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**LEARNING STYLES AMONG MEDICAL UNDERGRADUATES AND PRE-INTERN DOCTORS OF UNIVERSITY OF SRI JAYEWARDENEPURA**

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**Background:** Medical education is an ever evolving process. Gaining required knowledge, attitudes and skills within a stipulated period of time to become a competent doctor is a challenge. The shift from teacher-centred and subject-based teaching to the interactive, problem-based, student-centred learning is an important concept in the medical education. This study evaluates the learning styles (visual, auditory, read/write and kinaesthetic-VARK) among medical undergraduates and pre-intern doctors.

**Aims:** To determine Learning styles among medical undergraduates and pre-intern doctors of University of Sri Jayewardenepura using VARK questionnaire

**Methods:** A validated self-administered VARK questionnaire was used to assess the learning styles among 238 Medical Undergraduates and Pre-intern doctors of University of Sri Jayewardenepura. Data was analysed using SPSS v-16 and Brown-Forsythe t test.

**Results:** The study sample consisted of 67.2 % ( 160/238) pre-clinical undergraduates and 32.8% ( 78/238) pre-interns. The total male (72/238) to female (166/238) ratio was 1: 2.3. Among participants, the majority 59.8 % ( 142/238) had multimodal learning styles. Majority of the pre-clinical undergraduates [62.2 % ( 100/160)] and pre-interns [57.4 % ( 48/78)] were multimodal learners. Similarly, majority of males 81.9 % ( 59/72) and females 80.1 % ( 133/166) were multimodal learners.

Multimodal learners had a combination of auditory-kinaesthetic 28 % ( 40/142) and verbal-kinaesthetic 26 % ( 37/142) learning styles. Among unimodal learners, majority had visual [30.2 % ( 29/96)] and auditory [28.6 % ( 27/96)] learning styles.

A statistically significant difference ( $p=0.02$ ) was observed in reading/writing style among pre-clinical and pre-intern groups whereas other learning styles did not.

**Conclusions:** Multimodal learning is the popular learning style among medical undergraduates and pre-intern doctors of University of Sri Jayewardenepura. Comparable results were observed in local and international studies. Encouraging multimodal learning styles would help to develop a better undergraduate medical curriculum. The results suggest that, learning preferences of medical students need be verified prior to the start of their academic tasks.

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