

OP-25: An analysis of learning style preferences among second-year medical undergraduates using the VARK model

E. Janaka¹, R. Hewapathirana², I. Karunathilake³

¹Faculty of Medicine, University of Colombo, Sri Lanka

²Anatomy, Genetics and Biomedical Informatics Unit, Faculty of Medicine,
University of Colombo, Sri Lanka

³Department of Medical Education, Faculty of Medicine, University of Colombo, Sri Lanka

Introduction: The purpose of this study was to examine the preferred learning styles of undergraduate medical students at the Faculty of Medicine, University of Colombo, Sri Lanka. Medical students have a wide range of diversity in their learning preferences. Proper identification of the preferred learning style is important to design and deliver the instructional contents to gain the maximum outcome of the teaching.

Methods: A cross-sectional study was performed on second-year medical students using a locally validated (Cronbach Alpha >0.7) VARK Questionnaire in October 2021. The questionnaire consisted of 16 items that identified four different learning styles: visual, aural, reading/writing, and kinesthetic. The questionnaire was distributed online as a google form to the study population (n=205). The questionnaire was kept available online for two weeks. Responses were collected into the default google sheet. Inferential statistics were used to identify the associations. Pearson's Chi-squared test was used in the analysis.

Results: A total of 148 students completed the study. The response rate was 72%. 52% of the respondents were female. The majority (91.2%) favoured Quad-Model, while 8.8% favoured Tri-Model. No one favoured a single model learning style. There was no significant difference between model preferences among male and female students. The overall results suggest the students were more in favour of a multi-model. The kinaesthetic learning style was the most preferred among the study group, visual was the second most while reading/writing was the least preferred.

Conclusion: The results of this study provide useful information for improving the quality of teaching and learning experiences of the students. However, more research on this topic will be helpful to understand the association between learning style preferences and teaching/learning strategies.

Keywords: learning style preferences, VARK model, undergraduate