

Title of the Practice

‘Family study’ – module to teach the MBBS students the role of family and social values in the health of an individual.

Objectives of the Practice

The objectives of ‘Family Study’ study are,

- a. To enable each student to understand that the family is the basic unit of the community
- b. To obtain the practical experience in the health promotion, specific protection, early diagnosis, prompt treatment, limitation of disability, rehabilitation and to act as a family physician and learn about general medical practice.
- c. To study and observe the environmental factors responsible having their bearing on health and diseases of the family.
- d. To study the Socio – economic factors responsible for the disease in the family and vice versa.
- e. To study and observe the Psychological or emotional factors having their impact on the health and disease of the family.
- f. To learn the importance of observing the patient in his natural environment affected by multiplicity of factors and their importance in medical history sheets.
- g. To suggest improvements in the environmental factors within the easy reach of the family and to take part in the health education programme for the promotion of health and prevention of disease.
- h. To educate them about the medical facilities availability in rural areas.

The Context

The Department of Community Medicine has been teaching the students of MBBS the role of family and social values in the health of an individual by adopting the concept of Family study. As per this, poor families are identified in the rural and urban field practice area of the department of community medicine. Special focus is given to families with vulnerable population like pregnant and

lactating women, infants, under 5 children and geriatric population and also families with health issues like Diabetes and Hypertension.

The Practice

Based on the family folders maintained in the health centres, the medico-social workers identify families and visit them prior to the students visiting the families. The MBBS students studying in 2nd year, who are posted in the Dept of Community Medicine, are divided into groups of 2 or 3 and each student is assigned one family.

It is emphasized that the students are friends and health advisors to the allotted families and will act as family Physician during the whole period of training. Medical services needed by the members of the families will be provided through the rural health training centre and various departments of the college, hospitals, clinic.

The students in 2nd year visit the families on 5-6 consecutive days and assess the complete family details, vitals events in the family, their nutrition and health status. Based on the details collected, the students analyse the various determinants and issues in the family and also chalk out recommendations to be given to the family members in a subsequent visit. The students also serve as a liaison for the family members if they visit the hospital for any health issues. The students are also advised to keep in touch with the family telephonically to monitor the health aspects of the family. The community diagnosis is also done by the entire batch of students and this helps them in understanding the social determinants of health in the community.

In the third year, the students have around 2 follow up visits to the family to check whether the recommendations given earlier are followed or not. Health checkup of the available members are also carried out. All the activities are monitored by the staff of Department of Community Medicine.

Evidence of Success

‘Family study’ – though a method of teaching, has benefits to students and the families (society).

Benefits to the families:

1. All the aspects of health are assessed at the doorstep and practical recommendations are given to improve the determinants of health.
2. The families have a familiar face in the hospital if they need to visit the hospital for any health issues.
3. Basic medicines are provided free of cost through the UHTC Orr RHTC as per the advice of the staff.

Benefits to the students:

1. They observe the determinants of health in the family and community.
2. Improving the communication skills of the students.
3. Promotes active learning and management of health as they need to assess, review and provide recommendations under the Supervision of Faculty Member.

Students have verbally given the feedback that the family study helps them understand a disease from not just the medical perspective but also, from social and environmental perspective

6. Problems Encountered and Resources Required

- a. Migration of the families from the field practice areas
- b. Non availability on some days due to festivals and functions
