

# Students' Perception of New Revised Para-Clinical Sciences Curriculum in a Caribbean Medical School: A 3-year questionnaire based study

By

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## Abstract

*A new curriculum started in 2009-2010 with the MDSC3311, 3312, 3313 & 3314 courses at Faculty of Medical Sciences; the University of the West Indies; St Augustine Trinidad & Tobago. These courses blended with the semesterisation. Summative Continuous Assessment was conducted by Progressive Disclosure Questions (PDQs). An insight into the impact of changes implemented during the previous three years is essential for future guidance and improvement. Thus this study was conducted with the purpose to explore students' perceptions of quality and integration of course content: semester system, course delivery and new assessment method introduced in Year 3 Para-clinical Sciences. A survey questionnaire was administered on year 3 students of the academic years 2009-2010, 2010-2011 and 2011-2012. Of 609 eligible students in three academic years, 353 responded (58% response rate), 94.7% were first-attempt candidates, mean student age was 22.12 years, and female representation was higher (63.8%, n=225). Overall satisfaction about the content of various courses and their integration were very good. Listing of specific objectives and resource availability was considered above average in three courses and average in MDSC 3314. Students (75%) favor the PDQs as CA and end-of-semester examinations (83.8%). The new semester curriculum in Paraclinical Sciences presented a challenge for integration but students responded favorably. The change alleviated the burden of annual examinations. The semester system is acknowledged as an improvement over the annual examination. Strengthening the PDQs as an evaluation mechanism and introducing clinical based teaching during Para-clinical Phases of the MBBS program are recommended.*

**Keywords:** *Para clinical sciences, Medical Education, Semester System, Progressive Disclosure Questions*