

Knowledge, Attitude and Practice (KAP) of BAMS First Year Students about Integration of Streams of Medical Science- A Cross Sectional Survey

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Abstract:

Background: Our healthcare must be integrative, according to the National Education Policy 2020 (NEP 2020). The acceptance and practice of both streams by all stakeholders is critical to the success of integration. The purpose of this study was to analyze the knowledge, attitude, and practice of BAMS first-year students about the Indian government's new integrative policy.

Materials and Methods: The Study was conducted among first year BAMS students of Ayurvedic medical college between NOV 2020 to Dec 2020. A pre tested structured questionnaire was administered to capture all important aspects, consisting 16 multiple choice questions, of qualitative and quantitative nature, in Google form format, most of the questions were closed ended to assess their knowledge and practices as well as some designed to answer on to assess their attitude.

Results: The questionnaire was filled by 100 students studying in the first year BAMS(Bachelor of Ayurvedic Medicine and surgery) course in Ayurvedic medical college. According to the data, 53 percent of respondents were aware that the government has a plan to merge Allopathy and other AYUSH systems into a single national health system by 2030. It is possible to combine both pathies, according to 80% of participants, while it is not viable to integrate both pathies, according to 20 percent. According to our findings, 80% of respondents believe Ayurveda will have a bright future after merger, whereas 4% believe it will not.

Conclusion: The first-year BAMS students in our study had a positive attitude toward the merger of Ayurveda and Allopathy. Even after integration, the majority of them were eager to continue practising their chosen path, namely Ayurveda.

Keywords: Integrative Medicine, Ayurveda, Allopathy, National Education Policy, India, Health Policy, Attitude of Health Personnel

Introduction:

India is a country with a wide range of sociocultural differences. As a result, various traditional medical streams flourished in various sociocultural contexts over the course of several centuries. Traditional remedies have been used here for thousands of years, with varying degrees of success⁽¹⁾. Modern medical technologies and tactics pervaded the last century and have subsequently been ingrained in Indian households. Despite the fact that traditional medicines' popularity originally declined due to the availability of faster acting newer drugs, traditional medicines have seen a rebound in the recent two decades due to the inadequacy of contemporary medicines in healing many chronic diseases⁽²⁾.

According to the National Education Policy 2020 (NEP 2020), healthcare education needs to be re-evaluated in order for the duration, structure, and design to meet the needs of society. It states that people have a variety of healthcare options, and as a result, our healthcare must be integrative. It specifies that all students of allopathic medicine, as well as vice versa, must have a fundamental awareness of AYUSH systems⁽³⁾.

The success of this integration is dependent on the stakeholders, i.e. allopathic and AYUSH graduates, perceiving it positively instead of considering it as a threat to their domain. China has successfully implemented the integrative system, but there has been a lot of uproar in India about it since the beginning⁽⁴⁾. In this context, the goal of this study was to analyse the knowledge, attitude, and practice of BAMS first-year students regarding the new integrative policy, since they bear the responsibility for its proper implementation as a stakeholder.

Materials And Methods

Study Design

This is a qualitative cross-sectional research design tool study that employed a questionnaire with qualitative research variables to collect information from participants between November 2022 and December 2023, a study was conducted among first-year BAMS students at an Ayurvedic medical institution.

Ethical considerations

Because of the nature of the study, it was deemed not necessary to obtain approval from the Institutional Ethics

Committee prior to beginning it. After outlining the study's aims and obtaining informed verbal agreement from each student, the study was initiated.

Sample Size-study population

Students in their first year of Ayurvedic College were identified and included in this study. Using computer-generated random number tables, a total of 200 students were chosen.

Data collection tool- Questionnaire design

A survey method was employed to collect data based on our study objectives. We created a pre-tested structured questionnaire, consisting of 16 multiple choice questions of both qualitative and quantitative character, in Google form format, to capture all key aspects, most were closed-ended questions to gauge their knowledge and practises, while few were structured to be answered to gauge their attitude. Each participant was given 30 minutes to answer all of the questions on the form, selecting the most relevant answer from the various options provided. The questioner was designed to examine Ayurvedic first-year students'

knowledge, attitude, and practice (KAP) regarding integrating Allopathy and Ayurvedic, as well as other traditional medicine systems. The questionnaire was split up into multiple sections. The first section takes demographic data from participants, such as age and gender. The second half of the questionnaire's task was to assess their awareness of the government's integration plans and their effects on traditional medical systems. The final section of the questionnaire concerns the questioner's choice of clinical practice following integration.

Statistical Analysis

Descriptive statistics were used to conduct the statistical analysis. The open epi software was used in this study.

Results:

We reached 200 students in total, with 100 agreeing to fill out the questionnaire survey form, resulting in a 50% response rate. Sixty percent of the students were male. The responders' average age was 22 years, with a minimum age of 18 and a highest age of 26. The demographic characteristics of participants is as mentioned in [Table 1]

Table 1. Demographic characteristics of the participants

Demographic variable	N =100	Percent
Age (Mean +- SD*)	22.43+ _ 6.22	100
Sex(male percent)	62	62%
Rural background	84	84%
Government quota admission	76	76%
Poor socio economic background of family	18	18%
Family of Doctors	4	4%

*SD = Standard Deviation

According to the data, 53 percent of respondents were aware that the government has a plan to merge Allopathy and other AYUSH systems into a single national health system by 2030. Practically everyone was familiar with the basic ideas of allopathy and ayurveda.[Table 2] Overall, 76% of participants believe it is conceivable to merge two pathies, whereas 12 percent believe it is not conceivable. Nearly 80%

thought that integration was beneficial to the Indian healthcare system, while 20% disagreed. The majority of participants (84%) believed it would assist in boosting the doctor-to-patient ratio in India, while the rest disagreed. 38 percent of students believed that this integration would have an impact on traditional practitioners, while a similar amount did not.

Table 2: Distribution of knowledge among first year BAMS students about Integration

Questions	Total (n=100)	Yes (in percentage)	No (in Percentage)
Do you know Government plans about the integration of Allopathy and traditional medicine up to 2030 according to the one nation one health system plan? Yes	100	53	47
Are you aware of the basic and fundamental principles of Allopathy and Ayurveda?	100	100	0

When it came to the cost efficiency of pathies, 73 percent thought ayurveda was the most cost efficient, whereas 27 percent believed allopathy was the most cost effective. The majority of responders (92%) believed that the decision will raise public understanding about traditional Indian medicines. 61 percent of responders thought that this will raise the percentage of meritorious students in traditional practice colleges based on their results. 84 percent of participants, on the other hand, believe that this will help to

expand evidence-based research in traditional practices. Nearly half of the participants thought a ten-year term would be sufficient to merge both healthcare systems, while 15% disagreed and 35% don't have any opinion. According to our findings, 80% of respondents believe ayurveda will have a bright future after merger, whereas 4% believe it will not. Nearly 35% said ayurveda will lose its own identity as a result of unification, while 65% were opposed. The Data is presented in [Table 3].

Table 3: Distribution of Attitude of first year BAMS students towards integration

question	Total n=100	Yes	No	Don't have opinion
Do you think if the integration of both is possible?	100	80	20	0
The integration be a good thing for the growth of healthcare in India	100	80	20	0
will it help to increase patient to doctor ratio in the future	100	84	16	0
Will there be an impact of integration on traditional practitioners	100	38	38	24
Whether ayurveda is cost effective pathy compared to allopathy	100	73	27	0
The decision will increase awareness about traditional Indian Medicine among general citizens	100	92	8	0
Do you think more meritorious students will take admission in traditional medicine colleges due to this decision?	100	61	30	9
This integration helps in future evidence based research work done in Ayurveda or traditional medicine?	100	84	16	0
is a 10 year time period is sufficient for the integration of both systems	100	50	15	35
Is there a bright future for Ayurveda following integration?	100	84	16	0
Will Ayurveda's distinct identity be lost as a result of integration?	100	35	65	0

Even after the integration, 88 percent of those polled expressed a desire to practise ayurveda [Table 4]

Table 4. Distribution of practise of first year BAMS students after integration

Question	Total n=100	Yes	No	Don't know
Would you like to practise ayurveda when you finish your study if you had the choice?	100	88	12	0

Discussion

The standardisation of Ayurvedic formulations, the digitization of plant resources, and integrative research on herbal remedies have all contributed to a more flexible approach to the use of traditional medicines around the world. They can understand the physiology of disease and test different parameters according to both streams because Allopathy education is part of the Ayurvedic College curriculum. The world sees Ayurveda, a complementary and alternative medicine, as a source of hope, as it has demonstrated promising results in a variety of chronic diseases⁽⁵⁾.

Our findings revealed that the majority of first-year BAMS students were pleased with the integration of both healthcare streams and were willing to accept the obstacles they would face in the future. The majority of them had a rudimentary understanding of both streams, and their eagerness to accept the Allopathy stream demonstrated their enthusiasm. As one nation, one healthcare plan, if they get a thorough understanding of all other healthcare systems, they will be able to provide treatment for patients in acute or chronic stages of disease. Ayurveda strives to integrate body, mind, and spirit in order to achieve wellness.

According to the study, the majority of BAMS first-year graduates opted to practise Ayurveda, which is the current stream of their admittance, despite having a pluralistic choice of practise. This means that they believe in our old branch of medicine, which has a long and illustrious history. Few studies on integration have been conducted amongst allopathic practitioners, with the results revealing negative attitudes regarding integration among allopathic practitioners^(6,7). The acceptance and practice of both streams by all stakeholders is critical to the success of integration. Because attitudes about Allopathy, Ayurveda, and other systems of medicine will have a significant impact on the amount of this integration, it must be embraced by all of them. In this regard, integration should begin at the ground level for all pathies, where they will gain knowledge of both systems in order to implement best practices.

Conclusion:

The first-year BAMS students in our study had a positive attitude toward the merger of ayurveda and allopathy. Even after integration, the majority of them were eager to practise the stream in which they were trained, namely ayurveda. The majority of them said that combining both medical systems would be beneficial to India's future healthcare system. Because data from KAP studies is critical for planning, determining need, and carrying out future plans, it is critical to understand students' reactions to integration; our study takes a step in that direction.

Limitations of the study:

This research was carried out in a single Ayurveda medical college centre. As a result, sample selection bias may be an issue that should be considered before extending the study's findings to the wider population. Similarly, the KAP of MBBS first-year graduates was not included in this study, despite the fact that their perspectives as stakeholders are critical to the strategy's success.

Conflict of Interest: Nil

Source of Support: Nil

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