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**Original article**

**Role of small group discussion in comparison to didactic lecture in improving self directed learning among first year medical students  
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**Abstract**

**Introduction:** Most of the first year MBBS students try to learn anatomy by memorizing the parts and not by understanding. Student should learn how to apply and correlate knowledge of anatomy to explain various clinical conditions. For this purpose student should be motivated for self directed learning so that they will try to learn beyond lecture classes. The objective of this study is to assess whether self directed learning improves with small group discussion than the usual lecture class.

**Material and method:** Randomly selected first year MBBS students (n=36) were included in the small group discussion (SGD). Regular theory class was conducted and after one week with prior information SGD was conducted on the same topic. Three groups of 12 were made and each group was divided in three small groups. Pretest, posttest was conducted for each session to assess their performance. Anonymous feedback form filled by each student at the end of session.

Data was analyzed using student ‘t’ test and p value was calculated. p value was not significant.

**Result:** There was improvement in post-test scoring after the discussion. Students were satisfied at the end of session. Students perceived SGD helped them to improve understanding (85%), problem solving ability (80%), for better performance in practical examination (88%) and gives encouragement for self directed learning (78%).

**Conclusion:** SGD help students to learn through group discussion and they are sensitized towards application of this knowledge in clinical conditions.

**Keywords**:Small group discussion, self directed learning