PHARMACOLOGY DEPARTMENTAL UPDATE

Dr. Premilesh Gupta

Teaching a new subject can be confusing in the beginning if one takes up only the theoretical aspect but, as the other option, (Practical knowledge) increases, the understanding of new subject can also create interest among the students.

When I was appointed as Assistant Professor in Pharmacology Department, schedule was given to me to teach undergraduate M.B.B.S. students and one month after the first schedule, the second schedule was to teach the Nursing students. The subject was only Pharmacology. I started making notes for them. I was guided by senior Professors also, as the Nursing students' level is not the same as undergraduate M.B.B.S. students. So one has to think accordingly and then make notes or you have to teach selectivcly to Nursing students and in detail to under-graduate M.B.B.S. students. According to Academic qualification undergraduates start reading Pharmacology in IIIrd year (After clearance of Ist Professional Exam-subjects are non-clinical - Anatomy, Physiology & Biochemistry) while Nursing students were taught very selectively in Ist Year as their academic level does not match with undergraduate level. Topics were allotted as laws regulating Drugs & Pharmacopocias, rest were same as M.B.B.S. students.

This is more than enough for Nursing students, but more important was how to make a subject easier for those students who have just started reading medicine? Thus, selected teaching schedule or topic was made in a sequential pattern rather than interrupted or separated parts.

Teaching schedule was in this pattern, as sources of drugs & nomenclature, route of drug administration, Pharmacokinetics, Pharmacodynamics, factors influencing action of drugs, dosage calculation. Then all systemic Pharmacology as topics were allotted in the order of classification of all system to distribute, to save time and to develop confidence in students, not to confuse by typical names, by locating the written classification at the time of lecture (and important members (drugs) of each group). It was discussed in detail as mechanism of action in a very simple way, indication or uses, preparation/formulation, available in the market with required doses, contraindication and precaution & adverse effects. I also found myself handicapped due to very limited time (hours) for the completion of the course. I encouraged the students to note down as much as possible and providing the assignments by which they could learn the important points, regarding drugs alongwith signs and symptoms, provisional diagnosis and adverse drug reactions. Most of the students were satisfied and they started learning in same pattern which I had taught. On interaction in class only few students replied satisfactorily while others did not.

On the completion of general Pharmacology, one test was given. The result of that test was very disappointing. Then I started writing classifications and distributed among students for their convenience. Gradually I found that students started taking interest in Pharmacology and they were perceiving information of drugs.

On completion of the whole course I gave an assignment (a format type) in the order so that students could understand history: particularly the age, sex, religion, occupation, medical relevant points with adverse drug reactions. When they started visiting the wards I discussed the given assignment several times then I found students were more active and alert and taking interest in filling up the assignment at HIMS hospital.

They studied cases in various fields as medicine, general surgery, orthopaedics, E.N.T., ophthalmology and they recorded 123 cases.

Total cases	=	123
(4 cases were rejected due to incomplete history.		
Rejected	=	-04
		119
Medicine	=	57
Surgery	=	31

(including Plastic Surgery, Onco Surgery & ENT)

Ophthalmology = 3

Cases followed like wise.

25 cases completely followed.

97 cases incompletely followed for discharge.

Provisional diagnosis, sign and symptoms & history.

Those students were good in response in theory classes they also filled the format nicely (Presented well), few more also tried well but those students who were totally blank in the theory (at the time of lecture) did not complete the format, even they were unable to take down history of the patients. But most of the students presented it well as they noted history in a proper way. (They noticed all the points).

Few students also reported the adverse drug reactions and treatment. The follow up of the patients was done till discharge.

Thus, theoretical teaching may become more effective if it can be followed by some practical means (i.e. by making certain assignments etc)

Author:- Asst. Professor, Deptt. of Pharmacology, Himalayan Institute of Medical Sciences, Jolly Grant, Dehradun. [at the time of writing this article].