Nurturing future doctors: Pre-clinical medical student perspectives on holistic mentoring

By

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Abstract Introduction: Mentoring plays a crucial role in pre-clinical medical education, providing academic, emotional, personal, and professional support to students during early medical training. Although established in 2015, the impact of the pre-clinical undergraduate mentor-mentee programme at the Kulliyyah of Medicine, International Islamic Univer Malaysia (KOM, IIUM), has yet to be studied. This study aimed to explor

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the experiences and perceptions of pre-clinical students participating in the programme to assess its effectiveness and identify areas for improvement. Methods: A cross-sectional study was conducted using a self-administered online questionnaire distributed to all Year 1 and Year 2 students. The survey included 5-point Likert-scale items measuring satisfaction and perceived helpfulness, alongside openended questions for qualitative insights. Quantitative data were analysed using descriptive statistics, while qualitative responses underwent thematic synthesis, involving open, axial, and selective coding. Results: Results showed high satisfaction (mean score: 4.74 +/- 0.74) and perceived helpfulness (mean score: 4.69 +/- 0.81), with students praising the programme for fostering academic improvement, mental health support, peer collaboration, and holistic development. Thematic analysis revealed four categories: benefits of sessions, characteristics of effective sessions, challenges, and suggestions for improvement. Key themes included a safe and supportive environment, motivational reassurance, Islamic ethical guidance, and challenges such as infrequent interactions and emotional barriers. Strengthening frequency of interactions, mentor training, and feedback mechanisms was suggested for improvement. Conclusion: This study highlights the holistic value of the structured mentor-mentee programme at KOM, IIUM in enhancing students' academic and personal growth, providing valuable feedback for improvement.

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Data Availability Given the personal nature of the data, all data will only made available upon written request to the corresponding author with the agreement of all authors and IIUM.

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