

## Correspondence

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### Formative assessment during collection of attendance

India has 531 medical colleges with a median annual intake of 150 students (range 50–250).<sup>1</sup> The conduct of 1-hour lectures in a single hall is a common practice in most medical colleges. For recording attendance, teachers commonly call the rolls at the end of the class. A teacher spends an average of 15% of the 1-hour for calling the rolls of 250 students. If we consider a class of 150 students, a loss of 5–6 minutes is inevitable.<sup>2</sup> Hence, an average loss of 5 minutes in a class and three classes in a day ends up with a loss of 15 minutes in a day. During the roll call, the students remain idle. This time could be used for students' academic engagement and a formative assessment by 'Students' engagement during collection of attendance'.<sup>3</sup> In this method, students write answers to questions and handover the answer sheets to the teacher and the teacher records the attendance from the sheets later. This method requires a high level of motivation from the teachers. Besides, students' anonymity cannot be maintained as the rolls are written on the response sheet.

Formative assessment is a continuous constructive assessment by learners. It should be anonymous, non-competitive, flexible, fast, frequent and should be coupled with fun.<sup>4</sup> We designed an online, smartphone-based quiz that could be used as a method of formative assessment. We call this method 'Formative assessment during collection of attendance (FADCA)'. In this method, the teachers design a short quiz (e.g. with five questions having multiple-choice answers) according to the topic of the lecture. These questions are uploaded on an online platform such as Google forms. At the end of the lecture, teachers share the link of the online assessment through a quick response (QR) code on the screen or share a link of the quiz in students' social groups. While the teacher calls the rolls, the students respond to the questions. Immediately after submission of the answers, the students get the score and the answer key from the online quiz platform.

Teachers may avoid the roll call and consider the response to the quiz as the attendance in the class. However, for that, teachers need

to either record the email id or take the roll number declared by the students on the quiz form. In this case, the students are bound to participate in a formative assessment and students' anonymity cannot be maintained. In addition, any student facing technical difficulty (e.g. smartphone malfunction and poor internet connection) or not having a smartphone may miss the attendance. Furthermore, although teachers share the quiz link through a QR code, the students in the class may share the web link of the quiz (after opening the quiz form on the browser) with absentees. Hence, chances of getting false attendance cannot be ruled out. Due to these three reasons, FADCA is kept as a voluntary and anonymous assessment method where students get immediate feedback on the classroom learning.

The students are instructed to hold answering questions 10 rolls before their turn, so that they do not miss to respond to the roll calls. In addition, they are also informed about the aim of self-assessment so that they do not start a discussion among peers which may cause chaos in the classroom.

This method has some limitations. It is not applicable for medical colleges that use biometric attendance of students. Some students may face technical difficulty in participation in initial days of implementation. Many faculty members may not find it interesting to make a quiz for each of their classes.

In conclusion, FADCA is an anonymous formative assessment method where students can assess classroom learning during the roll call. This method can utilize that time of the students which is commonly lost idle. Considering the advantages and limitations, any medical teacher may apply this method to engage the students during collection of attendance.

*Conflicts of interest.* None declared

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Himel Mondal  
Department of Physiology  
Bhima Bhoi Medical College and Hospital  
Balangir  
Odisha  
[himelmkg@gmail.com](mailto:himelmkg@gmail.com)

Shaikat Mondal  
Department of Physiology  
Raiganj Government Medical College and Hospital  
West Bengal  
India