

Peer Assisted Learning in Undergraduate Medical Curriculum-A Literature Review

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INTRODUCTION

A career in health profession does not just limit to patient care, but includes clinical teaching, research, and administrative duties. To address this effectively GMC recommends to introduce teaching to medical students (GMC,2015). Acting upon this advice, many institutions have revived and started implementing an ancient teaching methodology used by Socrates & Plato, the Peer Assisted Learning (PAL) (Topping, 1998). PAL is a broader umbrella term which includes many entities like Peer learning & teaching, Peer mentoring, Peer leadership and Peer assessments. (Henning, 2008). PAL has been noted to improve the student engagement, self confidence, performance and overall performance (Smith, 2018).

AIM

Aim: To explore Peer-assisted learning as a learning tool among undergraduate medical students.

Objective:

1. To understand the undergraduate student's views of PAL in their learning
2. To explore the multidimensional support of PAL in their holistic growth.

METHODS

The study was approved by the Research and Ethical committee of our university. A systematic literature review was done, reviewing articles from major literature databases.. Analysis was done in two stages. First a systematic analysis was done with Prisma protocol and Briggs critical appraisal tools to access the methodological rigor of the studies and 20 articles were selected, after carefully applying all the inclusion and exclusion criteria in the last 5year period. In the second step, an in-depth analysis of the qualitative data was done to understand how peer-assisted learning has impacted student learning. These are shown in the results. Figure 1 shows the results of the first step. Figure 2 shows the results of the second step of analysis.

RESULTS

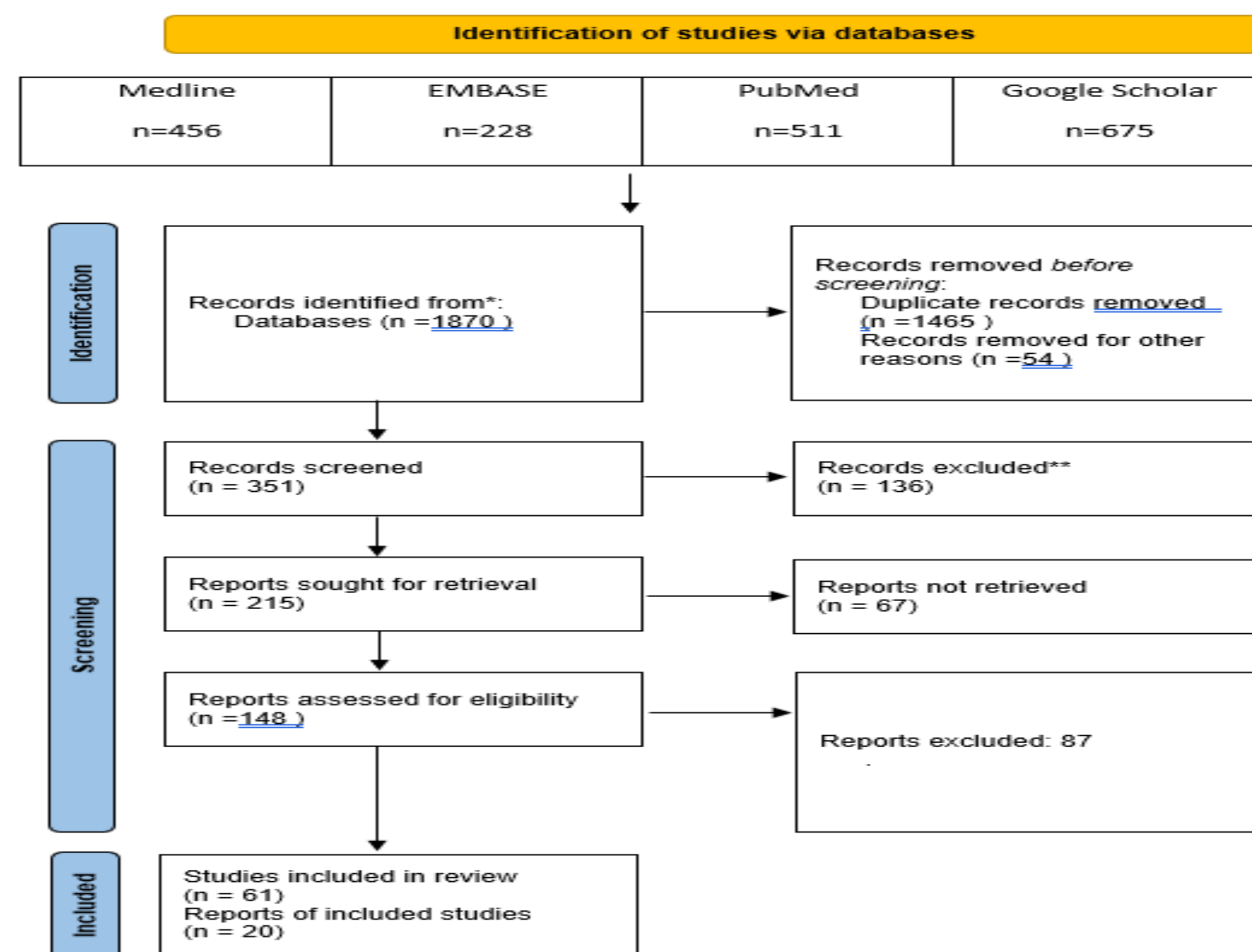


Figure 1: Results of data search

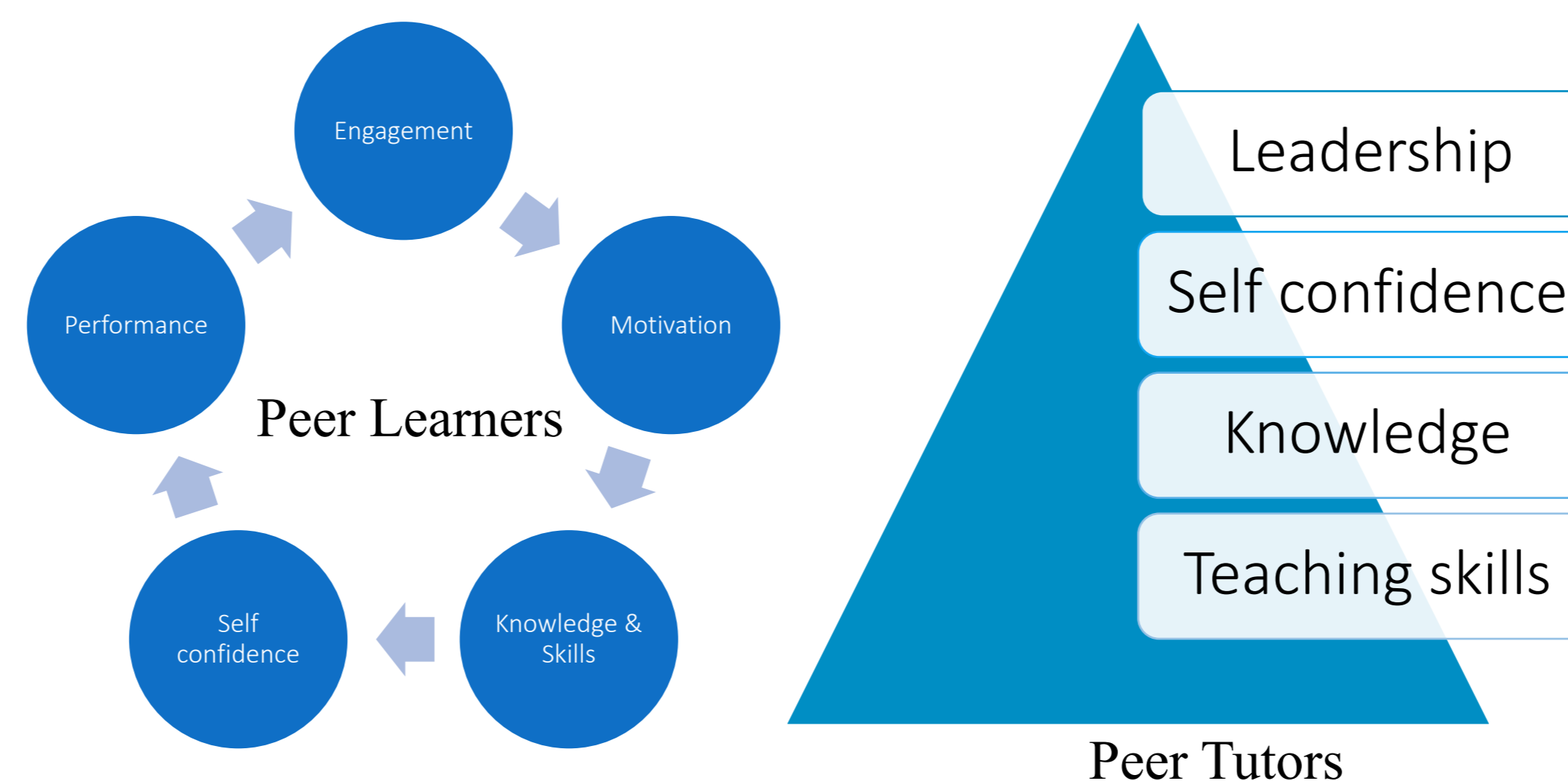


Figure 2: Results of the qualitative analysis

It was seen that both peer learners (PL) and peer tutors (PT) have symbiotic relationship in terms of benefit. The peer learners were well engaged within the session, given that hierarchy is broken and they feel at ease. This in turn increases their motivation, thereby providing an interactive & effective learning opportunity

DISCUSSION

Students often felt that a session with an Academic faculty is very formal It creates a stringent environment where the student are task oriented and competitive (Schutte, 2018). Aydin et al in their study have emphasized how learners felt safe and relaxed in a PAL session. when this hierarchy is broken. This according to Maslow satisfies the basic needs and help them advance in their learning (Aydin, 2022). From Vygotsky's Social Constructivist approach, we believe that when "peers interact among each other, there is both social construct and co-construct of knowledge" (Vygotsky, 1998).

Bugaj et al, in their study noted that both peer learners & tutors rapidly gained confidence through the sessions, the procedures and skills were perfect, and they have a positive perception of expertise and competency. This has greatly increased their "Self-efficacy and Self-confidence" (Bugaj, 2019).

CONCLUSION

Enhancing student motivation and engagement is a difficult task to achieve especially in a clinical setting due to many reasons including high requirements for knowledge, critical thinking, clinical reasoning, etc, besides the environment itself. In a PAL session with Peer tutors, creation of the safe environment has seen to impact the student's motivation and engagement, thereby facilitating learning.

Limitations: Small purposive sample, no blinded review

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