

To Snooze or Not to Snooze: Does Attendance Affect Pharmacy School Students' Academic Performance?

Ayaa Kobaissi (ayaakoba@usc.edu), Phoebe Kim (phoebeki@usc.edu), Tristin Jauregui (tristinj@usc.edu), Fatima Saleh (fasaleh@usc.edu)

Background/ Purpose

Graduate school attendance and academic performance has been a topic of continual debate. Implementation of the flipped classroom model has been linked to increased absenteeism, raising concerns about its potential negative impact on student success. A study conducted in the Fall 2023 semester at the USC Alfred E. Mann School of Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences assessed the correlation between attendance and exam performance among third-year pharmacy students in two therapeutics courses.

Methods

A survey with primary data collection examined attendance and academic performance among third-year pharmacy students enrolled in PHRD 619: Cardiovascular System and PHRD 611: Infectious Diseases. Both courses did not require attendance and utilized the flipped classroom model. Attendance was collected using the Qwickly Attendance Tool, and academic performance was measured through examinations and final course grades. All student data was de-identified, and only consenting participants were included in the study.

Results

This study of 53 third-year pharmacy students found no significant correlation between attendance and academic performance in either course. Regression analysis for both courses did not show a strong relationship between attendance and academic performance and the slope of each regression line did not show a recognizable trend. The average median analysis also showed no significant correlation, with students who attended more synchronous sessions not performing at a higher caliber.

Conclusion

Synchronous attendance did not impact or correlate with academic achievement in this particular study. While study limitations (including the number of students who participated) limited the type of conclusions that could be drawn, these findings differ from existing studies that examine the relationship between attendance and exam performance. Although there are advantages in attending synchronous classes, students may succeed academically due to the availability of recorded lectures that may be tailored to accommodate different learning styles.