

MEDICAL STUDENTS NEED A CORE ENGLISH CURRICULUM BASED ON CEFR (COMMON EUROPEAN FRAMEWORK OF REFERENCE FOR LANGUAGES)

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ABSTRACT

Literature Review: The traditional approach to teaching English in Vietnamese medical schools prioritises grammar over communication skills, the effectiveness of which is increasingly under consideration. The objective of this study was to assess undergraduate medical students' satisfaction and needs with their current English training in order to evaluate the appropriateness of a training program based on CEFR. **Methods:** In a cross-sectional survey utilizing a self-reported structured questionnaire, a sample of 487 students was selected from the students of Hanoi Medical University. **Results:** Forty-two percent of students reported they were not satisfied with the existing English curriculum with 77.2% and 55.4% of students identifying a disproportionate focus on medical terminology and grammar respectively, rather than on listening and communication skills. Most (83%) preferred a CEFR-based English program with extra course focusing on medical disciplines in active manners (pair work, group work, role play). All undergraduate student groups preferred CEFR-based training (ranging from 77.92% among general medical doctors up to 94.44% among bachelor of public health). The perceived need for English language skills was high with almost 60% of students wanting English courses focusing on the communication skills of reading, listening, speaking and writing. **Conclusions:** The results of this study highlight the need for a review and revision of the English language curriculum as taught within Vietnamese Medical Schools with an emphasis on the design of new teaching materials that meet the needs of both medical students and society. The curriculum should prioritize the communication skills of reading, listening, speaking and writing. It should cover topics related to medicine such as human anatomy, surgery and medical advances and offer learners a wide range of exercises including true/false, matching, multiple choice and gap-filling questions.

Keywords: Core English curriculum, CEFR (Common European Framework of Reference for Languages), Medical students, Medical University, Vietnam.