

Students' Perspectives on the Educational Environment in a Caribbean dental School during Pre-clinical Years

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Abstract

This study aims to elicit student perspectives of the learning environment at the University of the West Indies, St Augustine dental school during their pre-clinical years of undergraduate training. A questionnaire was administered to all pre-clinical students of the dental school in 2009. The data collected were analyzed using SPSS. Library and learning resources, student-faculty-administration relationships, meaningful experience and breath-of-interest were the survey subheadings rated most favourably. Student support, flexibility and emotional climate were the survey subheadings which received the most unfavourable ratings. These findings were in congruence of that of similar studies of US and UK medical and dental Schools. Trinidadian students rated library and learning resources significantly lower than non-Trinidadian students. Males rated student-student interaction significantly higher than females. The UWI School of Dentistry needs to focus on the allocation of resources to increase student awareness of its student support systems that are available to them - especially those that deal with student stress and coping skills. It also needs to re-examine its learning environment as it pertains to flexibility.

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