

Effects of Lecture Absenteeism on Pharmacology Course Performance in Medical Students

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ABSTRACT

Few studies have investigated the effects of absenteeism on medical student test results. The purpose of this study was to determine the effects of lecture absenteeism on performance in a medical pharmacology course as measured by test scores. Data on lecture absenteeism in pharmacology and the end-of-semester test scores were analyzed for two classes of medical students during four semesters. Based on the percentage of absenteeism in each semester, students were divided into two groups, group-I and group-II, with less than and more than 15% absenteeism, respectively. The percentage score attained and the frequency of failure in the two groups were compared. In addition, two groups of students were categorized; the uppermost 15% and the lowest 15% are based on test scores. The percentage absenteeism was compared between the groups and correlated with test scores. The percentage of high grades and percentage of failure in group-II (more than 15% absenteeism) were significantly lower and higher, respectively, when compared to group -I. The percentage of absenteeism was significantly higher in the group of students who scored in the lowest 15% of the class. Finally, a significant negative correlation was found between percentage of absenteeism and test score. The above results were similar for the four semesters of the study. The results obtained in this study confirm that absenteeism had a significant effect on the level of achievement in medical pharmacology, and suggest the importance of regular attendance as an effective way of increasing test's scores.
