## PP-24: Ensuring the sustainability of a diploma programme: reflection of decades long experience

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**Introduction:** Provision of expert testimony in Forensic Medicine and Science is crucial in court trials. The Diploma in Forensic Medicine and Science (DFMS) for legal professionals commenced over twenty-five years ago, to empower them to evaluate, apply or challenge expert medical and scientific evidence. This paper reflects on the long-term sustenance of the programme, the programme transformation from traditional to active learning and recommendations for improvement.

**Methods:** The programme transformed gradually from didactic lectures and post-mortem demonstrations to active teaching learning activities (TLA) with hands-on simulated crime scene investigation and other simulations leaving a unique stamp. Based on stakeholder feedback, the content area was modified, and the resource pool expanded to include forensic psychiatrists, senior police investigators and sociologists. Prior-knowledge quizzes, formative assessments (FA), end of semester assessments including FA, continuous assessments (CA) and take-home assignments were new additions. Online teaching and uploading of the activities to the learning management system (LMS) constitutes hybrid teaching. Student-friendly management strategies include a comprehensive handbook, inclusivity education and addressing of student concerns by an empathic staff member. Managerial staff strategies included online programme planning with document sharing and compulsion of the team to regularly update their digital acumen. As an income generation project incentives to team and welfare are ensured with other minor benefits for all department staff.

**Results:** Increased student enrolments could be due to student-friendly environment, active teaching and learning methods and increased commitment due to CA and FA keeping students engaged. Group assignments encouraged peer-peer communication, teamwork, and breaking hierarchies. Greater teamwork, staff compliance and information technology (IT) savviness could be associated with incentives, welfare programmes and team-based planning thus contributing to a better equipped and satisfied workforce.

**Conclusions:** The DFMS programme has evolved with respect to its content delivery and student-friendly learning environment as well as enhanced management principles and has had increasing enrolments despite cost involved.

**Keywords:** forensic medicine, legal professionals, active learning, teamwork, teaching learning activities