</sup> on forensic odontology to understand the impact of it on both, performers as well as audience and it really gave a better understanding to the both audience as well as performers. It was an experiment at that time but it gave an encouragement to go further on it. Both performers as well as audience gave positive response verbally, but no questionnaire or pre and post-test were used during that time. So it encouraged us to start this project as research work with following the proper guidelines.

Before going further here is a brief description of the moot court and discuss the literature about it.

According to Catherine Elise Barrett<sup>4</sup>, simulation means an imitation or an act that is only mock. As a teaching method, simulation can be interpreted as an activity that describes the real situation. The point is that students (with teacher's guidance) perform a

role in mock simulations to try to describe the actual events. In the simulation activity, participants or role holders perform a mock environment of the actual event.

In the current project, addition to acting as lawyers or judges, students were also assigned to serve as "law clerks, reporters, or amicus brief writers and also expert witness.

To get a real evaluation of the "Moot court for teaching - learning of court procedures in medical education" this research project was started. Here, students argue a mock appellate case before judges to understand "their overall act in court".

### **Material and Method**

As court procedure taught in MBBS as theory lecture, in this project we tried to give practical experience to the students of court so they can be more comfortable in courts in future and also used this project to analyse and evaluate the impact of this practical experience, to improve student's knowledge about court procedure.

**Study Design:** Educational interventional study - A Quantitative Study.

#### **Data collection method:**

For getting the data and preparing the project, a meeting was held with various faculties from different departments including Community medicine as experts in this work, to discuss the difficulties they faced in the court proceedings. They also shared their experiences and what can be added in this project and what they think the challenges can be faced during this project and how to overcome them.

A meeting was also held with the 13 coordinator students, who participated in "moot court" during previous basic course of medical education workshop in the institute.

Pre and Post-test prepared in the google form that covered both theory as well as practical aspect of the legal procedure for the medical professionals. Questions in pre and post-test were same.

A theory class as interactive learning, was taken during second MBBS of the same students, as a part of curriculum and then this project was started with

a pre-test than project of moot court and in the end post-test was taken, to get to know the improvement of the knowledge (if any) of the students about the legal procedures.

The students of the Phase III Part 1 MBBS were divided in 10 groups and among them 13 coordinators were appointed for these 10 groups. They helped in the sessions to train the participants for this project.

As these coordinators were already exposed to the moot-court (during previous basic course of medical education workshop) they were excluded from the pre and post-test.

Before starting the project, students of the phase III part 1 were sensitized about the project and written informed consent was obtained from the willing students.

The students who were willing to participate in the project were asked to take a pre-test with the help of google form on the topic "legal procedures" (students were asked to prepare for pre-test, as it was not a surprise test).

Different real life medicolegal circumstances were provided to the different groups and were asked to prepare for moot court competition.

To get the guidance for procedure of moot court competition, reference from the Amity International Moot Court Competition<sup>5</sup>, 2021 amity law school, Noida Amity University, Uttar Pradesh rules, procedure and guidelines of the competition and Sixteenth Nelson Mandela World Human Rights Moot Court Competition<sup>6</sup>, University of Pretoria, South Africa, were used. For this project group dynamics and SDL were also used.

#### **Process of validation:**

For the validation of the project, a meeting was held with 2 senior subject expert from L N Medical College Bhopal and RKDF Medical College Bhopal, along with faculties of the department of the forensic medicine and toxicology of MIMS & R, Bhopal, discussed about various aspects of the Pre and Post-test, rectified what needed as per suggestions and then validated the Pre and Post-tests and complete method.

Project was put in front of the IEC and got the ethical clearance.

**Status of Ethical permission:** Got the ethical clearance from the IEC (REG. No. ECR / 1190 / INST / MP / 2019 / RR-22) of the LNMC & RC & JK HOSPITAL, BHOPAL with ref. no. LMNC&RC/Dean/2024/Ethics/046.

**Sampling Method:** Convenient sampling technique (As the study was an Educational interventional study and it will be directly visible if there are any impact in either way positive/ negative/ neutral on the students, as they are currently studying in the department of forensic medicine)

**Participants:** The students from the Phase III part 1 MBBS, MIMS & R, and medical Faculties of various subjects from MIMS & R and other Medical colleges of Bhopal, MP.

**Sample size:** Students - 130 (Phase 3 Part 1, MIMS& R)

**Inclusion criteria:**

Students - 130 (Phase III Part 1 MBBS, MIMS & R)

**Exclusion criteria:**

- Who were not willing to participate and didn't give written consent.
- Who were not present during the session both in the practice session and competition.
- 13 coordinator students (who participated in MOOT COURT during previous BCME workshop) did not participate in pre and post-test.
- Students whom responses of either pre or post-test were not collected due to some technical error were excluded.

**Informed consent obtained** (Annexure- 1 INFORMED CONSENT FORM STUDENT)

**Moot Court Competition and data collection**

The moot court competition was held in which 35 faculties attended the competition as Judges and guests. All 10 groups performed "moot court".

Three senior faculties, having vast court procedure experience as medical professionals were invited to become Judges in this competition and willing faculties from various departments of MIMS & R and other medical colleges of Bhopal, were invited as guests.

After the competition, students (other than coordinators) took Post-test in the google form.

**Statistical analysis:**

Responses of the Pre & Post test were recorded. Only 99 student's both Pre and Post-test data were collected, other's either Pre or Post-test were missing. So only 99 student's data was used for the study, in MS Excel and used Paired t-test for the comparison. Statistical analysis was done using SPSS-20 software. The data was expressed as means and percentages.

**Results/Observations**

On observing in pre and post-test of the sample size 99 and using paired sample t-test (with 95% Confidence Interval of the Difference), mean value in post-test increased from 13.63 to 17.34.

Std. Deviation decreased from 3.14 to 2.47. Std. Error Mean decreased from 0.32 to 0.25. Here t-value is 12.1770 and P value is <0.0001.

So the current project shows by comparing pre and post-test and using paired samples t-test (Table no-1), the mean value of the post-test increased and concluded that the level of knowledge increased by using this moot court as simulation technique in medical education too.

**Table No 1: Comparison Of Pre And Post-Test**

	Mean	Number of observation	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	t value	P value
Total score pre-test	13.63	99	3.14	0.32	12.1770	<0.0001 (significant)
Total score post-test	17.34	99	2.47	0.25		

## Discussion

Sakhalkar Ujjwala<sup>7</sup> in her book "Developing skills through moot court and mock trials from preparation to performance" write all about the fundamental premise that Mooting and mock trials can be used as an effective educative tool, that helped a lot to prepare this project as "Moot Court" as teaching learning method in M.B.B.S. students. As it is still at a very early phase in medical education.

As mentioned above, Ringel<sup>8</sup>, Lewis. (2004) wrote, their same article, about how a moot court is an extremely fluid pedagogical tool which can be used for more than learning about the law or the judicial process. It has been used in a variety of disciplines including political science, media, history, journalism, sociology, art, economics, business, and the life sciences to educate students about a variety of subjects such as history, journalistic rights, antitrust laws, or professional ethics.

In this study more emphasis was given on the behaviour of a "Doctor in the courtroom as an expert witness", so that conclusion can be made for whether it can be helpful for the MBBS students in their professional life in the future or not too.

Hamzeh Abu Issa<sup>9</sup> et al also in their study shows that the Moot Courts should be an integrated part of the study curricula by allocating a subject for it, to grant all students the opportunity to participate in it, in order to enhance and develop their skills. They in their research paper "The Impact of Moot Courts on the Quality of Legal Education: Students of the Faculty of Law at the Applied Science Private University as a Model", concluded that Moot Court is a norm for Law students and definitely have positive impact on their knowledge that is why this is a part of their studies for a very long time.

This current project also concluded by using paired samples t-test, mean value of the post-test increased that level of knowledge increased by using this moot court as simulation technique in medical education too.

In "Court room exposure to medical students: a practical approach to legal procedures in Indian scenario" by Gupta Sanjay<sup>2</sup> et al also concluded that the average knowledge level improved

significantly by the courtroom exposure when compared to didactic lecture, which also shows the same results of this study.

Edward F. Kammerer<sup>10</sup>, Jr et al wrote that "students are motivated to participate in moot court for academic reasons, they believe their critical thinking and public speaking skills improve, and that, despite its heavy work load and difficulty, moot court is also fun". Same response in present study shows in the comments of the students and faculties too.

On searching among peers of the subject Forensic Medicine and toxicology in India, it came to know that "Moot Court" is used as teaching learning method in some of the medical institutes e.g. GMC, Bhopal where acts done by PGs and Faculties, also in SIAMS, Indore and D Y Patil medical college, Pune by the under graduate students of the MBBS.

Studies of the effectiveness of Moot Courts in medical education, are not many found till time but it is very common as student centered simulation technique as mentioned by Carlson<sup>11</sup>, J. & Skaggs, and Neil. (2000) in "Learning by Trial and Error" or Tindwani Manik<sup>12</sup> in "Legal research for a moot court problem" and Bose Sohini<sup>13</sup> in "Tips on How to Be a Good moot court Researcher" and many more, in many other courses e.g. Law and Politics successfully.

Although we are discussing about moot court in real life situation, there is also concept of virtual moot court too that was discussed as pilot study by Ireland et al<sup>14</sup> as a second life mooting project in 2010 at university of Western University (UWS) in Australia. We can also use this in India if needed.

This study on the effect of the "Implementation of the Moot court as a simulation technique for teaching - learning of court procedures" in medical students shows that it is a very effective way to teach the students about the legal procedure.

## Conclusion

- To gain practical knowledge, practical ways of study in any way, either in "real or simulation" are more effective than only theory lectures.

- Active participation of the students is beneficial not only for that particular topic, but it also gives them and faculties encouragement to become better in every way.
- “Implementation of the Moot court as a simulation technique for teaching – learning of court procedures” in medical students shows that it is a very effective way to teach the students about the legal procedure.
- As this study involved mainly one institute, more studies in different areas of the country are recommended.
- It can also be performed as role play with the volunteers every year, if all the student’s participation is not possible, as it will be less time consuming but yes results will not be at par.
- It is recommended, that at least 1 court attendance during internship with senior (PG or Faculties from Forensic medicine) should be mandatory.

**Ethical Clearance:** From IEC of the LNMC & RC & JK HOSPITAL, BHOPAL

**Source of Funding:** Administration of the MIMS & R, Bhopal (MP)

**Conflict of Interest:** Nil

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