



EARLY CLINICAL EXPOSURE(ECE)

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**“Tell me and I forget,
Teach me and I may remember,
Involve me and I learn.”**

-Benjamin Franklin

ECE is a teaching learning method that contextualizes medical education. According to Art of teaching Medical students “ECE is a teaching learning methodology, which fosters exposure of medical/dental students to the patients as early as the first year of the college”. It is one method of modifying the curricula to meet tomorrow’s need with objectives like: increase basic awareness of dental students, encourage active learning in preclinical settings, better academic performance, enhanced communication skills.

It can be implemented in three forms. The first one is a college/classroom setting wherein a cooperative and uncomplicated patient with his consent can be brought to the classroom. The basic science and clinical science teacher can discuss the case in detail with the students. In the second form, the students can be taken to the clinics and made to understand the protocols and patterns. They can be sensitized towards the importance of subject, communicating with staff and patients. These two “patient encounters”

can help the student enhance their skills and understand diseases and treatment needs of the society. The third form of patient exposure is that of the “community or under-served opportunity program.” The objective here is to provide a context for basic science learning by integrating it with clinical dimension. It creates awareness about how people live, how their living conditions influence general and oral health, and need of health services in a given population. By this form of exposure, students look beyond signs and symptoms of disease and think in terms of prevention of disease and thus enhancing overall health.

ECE helps students in getting early practical experience, increase their social awareness, prevents stress and emphasizes on preventive rather than restorative care. Irrespective of the form of ECE chosen, it provides a “spiral integrated model,” i.e., a consistently graduated clinical and preclinical exposure throughout the time a student is in institute. It also serves in “vertical integration” of medical education, with an immense interdisciplinary contribution.

Clearly, the ECE format gives a veritable insight to the students into the entire system. Hence, ECE bonds a rift between preclinical or basic and clinical sciences. A tremendous teamwork is required, and



the same is encouraged for the success of this offbeat yet resourceful format. At the same time, the teachers are primarily facilitators, like a lighthouse, showing the path that the students take. This imparts

the students a sense of responsibility and encourages them with self-directed learning.

Bibliography:

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