DOES ATTENDANCE CREDIT INCREASE MEDICAL STUDENTS’ PARTICIPATION IN IN-CLASS LECTURES AND PERFORMANCE IN PHARMACOLOGY?

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INTRODUCTION
In-class attendance is very important for a successful academic performance of students in a medical school. However, in-class attendance in a traditional theory lecture may be a debate for many medical educators. This present study aimed to analyze a correlation between an in-class lecture attendance and a performance in Pharmacology subject examination.

METHODS
A total of 182 students from January 2017 to December 2018, were enrolled in the study. Institutional ethical clearance was obtained. First group of students were given attendance credit of 10 points (credited attendance) calibrated as per their percentage of attendance during their whole semesters. Following the subsequent year, attendance of the second group of students was not credited (non-credited attendance). Pearson correlation test was used to see the correlation between the scores and in-class lecture attendances, and Chi Square test was used to compare the categorical data. P value ≤ 0.05 was considered to be significant.

RESULTS
Eighty seven percent (87%) of students attended more than 70% of lectures when in-class attendance was credited whereas only 44% of students attended more than 70% of lectures when attendance was not credited. The average of ‘credited in-class attendance’ was 87% vs 61% for ‘non-credited in-class attendance’ (P<0.001). The correlation between academic score and ‘credited in-class attendance’ was significant (Pearson correlation coefficient, r= 0.240, df= 90, r for df 90 at P=0.05 is 0.205), and the correlation between academic score and ‘non-credited in-class attendance’ was highly significant (Pearson correlation coefficient, r= 0.368, df= 88, r for df 80 at P=0.01 is 0.283).

CONCLUSION
Attendance credit increases the in-class attendance significantly in the lectures, and it has significant positive correlation with the performance of Pharmacology subject examination. So, external motivation to attend the in-class lectures increases in-class attendance and performance in exams.