

Impact of Dyslexia on the Education Experiences of Undergraduate Students in Medicine, Dentistry, and Biomedical Sciences: A Qualitative Study

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Aims

To explore the impact of dyslexia on the educational experiences of undergraduate students in medicine, dentistry, dental therapy and biomedical sciences.

Methods

Following Ethics approval, a qualitative study based on semi structured interviews was undertaken using purposive sampling. All interviews were transcribed verbatim. A thematic analysis of the data was conducted using NVivo 12 (QSR International Pty Ltd).

Results

Table 1 Demographic and Educational Profile of the Participants

Participant	Gender	Programme of Study	Year of Study
1	Male	BMBS	1
2	Female	BMBS	4
3	Female	BMBS	2
4	Female	BMBS	3
5	Female	BMBS	3
6	Male	BDS	5
7	Male	BDS	4
8	Male	BDS	2
9	Female	BDS	1
10	Male	DTH	2
11	Female	DTH	3
12	Female	DTH	3
13	Female	BSc Biomed	1
14	Male	BSc Biomed	1
15	Male	BSc Biomed	1

Disclosure

"When I applied, I felt a bit nervous about it, but then when I looked into it and the fact that it was actually considered in your application, I wasn't too worried about it". 2 BMBS

"I'm quite open about it and do not feel there is any need to hide a disability from staff or students". 7 BDS

Support

"I'm taking as much as help as I can and I'm getting ready for the world" 14 SoBS

Curriculum Design

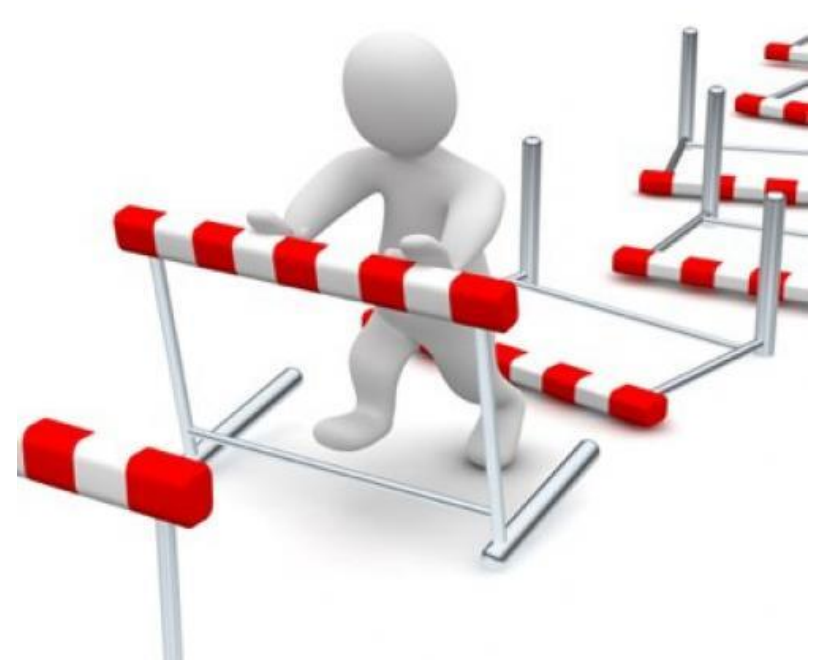
"PBL is easier, because it is more conversational and is much better for my learning style than my last degree, which was, I had five hours lectures, most people would struggle with power points for 5 hours". 1 BMBS

Clinical Skills

"My dyslexia does not impact on my performance in clinical competencies because it's all practical". 11 DTH

Professional Relationships

"My peers in my PBL group know, I told them that my spellings are awful because I'm dyslexic so that they all know it; I haven't felt excluded in any way". 9 BDS



Barriers

"I do take a bit longer to write my clinical notes because I need to proof-read" 9 BDS

"Drugs is what I struggle most. There are a lot of very similar sounding and very complexly spelled drugs, writing in patient notes and trying to spell it correctly". 1 BMBS

Suggestions

- Peer talks during induction to share their experiences and coping strategies
- Dedicated Academic tutors with expertise is supporting dyslexic students
- Advance online availability of lectures and learning resources
- Software with medical spell checks for clinical record keeping and written assignments (for e.g. research-based Student Selected Component module).



Figure 1 Learning difficulties experienced by the participants



Conclusions

- Participants were confident regarding disclosure of dyslexia and did not regard it as a stigma.
- Typical academic difficulties associated with dyslexia were reported by the participants
- PBL was perceived to be enjoyable and less stressful than traditional lectures
- No specific challenges were reported in acquisition of clinical, communication and teamworking skills