

INTRODUCTION

Artificial intelligence (AI) is the capacity of machines to mimic human behaviour (1). It is a group of mathematical models that can learn and analyse large amounts of data in a variety of forms fast and effectively. These models are expressed as algorithms. It can speed up and simplify clinical care, promote public health initiatives, and increase the accuracy and speed of diagnosis, among many other applications in the medical profession (2,3). Although these concepts are relatively new, artificial intelligence is rapidly becoming a new reality in medical practice due to the massive amount of healthcare data being generated and its speedy digitization (4).

The practice of medicine and medical education are changing significantly as human society enters the era of artificial intelligence. AI is quickly changing a number of fields, including medical education and healthcare. In order to improve diagnostic precision, customize patient treatment, and streamline administrative tasks, AI applications including robotics, machine learning, and natural language processing have been used into medical practice more and more (5). AI is rapidly changing a number of industries, including healthcare, by opening up new possibilities for tailored medication, diagnostics, and patient care. AI has the ability to completely transform medical education by enabling complicated decision-making, offering individualized instruction, and improving the preparation of aspiring medical professionals (6). AI has aided in the treatment of numerous illnesses and decreased a number of medical diagnostic and follow-up errors (7,8). AI has advanced quickly in recent years, from research to application in many medical fields (9). By 2035, the WHO estimates that there will be a shortage of 12.9 million healthcare workers worldwide (10). The burden of chronic diseases, rising healthcare costs, and an aging population are making it more difficult for governments around the world to create and modify healthcare delivery models.

As aspiring healthcare workers, medical students are important participants in this transition. The acceptance and use of AI technology in clinical practice can be strongly impacted by their knowledge of and attitudes regarding AI in medical school. Even though AI is becoming more and more important in healthcare, little is known about how medical students view its application in their coursework. To promote a greater knowledge of the many facets of health care AI, both positive and bad, it is imperative that medical curriculum and educational opportunities for patients, doctors, medical students, health administrators, and other healthcare workers be reviewed (11). Designing successful educational practices that promote AI literacy requires an understanding of their attitudes,

awareness, and readiness to integrate AI tools into their learning and future practice.

Hence the purpose of this cross-sectional study is to assess the impact of artificial intelligence on learning outcomes among medical students and comprehension of the application of AI in medical education at a tertiary care teaching hospital. This study may provide important insights into how medical curriculum might be modified to successfully integrate AI concepts and prepare students for the future of medicine in an AI-driven world by evaluating their understanding, perceptions, and perceived hurdles or facilitators.

METHODS

Study Design and Setting

After obtaining IEC approval, descriptive cross-sectional study conducted among undergraduate medical students to assess their knowledge, perception, and practice regarding artificial intelligence (AI) in the field of medicine in a tertiary care teaching hospital from January 2025 to March 2025.

Study Population

A total of 500 undergraduate medical students were included. The sample size was determined based on feasibility and adequate representation across different years of study. Students currently enrolled in the MBBS program who consented to participate were included. Incomplete responses and postgraduate students were excluded. Before each participant completed the questionnaire, they were informed of the study's objective and were asked for their informed consent. All participants' information was kept private. Data was gathered over a two-week period. A systematic questionnaire created specifically for this study was used to gather data. The questionnaire was pilot-tested among 30 students (not included in final analysis) to ensure clarity and content validity. Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.81 indicated good internal consistency.

Study Tool

A self-structured, pre-validated questionnaire was used. The tool consisted of four sections: Age, gender, year of study, and previous exposure to AI are among the demographics. Questions evaluating students' attitudes toward the use and teaching of AI in medical education, as well as their perceptions of the technology's role in medical education, its advantages, difficulties, and potential effects on future careers, are also included. Multiple-choice and true/false questions test students' knowledge of AI, machine learning, deep learning, natural language processing, and predictive analytics, as well as factors influencing their attitudes and comprehension of AI.

Statistical Analysis

Data were coded and entered into Microsoft Excel and analysed using SPSS version 27. Descriptive

statistics (frequency, percentage, mean ± SD) were used to summarize demographic variables and KAP responses. Inferential statistics, including Chi-square tests, were applied to assess associations between demographic factors and KAP scores. A p-value of <0.05 was considered statistically significant.

RESULTS

A total of 500 students participated in the study. The majority of students (170; 34%) were aged between 24–25 years, followed by 22–23 years (150; 30%), and 20–21 years (110; 22%). Only 70 students (14%) were aged above 25 years. Out of 500 participants, 290 (58%) were females and 210 (42%) were males, indicating a moderately higher representation of female students in this study.

A considerable proportion of students (180; 36%) agreed that AI is essential for advancing the medical field, while nearly half (240; 48%) remained neutral. Table 1 summarizes the perceptions of students towards AI in healthcare. When asked about AI’s clinical reliability, 140 students (28%) believed AI delivers accurate results, whereas 275 (55%) were undecided. Notably, 210 students (42%) agreed that AI could assist in providing lifestyle-based preventive recommendations by replacing physicians. Similarly, 185 students (37%) agreed AI could support diagnostic decision-making, while 165 (33%) agreed it could generate patient-specific prescriptions.

Interestingly, perceptions diverged on AI’s role in treatment personalization: 175 students (35%)

agreed, 165 (33%) disagreed, and 160 (32%) were neutral. Emotional and psychological roles of AI were largely dismissed, with 300 students (60%) disagreeing that AI could provide emotional support similar to a physician, and 305 (61%) rejecting the idea of AI substituting psychiatric counselling. On the other hand, 200 students (40%) believed AI could track patient adherence effectively, suggesting selective optimism toward AI’s supportive but not substitutive role. Table 2 highlights the reported practices of AI among medical students.

The most common use was for academic learning (185; 37%), followed by preparing assignments (125; 25%) and research projects (105; 21%). A smaller number of students reported using AI for clinical purposes, including assisting in diagnosis (95; 19%) and exploring treatment options (75; 15%). A minority of students (40; 8%) used AI for other medical purposes such as exploring alternative treatment methods. These findings suggest that while AI is increasingly integrated into academic and research domains, its application in direct clinical decision-making remains relatively limited among undergraduates.

DISCUSSION

This cross-sectional study was conducted among 500 undergraduate medical students to assess their knowledge, perception, and practice regarding artificial intelligence (AI) in the field of medicine. The responses provided a comprehensive understanding of how future healthcare professionals view the integration of AI into clinical

Table 1. Perceptions Regarding the Role of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in Medicine

| Statements | | Agree | Neutral | Disagree |
|------------|--|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| Q1 | AI is essential in advancing the medical field. | 180 (36%) | 240 (48%) | 80 (16%) |
| Q2 | AI delivers reliable and accurate clinical results. | 140 (28%) | 275 (55%) | 85 (17%) |
| Q3 | AI can assist in providing lifestyle-based preventive recommendations by replacing physicians (e.g., diet, exercise). | 210 (42%) | 160 (32%) | 130 (26%) |
| Q4 | AI has the potential to support diagnostic decision-making based on patient data by replacing physicians. | 185 (37%) | 190 (38%) | 125 (25%) |
| Q5 | AI can help in generating patient-specific prescriptions by replacing physicians by replacing physicians. | 165 (33%) | 190 (38%) | 145 (29%) |
| Q6 | AI can aid in designing personalized treatment strategies for individual patients by replacing physicians. | 175 (35%) | 160 (32%) | 165 (33%) |
| Q7 | AI is capable of offering emotional support similar to a physician. | 90 (18%) | 110 (22%) | 300 (60%) |
| Q8 | AI can effectively track and ensure patient adherence to medication and lifestyle modifications by replacing physicians. | 200 (40%) | 160 (32%) | 140 (28%) |
| Q9 | AI can serve as a substitute for psychiatric counselling provided by physicians. | 75 (15%) | 120 (24%) | 305 (61%) |

| Purpose | Number (Percentage) of Respondents |
|--|---|
| Academic Learning (e.g., studying) | 185 (37.0%) |
| Completing Academic Assignments | 125 (25.0%) |
| Conducting Research Projects | 105 (21.0%) |
| Assisting in Medical Diagnosis | 95 (19.0%) |
| Exploring Treatment Options and Modalities | 75 (15.0%) |
| Others (different treatment methods) | 40 (8.0%) |
| Total | 500 (100%) |

practice, education, and research.

Among the total participants, the highest proportion of students (170; 34%) were aged between 24–25 years. Furthermore, 290 participants (58%) were female, suggesting a moderately higher representation of women in the study population, which reflects the growing gender diversity in medical education. For instance, a study conducted in Syria reported that 70% of medical students had heard of AI technologies (2), while a study in Pakistan revealed that 68% of respondents were familiar with AI (13). Similarly, an Indian study reported that 62.5% of students had some awareness of AI applications (14). These results reflect a growing global trend where younger generations of medical professionals are increasingly exposed to AI concepts, either through their academic curricula, media, or digital tools.

A significant proportion of students are aware of AI in general, a smaller but meaningful percentage understand its relevance to clinical practice. This awareness is notably higher than what has been reported in some international studies. For example, a study by Swed S et al. found that only 23.7% of participants were aware of AI's role in healthcare. Similarly, a study in Pakistan showed that only 27.3% of doctors and 19.4% of medical students knew about its application in clinical scenarios (13). In stark contrast, a multicentric study conducted in the United Kingdom found that 80% of medical students believed that AI would play a vital and transformative role in the future of healthcare delivery (15). This optimism is mirrored by a French study, where 86% of paediatricians expressed support for the integration of AI tools into paediatric care settings (16). Moreover, a global online survey found that 68.4% of medical students believed that knowledge of AI is essential and should be formally included in medical training (17). Adding further evidence, a systematic review among healthcare students showed that 76% held a positive attitude towards AI in clinical settings (18). Additionally, another review analyzing physician and student perspectives found that in 5 out of 8 included studies, more than 65% of respondents reported awareness of AI's clinical potential (19). The perception of AI's role in modern medicine varied among participants. In this study, 180

students (36%) believed that AI is essential in medical practice, signifying a growing acceptance of AI's supportive capabilities in diagnostics, therapeutics, and patient care. Interestingly, 210 students (42%) expressed the belief that AI could replace some of the physician's roles, particularly in tasks such as creating personalized treatment plans or providing psychiatric support. These findings are in line with a study by Swed S et al., in which 45.7% of students strongly agreed and 41.7% had a positive attitude regarding the necessity of AI in the medical field (4). A web-based survey of surgeons found that 61.5% considered AI helpful for education and training, 59.5% for perioperative decision-making, and 53% saw its utility in improving surgical vision during emergency procedures (20). In a survey by Ahmed Z et al., 76.7% of students advocated for the inclusion of AI in the medical curriculum, while 78.3% emphasized its role in radiology, 59.8% in pathology, and 57.2% during the COVID-19 pandemic (13). Similarly, Jindal A et al. reported that 89.1% of Indian students expressed optimism regarding the future of AI in medicine (14). The UK multicentric study further revealed that 89% of students believed AI literacy would be advantageous to their medical careers, and 78% supported integrating AI training into undergraduate medical education (15). However, not all perceptions were positive. In a study from Nepal, more than 49% of students agreed or strongly agreed that AI might lead to a reduction in physician employment opportunities (21). In another study by Civaner MM et al., 58.6% of participants felt that AI might devalue the medical profession, 45.5% believed it could undermine trust, and 42.7% worried about a negative impact on doctor-patient relationships (22).

Further, French paediatricians expressed concerns about ethical and privacy risks, with 50% citing AI as a threat to data security and 35% seeing it as a risk to human ethics in clinical care. Similarly, in the study by Perrier E et al., 39% of respondents feared losing their clinical skills, and 6% feared that AI could eventually result in job displacement (16). A systematic review by Chen M et al. found that while 77% of respondents were optimistic about clinical AI, 68% disagreed with the notion that AI

could replace doctors, instead viewing it as a tool to support clinical decision-making rather than act autonomously (19).

Regarding practical application, a majority of the students—185 (37%)—reported using AI tools primarily for studying and academic learning. 125 students (25%) utilized AI for assignment preparation, and 105 (21%) applied AI in research work. Other notable applications included diagnosis (95; 19%) and exploring treatment options (75; 15%). These figures highlight that AI is already being integrated into the academic workflow of students, even if not yet widely adopted for clinical decision-making. In contrast, a study across 19 UK medical schools reported that only 45 out of 484 students had received any formal instruction in AI, suggesting a gap between interest and institutional support (15).

Similarly, De Simone B et al. reported that while 25% of surgeons were trained in robotic systems, only 9.5% were currently practicing with these tools (20). In Swed S. et al.'s study, residents and assistant professors were found to be 2.37 and 4.42 times more likely, respectively, to have hands-on experience with AI tools compared to medical students (12). In Perrier E et al.'s findings, those who received formal training in AI demonstrated significantly better knowledge and were more likely to have practical exposure to AI in medical settings (16). Finally, a comprehensive systematic review of 60 studies revealed that actual usage rates of AI among healthcare students ranged from only 10% to 30%, reflecting a substantial gap between awareness and real-world practice (19).

LIMITATIONS

The limitations of our study were it limited to a single institution, reducing the generalizability of results to wider medical student populations. Although efforts were made to compare results with international studies, variations in sample characteristics, academic curricula, and exposure to AI technologies across countries may affect the comparability of results.

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CONCLUSION

Although a considerable proportion of medical students recognize the potential of artificial intelligence in advancing the medical field, supporting diagnostic decision-making, generating patient-specific prescriptions, and aiding in the design of personalized treatment strategies, a substantial number of students remain neutral or express skepticism about its reliability, accuracy, and ability to replace physicians in providing lifestyle-based recommendations, emotional support, or psychiatric counselling. These findings highlight that, while AI is viewed as a valuable tool in academic learning, research, and certain clinical applications, there is still hesitation in fully embracing it as a substitute for human physicians, underscoring the importance of increasing awareness, providing targeted training, and developing clear guidelines for its safe and effective integration into medical education and healthcare practice.

Ethical Considerations

Ethical issues including plagiarism, informed consent, misconduct, data fabrication and/or falsification, double publication and/or submission, redundancy, etc. have been completely observed by the authors. Consent was obtained from all the participants. The study was approved by the Ethics committee of TMCH (No.12/ECR/634/Inst/TN2020/RR20). We extend our appreciation to the participants who responded to our study questions. We acknowledge that we have not used any AI tools or technologies to prepare this manuscript.

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