

ABSTRACT

Cadaver dissection has been used as the main method of teaching human anatomy for the last five centuries. There are emerging concerns on the negative consequences of cadaver dissection on medical students, leading to suggestions on use of alternative technological advancements to cadaver dissection. However, literature on medical students' perceptions on cadaver dissection and their opinions on anatomy as a subject is scanty particularly for newly established medical schools. We provided a structured questionnaire with 17 items requiring 'yes, no or undecided' responses and 6 items with Likert-type questions ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree to all preclinical students pursuing Bachelor of Medicine and Bachelor of Surgery at the new school of Medicine, Kenya Methodist University. Out of a total of 78 students, 75 correctly filled the questionnaires and were analyzed. An overwhelming majority (85.3%) found their first visit to the dissection room exciting. Most consider dissection the best method of learning anatomy, and do not support the view that it should be replaced by computer aided programs or plastic models. Despite most students indicating that they like anatomy, and find it exciting, very few are willing to take up careers as anatomists. More emphasis needs to be placed on pre-dissection training and counseling to make the experience better for students. There is need to mentor students on taking up anatomy as a career, in view of the great need for anatomists in the region.