

**Effectiveness of community based teaching on Medical students.**

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**Introduction and objectives:** Community Based Medical Learning (CBML) Programme of the Faculty of Medical Sciences, University of Sri Jayewardenepura (USJP) focuses on student training in a rural setting to empower the medical graduates to provide quality health care to the rural communities with minimal resources. CBML Programme for the year 2015 was held at Kalutara District as one week residential Programme from 19<sup>th</sup> to 26<sup>th</sup> July. Objectives were to assess the effectiveness of CBML Programme with regards to knowledge, skills and favourable attitudes of the students to work efficiently in any primary care setting with limited resources.

**Method:** A pretested, structured, self-administered questionnaire with 22 questions was designed to assess the knowledge about prevalent problems, health seeking behavior of the people in this community and the facilities available and possible care provisions at primary care level. There were some questions to assess the skills and attitudes of the medical students to work in a rural area. This was administered before and after the CBML program to 146 Medical undergraduates. Data was analysed using SPSS.

**Results:** Students showed a significant improvement in all fields ( $p < 0.05$ ). They showed improved interest in working in rural primary care setup and developed confidence in working effectively in the rural healthcare setting. Students admitted a significant improvement in their knowledge in health seeking behaviours of rural communities and gained confidence in acting as responsible member in the rural community.

**Conclusions:** A CBML programme in a medical curriculum significantly increases their knowledge, confidence and attitude towards working in rural primary care settings.

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