

# HOW CAN WE IMPROVE MENTAL HEALTH ACT TEACHING FOR MEDICAL STUDENTS?

## AUTHORS

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## INTRODUCTION

The *Mental Health Act (MHA) 1983* is a complex and significant piece of legislation which has the potential to significantly deprive someone of their liberties. Historical papers have demonstrated (1) that the understanding of this legislature by doctors may be lacking. This could be from lack of medical law teaching whilst at medical school.

Finding ways to improve medical student's knowledge of the MHA is paramount. This has been explored in relation to foundation doctors (2) however there is limited literature about how different teaching methods can improve retainment and understanding of medical law.

## DISCUSSION

During the focus group, students explained that the interactive teaching approach was more enjoyable and increased stimulation. The tutor noted that **Group 2** probed various interesting conversations around medical ethics and human rights finding it more enjoyable to teach.

The results were similar in both groups, **group 1** tended to answer more correctly than **group 2**. A possible explanation proposed was the way the pre-reading was utilised; with group 2 wanting earlier communication that the pre-reading would be useful for the scenario.

## OBJECTIVE

To explore the effectiveness of different teaching approaches on the understanding and retainment of the Mental Health Act 1983 and Mental Capacity Act for medical students

## METHODOLOGY

- Two different teaching styles performed across two consecutive years for 3<sup>rd</sup> year medical students during an eating disorder special interest group.
- **Group 1 (2024) - Didactic lecture style**
- **Group 2 (2025) - Interactive style**
- Groups received the same pre-reading
- A Slido was used to gather data on their understanding comparing the two years
- Focus group held afterwards exploring their enjoyment and engagement.

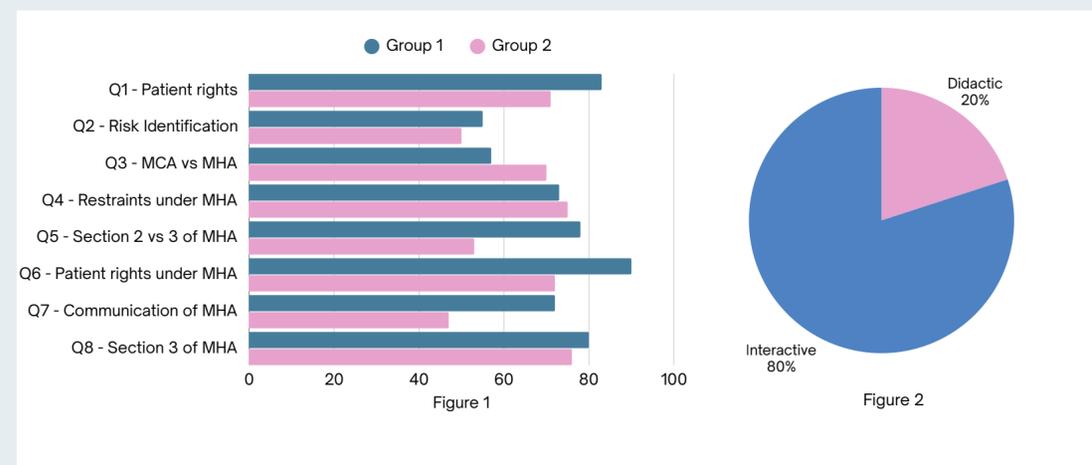


## RESULTS

- Slido data (*Figure 1*) demonstrated an **increase** in correct answers on MCA vs MHA during the interactive teaching (**Group 2**)
- **Increase** in correct answers for practicalities of the MHA for didactic teaching (**Group 1**)
- During the focus group **80%** of students preferred the **interactive teaching style**. (*Figure 2*)

## CONCLUSION

Findings ways to improve the understanding of the *MHA 1983* in medical students is important. The interactive storytelling approach demonstrated increased enjoyment and probed further questions whereas a didactic approach demonstrated more correct answers. This study suggests that potentially a hybrid approach to teaching would improve both engagement and understand which future sessions will explore.



## KEY SOURCES & ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

### References

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