



Effectiveness of Remedial Classes in Enhancing Performance of Slow Learners in Homoeopathic Materia Medica: A Pre-Post Study

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Abstract

Background: Teaching Homoeopathic Materia Medica poses unique challenges due to its vast symptomatology and the need for fine differentiation of remedies. First BHMS students often struggle with retention and application, resulting in underperformance. Identifying slow learners and providing remedial support may help improve outcomes.

Objective: To evaluate the effectiveness of remedial classes and structured testing on the academic performance of slow learners in Homoeopathic Materia Medica.

Methods: A pre-post interventional study was conducted among First BHMS students at Dhanvantari Homoeopathic Medical College, Nashik. Based on Terminal Examination results, students scoring less than 50% were categorized as slow learners. These students underwent remedial teaching sessions followed by a post-test. Scores of absentees were excluded. Data were analyzed for mean differences and percentage improvement.

Results: Of 29 students, 28 completed both assessments. The mean pre-test (Terminal Exam) score was 15.11, while the mean post-test score after remedial intervention was 27.39, showing an 81.3% improvement. Individual student analysis revealed substantial score gains, with many students nearly doubling their performance. Graphical analysis confirmed a consistent upward trend.

Conclusion: Remedial classes with repeated testing significantly enhanced the performance of First BHMS slow learners in Materia Medica. Incorporating such structured remedial strategies into homoeopathic education can strengthen learning outcomes, provided consistent participation is maintained (1,3,5).

Introduction

Homoeopathic Materia Medica is widely acknowledged as one of the most intellectually demanding subjects in the BHMS curriculum. Unlike modern pharmacology, which is system-based and structured, Materia Medica requires students to memorize and understand thousands of symptoms across hundreds of remedies. The absence of a logical sequence, coupled with the need for fine differentiations between remedies, often overwhelms students and reduces their ability to recall during examinations.

Traditional methods such as didactic lectures and rote memorization have shown limited success in ensuring long-term retention. Educational psychology emphasizes active learning strategies such as retrieval practice, test-

enhanced learning, and spaced repetition (1,3,4). These methods focus on reinforcing memory through active recall rather than passive re-reading.

Remedial testing is one such strategy that involves periodic assessments after the initial teaching. Each test serves a dual purpose: identifying weak areas and reinforcing learned material. Evidence suggests that repeated testing not only improves immediate performance but also enhances long-term retention and application of knowledge (1,5).

In the context of homoeopathic education, where Materia Medica mastery is vital for clinical decision-making, remedial testing holds promise as an innovative teaching-learning tool. This study therefore evaluates the impact of remedial testing on the performance of First BHMS students.

Methodology

Study design: Pre-post interventional study.

Setting: Department of Homoeopathic Materia Medica, Dhanvantari Homoeopathic Medical College, Nashik.

Participants: 29 First BHMS students. Based on Terminal Examination results, those scoring <50% were categorized as slow learners.

Intervention: Students undertook a pre-test (Terminal exam), attended structured remedial sessions with reinforcement, and later completed a post-test.

Data handling: Absentees were excluded from analysis.

Analysis: Mean pre- and post-test scores were compared. Percentage improvement was calculated.

Results

- **Participation:** Of 29 students, 28 completed both assessments.
- **Average performance:** Pre-test mean score was 15.11; post-test mean score was 27.39.
- **Improvement:** Percentage gain was +81.3%.
- **Individual trends:** Many students nearly doubled their marks (e.g., Roll No. 16: 10 → 26; Roll No. 11: 15 → 27).
- **Graphical analysis:** Showed a clear upward trajectory across the cohort.

Discussion

This study demonstrates that remedial testing is a powerful educational tool for enhancing academic performance in Materia Medica. The observed 81.3% improvement is not only statistically meaningful but also educationally significant.

The findings align with retrieval practice theory, which suggests that repeated recall enhances memory consolidation (1). Similarly, the role of spaced repetition in reducing the forgetting curve has been well established (4). Together, these strategies support improved long-term retention, particularly useful in Materia Medica where symptom recall is critical.

Previous studies in medical education also confirm the effectiveness of retrieval-based and test-enhanced learning approaches (3,5). Although limited research exists in homoeopathic education, our findings suggest that structured remedial interventions increase both confidence and conceptual clarity among slow learners.

Limitations:

- Lack of a control group restricted causal inference.

- Study was limited to one subject and one institution.
- Long-term outcomes (e.g., university exam performance) were not assessed.

Future scope:

- Multi-institutional studies with larger samples.
- Incorporation of digital platforms for remedial sessions.
- Qualitative student feedback to assess stress, motivation, and engagement (7).

Conclusion

Remedial classes and repeated testing significantly improved performance of First BHMS slow learners in Materia Medica, nearly doubling average scores. Structured remedial testing can be a valuable teaching strategy to enhance learning outcomes in homoeopathic education (2,6).

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