

Self-empowerment Boosts Confidence: Assessing Experience of Martial Arts Workshop among Undergraduate Students in North Bengal Medical College

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Abstract :

Introduction: Martial arts has remained an age old tradition of boosting confidence and increasing self esteem. Apart from self defence it is a well known sports which requires skill, Revised curriculum in foundation course for undergraduate medical students has incorporated it as an integral part of learning. **Objective:** Hence a daylong workshop was planned in North Bengal Medical College to assess outcome among students primarily **Methods :** Experts of the field were invited and they held a hands on workshop teaching them basic skills apart from enlightening the theoretical aspect and importance. 84 female students could be studied using questionnaire. A pre-test and post-test assessment was done on few relevant issues. Dean of student affairs was interviewed in depth for his experience on the issue. **Results:** 63.5% students opined they benefitted. A significant difference was noted in responses of fears faced and confidence to face the world. It would empower women more and inspire them to be self-reliant was opined by the Dean. Students and trainers were satisfied with the experience and placed demand for further workshop of similar kind or provision of regular coaching class. **Conclusion:** The study concluded that martial arts training are empowering and help in increasing self confidence. It should be made an integral part of learning and incorporated judiciously in the curriculum.

Keywords : Martial arts training, women empowerment, workshop, foundation course

Introduction:

“All work and no play makes Jack a dull boy” , an age old saying which holds true even in modern context . But few sports don't only let physical agility grow but also promotes self-belief and self-reliance. The motivation to excel further helps individuals push their boundaries beyond comfort zone and achieve the seemingly impossible. Moreover these sports help in teaching team work and group activity and also inculcates sportsman spirit ¹. Life skills education are imparted and students find themselves better equipped to deal with the challenges and obstacles of the modern world. Another important area is of gender empowerment is addressed specifically through martial arts which not only train women physically to ward off unprovoked attacks but also train them mentally to be strong and endure hardships positively. Violence on Women are on rise and despite legislations and social awareness on rise these crimes are yet to be abolished²⁻⁶

Violence on Doctors is yet another burning issue which needs to be addressed. Incompetence of physical training makes them more vulnerable and lack of martial arts training makes them feel insecure⁷⁻⁹. The foundation course has rightly urged the need to incorporate sports 4 hours and extra-curricular activities 2 hourly in the regular ongoing curriculum¹⁰. The onus lies on the both genders , more so with the fairer sex to be equipped with self-defence techniques which would impart them courage to ward off offences , protect others as well as give them courage and confidence to walk their will without yielding to societal oppressions and false perceptions^{11,12}.

It also helps in peer dissemination of information and by hand holding is anticipated to give birth to a nation where equal opportunities exist irrespective of gender. North Bengal Medical College is the only rural tertiary medical college in the hilly terrains of Darjeeling district and caters a vast population. With violence on doctors also on rise such martial

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arts training promises young doctors working at wee hours in such difficult terrains and remote settings a morale of self reliance and defence against unprecedented attacks. The empowerment and confidence to protect oneself and also others uplifts physicians morale and helps in better care giving behaviour⁸.

Martial arts can be karate, taekwondo, muithai etc,, Usually taekwondo deals with increased movement and swiftness of lower parts of the body and is a common wealth sport as well. Every year there is a belt examination where on performing a defined set of deliverables an elevation in rank and the next belt is awarded. It is primarily a sport though also used for self - defence as well^{11,12}.

Students have increased interest and have displayed their intent and will to participate in such workshops¹¹. Moreover, a new foundation course laid for first year students in the new medical curriculum has emphasized importance of sports and designated fixed hours for related activities. As this kind of a workshop was first of its kind the pilot study was envisaged to assess the uptake of such programs among students. The aforementioned study was hence conducted along with a workshop to identify among study participants , primary reasons for attending the program, to assess their satisfaction level regarding the program and to assess any change of self-reliance among students before and after the workshop. Additionally, satisfaction of trainers and their perception regarding the program was also assessed.

Materials and Methods:

A descriptive cross sectional study was conducted in North Bengal Medical College along with a sensitization daylong workshop on August 2019 held for taekwondo among undergraduate female students . 84 eligible participants were enrolled for the study purpose. Both study and the activity had support from college authorities viz. Dean of Students Affairs and MSVP and Principal all through. The team visiting the college for the workshop had trainers from State Taekwondo Association , previously working in SAI . They were national level players, gold medal holders who came for the workshop from different districts. There were 5 trainers all black belt, medal holders and three among them had represented state at national level.

All undergraduate female students were study subjects. Among anticipated 114 students, 97 attended and 84 were willing to participate in the study. Few could not attend as were sick and out of station . Few college faculties who were interested and motivated attended the program.

The program was held at Multi auditorium hall where the hands on training was given by trainers and participated learnt and practiced various moves. An overall of 14 tactics were displayed and taught and participants practiced it among themselves in groups of two , offender and defender taking turns. Tools used were the various equipment's like guard, punch bags and skipping ropes and mats required for the sport activity. First aid kits were kept in hand.

A predesigned pretested semi structured validated questionnaire was used for assessing sociodemographic profile of participants and their satisfaction regarding the program on few chosen variables like quality of training , comprehensibility of training and participatory behaviour of trainers (taken by 3 point Likerts scale method)¹³ . Satisfaction of trainers was also assessed on cooperation from participants, quality of venue and interest and cooperation from authorities. Few questions relating to increase in self-reliance were incorporated. The pre and post test questionnaire was given to students to assess change in perception of self belief and changes in perception on in dealing with fears alone. In-depth Interview was taken from Dean of Student Affairs was done.

Data was collected after pre-sensitisation and compiled after cleaning. It was analysed using principles of descriptive and inferential statistics as and when required.

Result :

84 participants and 5 trainers were studied. Students were motivated , participated with full vigour and requested for future classes. All were females and majority (63.5%) belonged to third semester. Only 6 people had learnt martial art earlier. Majority (71%) stayed at hostel. Majority of students opined they had no exposure to such activities back home or anywhere barring few but seemed very interesting, helpful , practical and helps in empowering oneself. It builds stamina and mental confidence was an unanimous perception. The ability to survive against odds increases. However 26% students opined they would also like to get some belts through proper training and impart it later to their friends and neighbours. Pre-test and post- test assessment clearly found a significant difference ($p < 0.01$, $t = 21.1$) in perception on self belief. All the 84 students opined they would feel more confident and less fear faced alone while return at night time in campus if trained adequately in martial arts since childhood.

Majority 74.4% and 62.3% were satisfied with quality of training and participatory approach of trainers respectively. However only 51% were satisfied with comprehensibility of training. All the 5 trainers were happy and satisfied with venue and interactive behaviour of participants though insisted a five day workshop would do justice to the case and give chances to budding talents. They reiterated a one-day workshop will just be sensitization and couldn't elicit the desired interest.

Interview with Dean of Student Affairs revealed that such a basic sensitisation program would pave way for more involvement of college faculties with undergraduate students outside academics. These participatory activities would pave way for team spirit, discipline. Mandatory incorporation of these sports in foundation course will lead to more physically trained , disciplined and empowered doctors aiding in effective and fearless service delivery as self defence would be an inherent quality of the basic doctors.

Discussion

Women empowerment is a burning topic and so is violence on doctors. Lady doctors become the worst hit facing the dual sword. Many studies earlier have reiterated that sports training in early ages leads to increased self competence and confidence, instills team spirit. Self defence sports in addition empower women physically as well as mentally^{11,12}.

The present study concludes that though it was a one day sensitization workshop, it promised to instil self-confidence and reliance. Young medicos felt the training if continued consistently would help them allay the fears of violence on doctors⁸. Study among doctors regarding martial arts is rare and has not been conducted in recent past in nearby areas. However women empowerment would seemingly be high if such trainings are imparted^{1,6}. Moreover the foundation course for undergraduate students have incorporated t and like in other states promises a new batch of self-reliant doctors. However few challenges faced are the mindset, false perceptions and sedentary lifestyle. Moreover regular practice sessions with annual examinations are needed. The main roadblocks identified as funds needs to be cleared for its successful implementation ahead.

Conclusion :

The study concludes that participants and trainers were satisfied with the workshop organised. They felt the workshop would teach them basic skills of self defence which is a burning need in present scenario for ladies as well as doctors. Support of college authorities was exemplary and the decision to implement it ahead of foundation course was welcome. Logistic constraints in the study and evaluation over a just one day workshop remains a limitation. A larger study with a more representative sample is warranted.

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