

## Case Report

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# Learning innovation in community medicine teaching: A-Z of job responsibilities of anganwadi worker, accredited social health activist, and auxiliary nurse midwife

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### Abstract:

The interaction between medical students and frontline healthcare workers is one of the crucial components of community medicine. The interaction of medical students with frontline healthcare workers provides multiple opportunities. Medical students like to understand their job responsibilities and their involvement in implementing the various national health programs at the community level. Innovation is required to train our medical students better and enhance their learning. A learning and teaching innovation was developed by us to provide insight into the various roles and involvement of frontline healthcare workers in the community. One innovation is the A-Z activity calendar of frontline healthcare workers in teaching and learning in medical education.

### Keywords:

Community medicine, frontline workers, learning innovation, medical education, teaching

## Introduction

The medical curriculum has been designed to raise critical thinking in students' minds during their undergraduate period.<sup>[1]</sup> This leads to the use of learning in their constant, conscious, and competent practices in patient care professionally.<sup>[2-5]</sup> The real-life exposure creates a broader understanding with integration to seek the truth with knowledge and apply them to patient's service.<sup>[6]</sup> It has also been found that students emphasize the task assigned to them, and a reflective attitude is the least until proven.<sup>[7,8]</sup> The earlier the habit is imbibed, the faster the outcome is in subsequent academic years of study.

Various attributes of reflection lead to enthusiasm in the long journey of

seeking knowledge, self-monitoring, and subconscious analysis, which, when well established, carry forward the vicious cycle of learning and reflecting. Only new innovative techniques can be utilized to solve such problems in medical education, and innovation in medical education is not a new concept.<sup>[9]</sup> Students' approach to learning depends on the learning environment and context of teaching. Superficial and deep learning concepts are essential concerns of both students and teachers.

Currently, in India, Accredited Social Health Activist (ASHA) workers, Auxiliary Nurse Midwife (ANM), and Anganwadi workers (AWW) are working as community healthcare workers or frontline healthcare workers.<sup>[10,11]</sup> The main role and job

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responsibilities of frontline workers are to bring services to people's doorsteps. ASHA and ANM workers belong to the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MoHFW) and AWW in the Ministry of Women and Child Development (MoWCD).<sup>[12]</sup> The interaction with all three is one of the essential parts of the community exposure visits under the undergraduate curriculum in medical sciences. The job responsibilities and functions of these three are described in the undergraduate curriculum in community medicine subject as per the National Medical Commission. As part of community exposure, the focus was on orienting the students to learn and imbibe the knowledge of the functioning of healthcare workers. The healthcare facilities that cater to the corresponding healthcare workers are also an integral part of the learning about frontline workers. The interaction between medical students enhances the understanding of each healthcare provider's essential job responsibilities and functions. On a day-to-day basis, frontline workers are involved in various activities, responsibilities, maintenance of various records, etc. We have developed an innovative A-Z activity calendar [Figure 1] of the job responsibilities and functions of these three frontline workers.

| A   | B   | C  | D   | E  |
|---|---|--|---|--|
| Awareness regarding health schemes                          | Beneficiaries Registration  | Counseling on health issues<br>Child growth<br>Community stakeholders' engagement              | Demographic details,<br>Danger sign identification  | Escort to Health facilities<br>Early Childhood Development |
| Family Planning Services<br>Food distribution<br>Folic Acid | Growth Chart plotting<br>Growth Monitoring                              | Health Survey<br>Home visits<br>Health Education   | Immunization<br>Institutional deliveries promotion<br>Iron and Folic Acid tablets               | Janani Suraksha Yojana/Janani Sishu Suraksha Karyakram     |
| Kishori Sakti Yojana  | Labor monitoring  | Medical care<br>Maternal and Child Health<br>Mobilization of community                         | Nutrition, (Supplementary Nutrition)<br>National Health Mission                                 | Oral Dehydration Salt                                      |
| Pregnancy care  | Quality of life in chronic diseases and mental illness/health           | RBSK<br>RMNCH+A<br>Referral services/management  | Subcentre Supervision (Role to ASHA and AWW)<br>Sanitation<br>Supply<br>School health education | Training   |
| Urine Pregnancy Test<br>Undernutrition                      | Village Health Plan<br>Village Health and Nutrition Day<br>Vital Events | Waste management at site of immunization and in general<br>Water (safe drinking water)<br>WASH | Xerophthalmia   | Yellow Vitamin-A Solution                                  |
| Zinc Supplements Tablets                                    |   |  |   |  |

Figure 1: An innovative A-Z activity calendar to understand job responsibility of frontline workers

### Description of the A-Z activity calendar

This innovative A-Z activity calendar depicts the different types of work performed during their everyday work, and these activities are part of the Indian health system. Medical undergraduate students will be taught about those activities using the calendar. The whole activities, job responsibilities, and functions are in the summary form in the calendar.

### Learning innovation in medical education

Different types of innovations have been tried in the field of medical education to make the teaching-learning method more interesting. These innovations include role play, online interactive sessions, quizzes, and debates.<sup>[13]</sup> Those innovations also help in remembering things effectively. In undergraduate medical education in India, the roles and responsibilities of ASHA, AWW, and ANM are not only an important part of the community medicine curriculum but also very difficult to remember.<sup>[14,15]</sup> This A-Z calendar can help in remembering things effectively.

### Conclusion

The learning activity of medical students should be an integrative approach, and newer innovations should always be encouraged in the learning. The A-Z activity calendar should be studied for its effectiveness in learning benefits among medical students. This will help in the formulation of other innovations in medical education.

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### Conflicts of interest

There are no conflicts of interest.

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