



Editorial

Electives in Forensic Medicine and Toxicology

The word ‘Elective’ is derived from the Latin *electives* by way of *eligere*, “pick out or select. It is something that is optional. In academic institutions, electives are the optional class or short-term courses which students choose to gain extra knowledge. They do not have any significant course requirements and are not necessary for the particular degree of study but add to students’ credits for graduation. As these courses are not necessarily evaluated, motivate students to learn new things apart from their academics in short period of time. The students have the freedom of choice to select the electives. As they elect or choose the topic of their interest, students learn it enthusiastically and with utmost curiosity. These short courses are lighter, filled with more fun, and can benefit students in numerous ways.

The National Medical Commission (NMC) has introduced the concept of ‘electives’ in the new competency based medical education (CBME) with the intension to provide opportunity to the students to explore, discover and experience the areas of their interest. These provide the students an ample opportunity to involve themselves in more specific clinical, laboratory, community or research work. They inspire students to think beyond examinations and think laterally of the career pathways. The electives can significantly improve the quality of students’ education. They should prepare the students to the challenges of the academics and improve their academic skills. Also, they help the students to expand their portfolio.

In Forensic Medicine and Toxicology, the students can explore many new things which are directly or indirectly related to the subject and help them to have essential additional learning in the field of legal medicine. This enables them to be equipped with crucial knowledge for future challenges during their clinical practice or eventual research. The students should have the wide options of electives to be chosen and they must not be limited to their field of study. As it the responsibility of each institution to pre-determine the number and nature of electives, based on available local resources and number of faculty, different institutions are offering different electives. The Rajiv Gandhi University of Health Sciences, Bengaluru has proposed following electives; Disaster management, Disaster Victim Identification, Deposing evidence in a court of law, Medicolegal aspects of healthcare/hospital administration, medicolegal aspects of management of emergency cases, Forensic odontology, Forensic Anthropology, Forensic ballistics, Forensic Psychiatry, Forensic Radiology, Forensic Toxicology, Snakebite – Species identification and management, and Crime scene Investigation. However, the electives are not limited to these topics. Even, the students can have Forensic traumatology, cyber forensics, Forensic serology, Forensic paediatrics,

Forensic obstetrics, Medicolegal handling of POCSO cases, Bio toxicology, socio-medical toxicology, Forensic investigative techniques, Forensic research, Basics of research etc. Any topic which requires forensic interpretation or involves forensic component and has potential growth to be taken for further studies can be an elective topic.

It is important for the students to use the opportunity provided by the governing body to make use of these electives and gain extra knowledge which is essential for their personal and professional growth...!

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