



CODEN [USA]: IAJPBB

ISSN: 2349-7750

INDO AMERICAN JOURNAL OF  
**PHARMACEUTICAL SCIENCES**

<http://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.3405471>

Available online at: <http://www.iajps.com>

Research article

## ACADEMIC CHEATING AMONG MEDICAL STUDENTS

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**Article Received:** July 2019

**Accepted:** August 2019

**Published:** September 2019

**Abstract:**

**Objective:** To analyze the trends of academic cheating among medical students of different medical institutes.

**Material and Methods:** A total of 123 students was included in this study. A predefined questionnaire was served. The collected data was entered and analyzed in SPSS 23.0.

**Results:** The mean age of the students was  $22.34 \pm 2.21$  years. There were 68 (55.29%) male students and 55 (44.71%) female students. Twenty-nine students (23.57%) told that they never cheated. Ninety students (76.42%) told that they cheated during their assignments and examinations.

**Conclusion:** Most of the medical students cheat during their assignments and examinations. Mostly girls cheat during their examinations. They do so due to lack of preparation, fear of failure and confirmation of the answers.

**Keywords:** Academic Cheating, Medical Education, Ethics.

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Please cite this article in press Syed Muhammad Ali Bukhari et al., *Academic Cheating Among Medical Students*, *Indo Am. J. P. Sci*, 2019; 06(09).

**INTRODUCTION:**

Cheating during the examination and routine tests is a global issue among different educational institutes. In routine assignments and examinations, students are not allowed to ask from each other, take helping material and take mobile phones or digital tools with themselves. These limitations are imposed in order to ensure the clarity of examinations and helping the hard-working students to excel in their academic career [1,2].

According to the literature, medical students are also involved in this kind of practice. The main point of consideration is that these medical students will become health professionals in the future and if they are involved in academic cheating during their examination and assignments, the capabilities in them will not be up to the mark hence leaving an immoral impact on their personality as well the health system. This academic cheating also down-regulates educational institutes. Both of these issues are of high concern and must be addressed [3,4].

The purpose of this study is to analyze the trends of cheating among the medical students of different medical colleges and to study the possible causes of this academic cheating. This study will help us in improving our medical education system, enable students to become a better health professional and give confidence to the hard-working students to boost their academic activities.

**MATERIAL AND METHODS:**

Total of 123 medical students was included in this study. The procedure and purpose of this study were explained to them and a predefined questionnaire was served. The data was entered and analyzed using SPSS Version 23.0. The qualitative variables were presented in numbers and percentages and the quantitative variables were presented in mean and standard deviation.

**RESULTS:**

The mean age of the students was 22.34±2.21 years. There were 68 (55.29%) male students and 55 (44.71%) female students. Twenty-nine students (23.57%) including 7 female students and 22 male students told that they never cheated during their assignments and examinations. Ninety students (76.42%) including forty-eight female and forty-six male students told they cheated during their examination. Forty-three students (34.95%) of the students told that they do the cheating on a regular basis in every assignment and examination. Fifty six

students (45.52%) told that they cheated once or twice during their academic career.

When asked about different reasons of cheating 70% of the students told that they do it due to lack of preparation during their assignment and examinations, 15% of the students do it due to fear of failure and bad impression on their internal assessment and 12% of the students told that they do it in order to confirm the answers and secure more marks in the examination.

**DISCUSSION:**

In our study, around 76.42% of the students told that they cheated during their assignments and examinations. Kamran et al., and Hrabek et al., documented similar kind of results in their manuscripts. They also stated that female students cheat more than male students. Nyamwange et al., also reported in their study i.e. 52% of the girls cheat during their examination [5-7].

Regarding different reasons for cheating, seventy percent of the students told that they do it because of lack of preparation. This is an interesting fact and needs more probing. Lack of preparation among the medical students might be due to certain reasons i.e. poor methodology of the teaches and inability to deliver the lectures properly, lack of interest of medical students themselves, curriculum designing issues and implementation of proper schedules for the teaching of students. This reason must be addressed individually and the solution must be devised in order to improve the medical education system.

There are certain limitations to our study. Firstly we didn't include the teachers or faculty members in this study. Secondly, we didn't probe the steps to stop this academic cheating in medical institutes. A study including teachers, the social background of the students, extra-curricular activities of the students and medical education department should be conducted.

**CONCLUSION:**

Most of the medical students cheat during their assignments and examinations. Mostly girls cheat during their examinations. They do so due to lack of preparation, fear of failure and confirmation of the answers.

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