



# Attitude of the Students of Azerbaijan Medical University to Multidisciplinary Concilium Classes

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## Introduction

The goal of higher medical education is the development of clinical competence, that is, the aggregate of knowledge, skills, and attitudes [1]. In recent years, the scope of application of competency-based education at higher levels of medical education around the world has been rapidly expanding, and this new system has been adopted as a strategic target by the Ministry of Education of the Republic of Azerbaijan [2]. New technologies are of particular importance in the organization of medical education in universities, ensuring and improving its quality, and have a great role and value [3-5]. The study of the students' feedback is one of the most important criteria used to assess the quality of teaching at higher education institutions [4-8]. The purpose of assessing the quality indicators and criteria of student satisfaction in such institutions is to contribute to the improvement of the existing education system by identifying weaknesses and flaws, as well as outdated and unnecessary aspects of higher medical education [3,6]. Insufficient use of modern information technologies in the educational process leads to poor delivery of necessary knowledge to students and ultimately to dissatisfaction with education [3,9]. The bachelor's level of medical education as the first stage of higher education creates the basis for future doctors to provide quality care to patients by instilling in them such important elements of teaching as knowledge, clinical skills, competence, and behavior.

Multidisciplinary Concilium classes along with the classical ones have been introduced at the Department of I Surgical Diseases of Azerbaijan Medical University (AMU) since 2017. Physicians of various specialties participate in the Concilium classes held in a hybrid (face-to-face and online) format. Along with surgeons, radiologists, oncologists, gastroenterologists, and doctors of other specialties, depending on the case, IV, V, VI year-students also attend the classes in a hybrid (full-time or online) format. Classes begin with the provision of general information about patients who are planning surgery or have complex surgical pathologies and last 60–90 minutes. Patients' complaints, anamnesis, examinations and results, and treatment plan are discussed. The students actively participate in discussions and freely express their questions and suggestions. This contributes to the development of applied clinical thinking skills of tomorrow's doctors.

## Aim

The aim of the study is to identify the attitudes of IV-VI year-students toward the classes conducted in the format of a multidisciplinary Concilium.

## Materials and Methods

The study included 1122 students of the IV, V, and VI courses of the Faculty of I General Medicine of AMU. An anonymous survey, on the principle of voluntariness was used (Table 1).

**Table 1:** Survey questions used for the study.

1	Is the necessary information about the patients provided during Concilium classes?	yes	no
2	Are the results of patient examinations related to their problems?	yes	no
3	Are the results of the visualization methods shown on the screen explained?	yes	no
4	Are there opportunities for students to ask question(s) about the patient?	yes	no
5	Is there enough explanation of the performed or planned surgical operation?	yes	no
6	Have the consilium classes changed your view of the problem?	yes	no
7	Is it useful to attend consilium classes?	yes	no

786 (70.05%) questionnaires were recognized as valid. Of the students who answered the survey questions, 355 (45.15%) studied in the IV year, 341 (43.4%) in the V and 90 (11.5%) in the VI year. 137 (17.5) in the 2017/2018 academic year, 152 (19.3) in the 2018/2019 academic year, 151 (19.2) in the 2019/2020 academic year, 2021/2022 in the academic year, 346 students (44%) participated in the survey. Since the fall and spring semesters of the 2020/2021 academic year, practical classes, lectures, as well as part of the Concilium classes related to the SARS-Cov-2 virus pandemic, were held entirely in a remote (online) format, no survey was conducted among students. Surveys were conducted on a voluntary basis; incomplete and incomplete questionnaires were excluded from the study in order not to distort the results. Only the researchers (authors) had access to the answers. The attitude of students to Concilium classes was studied as a result of methodical analysis, statistical processing and evaluation of answers.

## Statistics

The data was collected on a unified statistical card and processed in the SPSS-26 statistical package. Cross-tables were compiled for the purpose of statistical analysis, and the results were evaluated according to Pearson ( $\chi^2$ ) and Kruskal-Wallis (H) criteria [10].

## Results and Discussion

87.7% of survey participants answered positively in response to the question, "Is the necessary information about the patients provided during Concilium classes?". No statistical differences were found in the answers provided by the students of various years of education, as well as in academic years. 88% of the 675 responders answered positively to the question, "Are the results of patient examinations (ultrasound, CT, MRI, etc.) related to their problems?" Statistically significant differences have been found between different years of education ( $p < 0.001$ ), as more senior students answered this question positively. There were statistically significant differences according to academic years ( $p = 0.026$ ). An increase in positive responses was observed in the 2018–2019 academic year (the second year of the study), but in subsequent academic years, the gradient of responses was directed downward.

87,2% of 671 responders answered positively to the following question: "Are the results of the visualization methods (ultrasound, CT, MRI, endoscopy, etc.) shown on the screen explained?" While the positive dynamics in the answers according to the academic years have been found ( $p = 0.045$ ), the survey results do not statistically differ by year of education.

Of 668 responders 94% answered positively to the question "Are there opportunities for students to ask question(s) about the patient?", and 71.5% of 674 responders answered "Yes" to the next question ("Is there enough explanation of the performed or planned surgical operation?"). There were no statistically significant differences in the answers to the questions, both in years of education and in different academic years.

88.4% of 704 students who participated in survey answered positively to the question "Have the Concilium classes changed your view of the problem?" and they reported that they better understand clinical courses and management of diseases due to these classes. The next question of the survey concerned the usefulness of Concilium classes: 88.9% of responders answered positively ( $p < 0,001$ ). Thus, the majority of students noted the effectiveness and usefulness of Concilium classes.

## Conclusions

1. Concilium classes, conducted with real-life patient presentations, pave the way for the development of diagnostic skills among medical university undergraduates.
2. These classes play an important role in the development of clinical thinking, knowledge, practical skills, and competencies of medical students, and thus the formation of competent doctors.

## Acknowledgment

None.

## Conflict of Interest

No conflict of interest.

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