

# Identifying Qualities of a Medical Teacher

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## Abstract

**Context:** Teaching is a novel profession. Teaching is a science as well as an art. In case of medical teaching it is more important as it deals with human being oriented curriculum. Products of the medical teachers will deal with life and death. So medical teachers should have such qualities as role model in-front of students. It will help students to become future physicians with professionalism which the medical profession and people expect from them.

**Materials & Methods:** A descriptive type of cross sectional study was conducted in different government and nongovernment medical colleges of Bangladesh to identify the qualities of medical teachers. The study population was the teachers of MBBS course who were working at least one year in medical colleges and were willing to co-operate and were available at the time of data collection. Sample size was 437. Self-administered structured questionnaire was used for the collection of data from the teachers. There were few open ended questions also.

**Results:** Study revealed the generic fundamental qualities of a medical teacher are competent in respective subject, teach medical students daily, ethical person, nonthreatening attitude, assess the student in unbiased way, strength of personality, updated with relevant recent knowledge, not involve in grouping, preparing and presenting audio visual aids to make the teaching sessions attractive, strength of good communication (verbal, nonverbal, writing etc.), conduct research regularly, publish article in journals every year, act as role model, friendly with the colleagues, supportive for the staff, co-operate rationally with the administration, justified decision maker and good basic clinical care provider. Study also revealed the specific qualities of a medical teacher are sympathetic & empathetic dealings of a teacher towards patients, counsel to motivate students to be a self directed learner, motivate students for positive extracurricular activities (outdoor/indoor games, cultural functions, wall magazine, debate etc.), well behalf manager, fair personalities, wear decent well dress and not actively involved in politics.

**Conclusion:** More wider scale of study is also recommended to get more qualities of medical teacher.

**Key words :** Quality, medical teacher

## Introduction

What does it take to be an effective medical teacher? This is a question that has long gnawed at reflective teacher educators, idealistic teachers (especially those just beginning their careers), and worried families who place their young children in the care of an institution. Many educators feel that

effectiveness as a teacher stems from a combination of knowledge, skills, and personal characteristics<sup>1</sup>. While aspiring teachers can increase their knowledge and develop their skills, their personal characteristics - which involve the socio emotional and spiritual realms in addition to the cognitive - are likely to be more fixed. As Cantor notes, one can have both knowledge and skills, but without a disposition to make use of them, very little will happen<sup>2</sup>. *Having* is not the same as *doing*. Because personal characteristics are rooted in feelings and beliefs, some one can neither observe

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them directly nor assess through traditional methods, which makes them difficult to identify<sup>3</sup>. Nevertheless, teacher educators and administrators would benefit greatly from knowing the characteristics of an effective medical teacher, as they strive to improve the quality of the field. New teachers and those at a cross roads in their career would also benefit if they could confirm that the interpersonal and intrapersonal beliefs they possess are those demanded by the field.

But academic institutions do not have a way to identify the identifying characteristics of a medical teacher who are proficient in learner-centered teaching. So, the study will be conducted to summarize an attempt to identify some of the key characteristics of medical teachers to excel in their job.

Such a concept of effective learning conditions has major implications for the teacher's role, which obviously becomes that of a learning facilitator. This is very threatening to those who perceive the medical educator's chief role to be an imparter of facts and experience. The latter role is somewhat passive and does not require the teacher to reveal to the students. It is perhaps the more traditional teacher role and might partially explain why students find much of medical education boring. Awareness of one's feelings must match one's experience. It demands an intense commitment towards the student's welfare and the willingness to examine seriously one's value system. It also requires a willingness to admit uncertainty and anxiety and to broaden one's sense of trust in others. Viewed in this perspective, a medical educator faces a challenging lifetime career, because one can only work towards achieving such conditions and characteristics - can never be completely mastered. This concept has allows more meaningful involvement

with students, as long they see the teacher attempting to function in this way. It would be detrimental to effective learning simply to talk this way and behave differently. Such behavior would be grossly incongruent.

So, this study was conducted as the need of time to identify the qualities of a medical teachers of different government and non government medical

colleges of Bangladesh to ensure effective teaching & learning in future.

### Materials & Methods

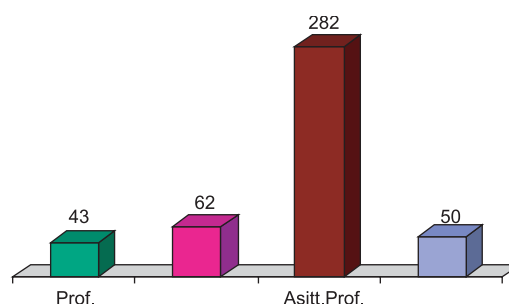
This was a descriptive type of cross sectional study, which was conducted in different government and non government medical colleges of Bangladesh. Teachers of medical colleges fulfilling inclusion and exclusion criteria were the study population. Purposive Sampling / Convenience sampling was adopted. Sample size was 437. Pretested self administered structured questionnaire was used to collect data. All the data was checked and edited after collection. Then the data were entered into computer. After entry data was checked for consistency and was analysed with the help of software SPSS. Prior permission was taken from the concerned authority. Confidentiality and anonymity were assured and maintained.

### Results

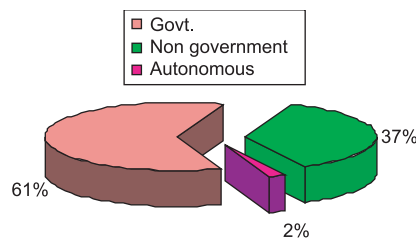
Fig.-1 and Fig.-2 shows the distribution of respondents by their designation and institute respectively.

Table 1A – 1D shows the distribution of the respondents as per their views about the generic qualities of medical teacher.

Table-II A and Table-II B shows the distribution of the respondents as per their views about the specific qualities of a medical teacher.



**Fig.-1:** Distribution of respondents by their designation.



**Fig.-2:** Distribution of the respondents by their institute

**Table I. A***Distribution of the respondents as per their views about the generic qualities of medical teacher*

Statements about the generic qualities of a medical teacher	SA (%)	A (%)	U (%)	DA (%)	SDA (%)
At the entry point doctor should be appointed in the category of either as teacher or clinician or administrator	187(45.1)	157(37.8)	27(6.5)	28(6.7)	16(3.9)
Medical teacher should be competent in respective subject	356(82.2)	70(16.2)	-	4(.9)	3(.7)
Medical teacher should teach medical students daily at any level	114(26.5)	187(43.4)		66(15.3)	15(3.5)
Medical teachers should be an ethical person	368(85)	54(12.5)	-	5(1.2)	6(1.4)
Students expect non threatening attitude from medical teacher	283(66.3)	128(30)	6(1.4)	4(.9)	6(1.4)

**NB:** (SDA- Strongly Disagree, DA-Disagree, UD- Un Decided, SA-Strongly Agree, A-Agree)**Table I. B***Distribution of the respondents as per their views about the generic qualities of medical teacher*

Statements about the generic qualities of a medical teacher	SA (%)	A (%)	U (%)	DA (%)	SDA (%)
Medical teachers should assess the student in unbiased way	323(74.9)	86(20)	12(2.8)	8(1.9)	2(.5)
Teachers should have strength of personality of his/her own	318(73.6)	111(25.7)	-	-	3(.7)
Teachers should be updated with relevant recent knowledge	386(88.9)	45(10.4)	-	-	3(.7)
Medical teachers should not involve in grouping	341(79.1)	70(16.2)	10(2.3)	4(.9)	6(1.4)
Teacher should be expert in preparing and presenting Audio Visual Aids to make the teaching session attractive	254(58.9)	165(38.3)	11(2.6)	1(.2)	-

**Table I. C***Distribution of the respondents as per their views about the generic qualities of medical teacher*

Statements about the generic qualities of a medical teacher	SA (%)	A (%)	U (%)	DA (%)	SDA (%)
Medical teacher should have strength of good communication (verbal, non verbal, writing etc.)	314(74.2)	109(25.8)	-	-	-
Medical teacher should conduct research regularly	195(46.1)	204(48.2)	22(5.2)	2(.5)	-
Medical teacher should have publications in journals every year	131(31.1)	233(55.3)	25(5.9)	32(7.6)	-
Medical teacher should be friendly with the colleagues	286(67.8)	134(31.8)	2(.5)	-	-
Medical teacher should be supportive for the staff	205(48.9)	201(48)	12(2.9)	1(.2)	-

**Table I. D**

*Distribution of the respondents as per their views about the generic qualities of medical teacher*

Statements about the generic qualities of a medical teacher	SA (%)	A (%)	U (%)	DA (%)	SDA (%)
Medical teacher should co-operate rationally with the administration	191(45.3)	219(51.9)	12(2.8)	-	-
Medical teacher should be a justified decision maker	245(58.3)	165(39.3)	6(1.4)	-	-
Irrespective of subject medical teacher should have the quality of good basic clinical care provider	169(40.2)	216(51.4)	26(6.2)	7(1.7)	1(.2)
Medical teacher should not actively involved in politics	282(67.1)	96(22.9)	25(6)	17(4)	

**Table II. A**

*Distribution of the respondents as per their views about the specific qualities of a medical teacher*

Statements about the specific qualities of a medical teacher	SA (%)	A (%)	U (%)	DA (%)	SDA (%)
Students expect sympathetic & empathetic dealings of a teacher towards patients	245(57)	166(38.6)	10(2.3)	-	6(1.4)
Apart from teaching teacher should counsel to motivate students to be a self directed learner	256(59.4)	158(36.7)	11(2.5)	-	6(1.4)
Teacher should motivate students for positive extra curricular activities (outdoor/indoor games, cultural functions, wall magazine, debate etc.)	150(35.5)	248(58.6)	20(4.7)	5(1.2)	-
Medical teacher should be a positive role model for the students	253(59.8)	166(39.2)	4(.9)	-	-

**Table II. B**

*Distribution of the respondents as per their views about the specific qualities of a medical teacher*

Statements about the specific qualities of a medical teacher	SA (%)	A (%)	U (%)	DA (%)	SDA (%)
Medical Teacher should be a well behalf manager	227(54.3)	170(40.7)	19(4.5)	2(.5)	-
Medical teacher should be a good academic leader	277(66.4)	124(29.7)	10(2.4)	6(1.4)	-
Medical teacher should have fair personalities to be followed by the students	292(69.5)	123(29.3)	5(1.2)	-	-
Medical teacher should wear decent well dress	246(58.9)	163(39)	9(2.2)	-	-

**Discussion**

It is not surprising that our intuitive, personal assessment of the qualities of good medical teachers produced quite similar results to the themes generated from our search of the literature.

This study suggests that excellent teaching, although multifactorial, transcends ordinary teaching and is

characterized by inspiring, supporting, actively involving, and communicating with students. These activities produce an emotional arousal in the student. The Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education (ACGME) and other accrediting bodies strive to create a more competency-based medical education system, and academic medical

centers increasingly allow for the quality of teaching when determining the academic rank of their faculty. It is important, therefore, to identify characteristics that define a quality educator<sup>4,5</sup>.

In this survey, there were areas of very strong agreement as well as some interesting differences of opinion. All the respondents agree that clinical competence is among the most important attributes of an effective clinical teacher. There is also agreement that better educators are those who demonstrate enthusiasm for their educational responsibilities. Some of them also felt strongly that scholarly activity has little importance in defining an effective clinical educator, a finding consistent with the work of previous authors<sup>6</sup>.

Effective teaching in medicine is essential to produce good quality doctors.<sup>7</sup> Defining what makes an exceptional teacher is challenging.<sup>8</sup> In the past decade the principles of effective teaching for doctors have come of age. To earlier generations of doctors no training in specific teaching skills was provided. Teaching was a skill that you were expected to possess or acquire. Effective teaching techniques are now a requirement for doctors, as highlighted by the General Medical Council,<sup>9</sup> and can be learnt and perfected like any other medical skill. Every doctor is expected to deliver teaching, whether to medical students, allied health professionals, or postgraduate doctors. Furthermore, there is an expectation to show formal training in teaching methods. A passionate teacher will be an asset to any medical department. This, coupled with the personal satisfaction of being an effective teacher, is the motivation to become a better medical educator.<sup>10</sup>

When one strives and works to become a good teacher and to create a good class, the four core qualities are essential: knowledge, the skills to convey that knowledge, the ability to make the material you are teaching interesting and relevant, and a deep-seated respect for the student. Without these four qualities, good teaching will not exist. There are many skills that make a good medical educator. Some of these qualities are –calm, approachable, logical, passionate, knowledgeable, role model, enthusiastic, leader, reliable, mentor, efficient, learner, facilitator & flexible.<sup>11</sup>

Our findings hold broad implications for teacher selection, promotion, and faculty development programs at medical colleges.

What is particularly interesting is that many of the characteristics and attributes we found were non cognitive characteristics rather than the cognitive skills that generally receive so much attention in students development. This is not surprising, given that clinical teachers must ultimately serve as supportive role models and mentors to trainees in their development of knowledge, skills, attitudes, values, and professionalism.

We can take heart from the progress that has been made over the preceding decades. We now have generations of students and doctors who consider training in teaching methods as part of the norm. Many students now have the opportunity to take formal qualifications and fellowships. Educational excellence, along with clinical excellence, is increasingly being recognised and rewarded appropriately. However, we cannot rest on our laurels and must continue to strive to improve how we teach and to embrace new ways of delivering teaching, while not losing sight of the main goal: to be better at treating patients and delivering high quality healthcare.

In times of limited resources and changes in delivery of services, we must also ensure that education is included, costed for, and not squeezed out. In one recent study, the most highly regarded teachers in a large department of medicine were asked to specify the personal qualities, teaching skills and clinical competencies they considered most critical for effective role modeling in medicine.<sup>12</sup> The findings indicated that good teachers are enthusiastic, friendly, easy-going, able to develop rapport with learners, committed to the growth of their students, approachable, interested in learners as people, and always conscious of their status as role models.<sup>13</sup>

## Conclusion

The clinical competence and professional growth of medical learners can be most effectively facilitated by students learning. Excellent teachers serve as role models, influence career choices and enable



students to reach their potential. Some of the necessary qualities are inherent, others can be acquired. In medical schools the good teachers must be nurtured and rewarded.

### Recommendations

- Medical teachers should be competent and knowledgeable on concerned subjects with positive attitude to teach and to assess students properly.
- Medical teachers should have strength of personality, ethical behavior, sympathetic & empathetic dealings towards patients, good communication skills, capability to prepare and present audio visual aids competently.
- Medical teachers should counsel and motivate the students to be self directed learner and for positive extracurricular activities (outdoor/indoor games, cultural functions, wall magazine, debate etc.) Medical teacher should act as role model, be friendly with the colleagues, supportive for the staff, co-operate rationally with the administration, justified decision maker, well behalf manager.
- Medical teachers should conduct research regularly and publish it in journal and should be good academic leader, good basic clinical care provider, wear decent well dress and should not actively involved in politics. More wider scale of study is also recommended to get more qualities

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