

Supplementary

Questionnaire

Factors Affecting JKUAT Pharmacy Students' Transition from Preclinical to Clinical Years

Consent

1. I agree to take part in the study.

I agree to take part in the study.

I do not agree to take part in the study

Section A: Sociodemographic Characteristics

2. What is your Gender? *

Male

Female

3. What is your year of birth? *

Example: January 7, 2019

4. What religion do you practice? *

Christianity

Islam

Hinduism

Other: _____

5. In which class are you? *

3.2

3.3

4.1

5.2

6. Where do you reside? *

University hostels

Private rented houses/hostels

With parents/guardians

Other: _____

7. What is your source of funding for school fees? *

Government-sponsored

Self-sponsored

Other Sponsor

8. What is your source of funding for the upkeep costs (non-school fees related costs)? *

- Family
- HELB Loan
- Part-time job
- Other: _____

9. What was your grade in KCSE? *

10. Do you have a diploma in pharmaceutical technology? *

- Yes
- No

11. Do you engage in any extracurricular activities? *

- Yes
- No

12. If Yes, which activity? _____

Section B: Attitudes

Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements:

13. The introduction to the third year of study was satisfactory. *

- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Neutral
- Agree
- Strongly Agree

14. My transition from the second year to the third year of study was smooth. *

- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Neutral
- Agree
- Strongly Agree

15. I needed time to adjust to the expectations of the third year of study. *

- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Neutral
- Agree
- Strongly Agree

16. I experienced a good balance between my academic and personal life during the transition from the second to the third year of study. *

- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Neutral
- Agree
- Strongly Agree

17. I felt well prepared to perform medical technical skills in my third year of study. *

- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Neutral
- Agree
- Strongly Agree

18. My experiences in the third year of study closely matched my initial expectations during the preclinical years. *

- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Neutral
- Agree
- Strongly Agree

19. The transition to the third year of study positively influenced my career aspirations in pharmacy. *

- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Neutral
- Agree
- Strongly Agree

20. During the transition from the second year to the third year of study, I could confidently apply theoretical knowledge to real patient cases. *

- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Neutral
- Agree
- Strongly Agree

21. I find the knowledge acquired during the pre-clinical phase to be relevant for the clinical phase. *

- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Neutral
- Agree
- Strongly Agree

Section C: Challenges

22. As a BPharm student in my clinical years of study, I have to study for longer than I did in my preclinical years. *

- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Neutral
- Agree
- Strongly Agree

23. As a BPharm student in my clinical years of study, I have enough time to study. *

- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Neutral
- Agree
- Strongly Agree

24. My study workload in my clinical years of study is greater than it was in the preclinical years. *

- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Neutral
- Agree
- Strongly Agree

25. I experienced a great deal of stress during the transition from the second to the third year of study. *

- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Neutral
- Agree
- Strongly Agree

26. I considered quitting pharmacy school during the transition from my second year to my third year of study. *

- Strongly Disagree

- Disagree
- Neutral
- Agree
- Strongly Agree

27. I considered deferring my studies during the transition from my second year to my third year of study due to academic pressure. *

- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Neutral
- Agree
- Strongly Agree

28. I have had the opportunity to network with professionals in the field of pharmacy during my clinical experiences. *

- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Neutral
- Agree
- Strongly Agree

29. To what extent did you feel supported by faculty members during the transition period from the second to the third year of study in the following aspects? *

Likert Scale

1. Strongly Disagree
2. Disagree
3. Neutral
4. Agree
5. Strongly Agree

Aspect

- a) Clear communication of expectations and course requirements
- b) Availability and responsiveness of faculty members for questions or concerns
- c) Adequacy of guidance and resources provided to address challenges
- d) Timely and constructive feedback on academic performance
- e) Encouragement and support in pursuing academic and professional goals

Focus group discussion guide

Focus Group Discussions – Leading Questions

The following guiding questions were used to facilitate focus group discussions (FGDs) with JKUAT Pharmacy students transitioning from preclinical to clinical years. The discussions aimed to explore students' experiences, challenges, and coping mechanisms during this transition.

1. Describe your experience transitioning from preclinical to clinical years in the pharmacy program at JKUAT.
2. What were some significant changes you encountered during this transition period?
3. In what ways did your support network (e.g., peers, faculty, family) contribute to or alleviate the challenges you faced during this transition?
4. Were there any specific resources or support services you found particularly helpful during the transition?
5. Can you discuss any changes or adjustments you had to make in your study habits or academic approach during the transition?
6. Did you experience any emotional or psychological impacts during the transition period, and if so, how did you address them?

Focus Group Discussion Responses**Y3T2****1. Describe your experience transitioning from preclinical to clinical years in the pharmacy program at JKUAT.**

Participant 1: To most of the people including me, it is like flipping a switch, like snapping a finger, because you are from the normal things that you are used to from other educational levels like high school with units like anatomy, biochemistry to units like pharmacology, pharmaceuticals and deeper chemistry that are structure-based. So, if you are not ready by the end of your preclinical years it is quite hard. It is not a smooth transition for me. You have to cut yourself off from a lot of other things you used to do during the preclinical years.

Participant 2: I no longer have the privilege of doing the bare minimum because in my preclinical years I was dependent on my biology knowledge from high school, which was really useful, but right now the information is not enough you have to study and understand.

Participant 3: On one side you are scared and, on another side, you are just motivated because having completed the first two years, it gives you some motivation that you can just push on through the rest of the years. It is scary because you are now getting the real stuff in pharmacy. I had to make lots of changes e.g. change my study plans. The new units require a lot of effort and to understand the concepts hence the need to read widely and be conversant with everything.

Participant 4: The experience is really overwhelming because there is so much new information and the units are new. In 1st and 2nd year, we depended on the information from high school but now the information is new. It is also scary because I am getting closer to being a doctor.

Participant 5: The transition was overwhelming due to the increased workload and also it is harder to study. The units are more difficult and the knowledge is too huge than in the preclinical units.

2. What were some significant changes you encountered during this transition period?

Participant 1: My academic and study timetable, because in my preclinical years you had to study for few units but coming to clinical years more key units that I have to know in my fingertips. I had to incorporate how I might go through one or two pharmaceutical journals to keep up with the latest pharmacy news and also to cut some slack in the time I used to spend having fun and socializing with some of my friends.

Participant 2: The change in the content we were studying from basic chemistry and biology to now comprehensive information regarding drugs. I have to study for extra hours because the information is not easy to grasp unlike in 1st and 2nd year and we need to commit it to memory. Also, I got to obtain clinical exposure and experience one-on-one interaction with patients.

Participant 3: I got to start learning new things. The content that we were studying were new, and that gave me motivation and passion. I also had to change my study plan, now that I had more core units that required more time for me to grasp them. I had to be flexible and strategic enough.

Participant 4: There is too much information e.g. when learning about cephalosporins, you have to grasp the mode of action and lots of information. Also, the transitioning helped us to obtain

clinical exposure through the ward rounds which made us feel more like doctors. The main change is too much studying.

Participant 5: Most lecturers used to send notes during the preclinical years. In clinical you have to use textbooks which are bulky and there is an increase in workload. We are also learning about drugs and being taught by pharmacists, going for rotations which is nice.

3. In what ways did your support network (e.g., peers, faculty, family) contribute to or alleviate the challenges you faced during this transition?

Participant 1: My friends and family really helped me. They pump that support I you and tell you that you can do it, they plant and build the psych up and give you courage and make you know that you can do it. This gives me stability and mental strength. My connection to my peers and other pharmacists out there, lecturers and the department of pharmacy also helped. If they were able to do it, it means it is doable. Whenever you have a mental breakdown, you family is always there.

Participant 2: My family has been really supportive. During exams I get money for laundry so I don't have to waste time washing clothes to read for exams. My peers also supported me, because they have a positive attitude that we cannot give up having come all the way. I also have peers who have finished this course recently, is a constant motivation that I can make it. The faculty, some are supportive some are not, so my experience for the faculty is neutral.

Participant 3: My family was of great help. They encouraged me and are still encouraging me. My peers, especially those ahead of me, we had the platforms and events where we met and we shared how pharmacy was taking us and from that sharing, it really encouraged me to put up with whatever I was studying. Even the peers in the same class, we have been having study sessions, sharing a lot and do a couple of things together, which helps me. One of the faculty members used to give us encouragements.

Participant 4: I have gotten most of my support from family, financially they really support me and encourage. Also, from my peers, we do discussions which makes things easier. My friends were also understanding when I was not available to spend time with them because I had to read. From the faculty, I wouldn't say we get so much support from them. Others encourage us.

Participant 5: My peers supported me in that most of the time during the weekend, I am studying, we have made it possible that I continue with my studies which have been helpful. My family also understand when I don't go over the weekend because I had to study. The faculty, e.g. a lab technician who encouraged us and asked of our progress which was very nice.

4. Were there any specific resources or support services you found particularly helpful during the transition?

Participant 1: I really didn't come across a lot of resources which proved to be helpful in my clinical years. There are some apps that I use that have turned out to be productive to me. I use productivity apps like Balance and Notion and mental apps like Balance Apps which help me relax in the times where I feel that I am having mental breakdown because of the frequency I have to study. There are also apps that simplify some notes such as Med Notes.

Participant 2: I don't think I had anything extra to help me. Only YouTube, that teach pharm core units were helpful and the reference resources that the lecturers gave us also helped.

Participant 3: I don't think there are any specific resources, but a couple of YouTube channels that I discovered. And also, books that are easy to read and understand for units like pharmaceutical chemistry.

Participant 4: I'd say just the library and maybe online apps, YouTube, Chatgpt, but not much.

Participant 5: YouTube videos and apps lie pharma library.

5. Can you discuss any changes or adjustments you had to make in your study habits or academic approach during the transition?

Participant 1: In my preclinical years, I have been able to study even in noisy environments but transitioning to clinical years I have been exposed to much realistic and serious core units that I am forced to have quiet reading and also to adjust to late night studying to catch up with the course.

Participant 2: I have had to read more than once for CATs. E.g. preclinical you could only read once and be okay but for the pharm core units, they are more complex to grasp, hence the need to study for more hours and to visit the library more often. I have also had to incorporate extra resources to study pharm core units.

Participant 3: My approach has changed because I know that what I am learning now will be useful in my future field, hence reading with the perspective that I have to retain the information, not just for examination as in the preclinical years.

Participant 4: I have stopped going for the modelling classes, which was my side career, and now I have to focus on pharmacy. I have also added more hours of studying.

Participant 5: I did not make any changes at the beginning of my clinical years, but I am going to do that because it is not looking good.

6. Did you experience any emotional or psychological impacts during the transition period, and if so, how did you address them?

Participant 1: I experienced a couple of emotional and psychological issues. My family and friends are really been useful to me.

Participant 2: Yes, I experienced a lot of academic pressure that was affecting my mental health at some point because I was wondering whether I will be able to cope. I have been speaking with my friends, and seeking religious aid for just maintaining my mental health.

Participant 3: Not really, except uncertainties about where you are going. I received support from family and friends who encouraged me.

Participant 4: The fact that I had to stop the modelling really disturbed me. To cope with it I had to run to my friends about it. There was also a lot of emotional breakdowns from the transitioning because of increased academic pressure.

Participant 5: When I was frustrated, I talked to someone, people who have been there, the years ahead, which helped me a lot and also due to a lot of pressure at school.

Y3T3**1. Describe your experience transitioning from preclinical to clinical years in the pharmacy program at JKUAT.**

Participant 1: I can term it as tough because there were changes in units for example in the first year and second year, we did physiology and anatomy. They were just basic sciences, it didn't involve much and we could easily read within a short time, and we had a transition to pharm hem which had structures and I wasn't prepared for that transition.

Participant 2: It was not as bad, I wouldn't say it was so bad, I actually loved the units in the clinical years because they guided me more towards what I was supposed to do because in preclinical years I wasn't quite sure of what pharmacy entails but I got a clearer view as I got the clinical years. But the number of Units kind of set me back a little because I was used to a lower workload but in clinical years it was heavier which kind of affected me a little, but it wasn't as bad.

Participant 3: It was not quite heavy because I had some friends ahead of me who somehow psychologically prepared me so going there at least I knew what to do though we had so many units but at least that psychological preparation ensured that the transition was not quite rough, just the heavy workload.

Participant 4: My transition can be described as a shift in how I perceived education, because earlier on education for me was just cramming and I could survive while I was doing anatomy, the basic biochemistry. But in the clinical years the questions were tailored to test on how you understood stuff. In addition to that, the workload. As the years progressed, as I did deeper into the clinical years, I find the workload increasing day by day.

Participant 5: There was an academic shock that comes with the huge number of units and the relevance the units had introduced considering the drugs we were now studying, the pathologies, the clinical cases we were likely to encounter. It was becoming really and I could see myself as a clinician.

2. What were some significant changes you encountered during this transition period?

Participant 1: An example of a significant change that I encountered during this transition period is that I had to change my reading method. Normally I could take even 30 minutes to read units, but now I had to strategize and now spend more time, reading to understand and not just cram. Some of the days I had to wake up early and even sleep late in order to accommodate the changing workload.

Participant 2: One, socially, some friendships were strained, for example discussion groups became lesser and lesser because everyone was trying to read. Previously in 1st and 2nd year we could meet 5 times at least a week, but times for meet ups for discussions and discussion groups decreased and also my social life in general suffered. Also, mentally, I had to use a lot of energy to read and also to adapt to the things that were being taught because they required more time, and more input. But then, it was much understandable compared to 1st and 2nd year, because I didn't really understand what I was doing, but moving forward I could clearly understand.

Participant 3: When I look back outside class, in my 1st and 2nd year, I had a lot of outdoor activities I could attend many events and functions, but when we transitioned to 3rd year it became difficult because of the workload. Many extracurricular activities and conferences, and religious activities I could not manage because most of my time was spent in books. Also my reading mode changed such that I could now have the reason to read outside what I was taught because it was a learning of things we were yet to practice, so it changed for me rather to just to read for exam so I went ahead to even start reading about actual stories actual diseases real things that were happening on the ground.

Participant 4: My significant change had to be from the way I sourced information. Back in my preclinical years, I used to just shallowly obtain information from websites but as I proceeded into clinical years, I found that I had to come up with information from sources that are peer-reviewed and the sources have to be legitimate.

Participant 5: The changes were meeting new lecturers those who were mostly pharmacists who had experience and most had worked in the clinical, industrial or academia. Senior lecturers in the department and their insights were great and it was really a huge impact as it made me aspire to one day reach the heights they reached. The number of units were now 12-15 instead of 7-10 of the preclinical years. The content covered was greater and bulkier and unprecedented.

3. In what ways did your support network (e.g., peers, faculty, family) contribute to or alleviate the challenges you faced during this transition?

Participant 1: My support network mainly included my family and peers. For my family, they really did a good job in checking up on me daily. They used to ensure that I am okay mentally, emotionally and that I am fairing on well in school. For my peers, we now became more serious in checking up on each other, we formed a group with which we could check up on each other, we could do random calls to see the other person was okay, or they could even call me at any time to ask me how I am fairing on academically or even mentally and emotionally.

Participant 2: Family was very supportive during the transition. They would call not so frequently but they would call still to check up on how I am doing and also to encourage me on the small wins and even praying with me before the CATS and the exams. From peers who are in the classes ahead, I have some friends who would call and I could ask questions about different units or they would send past papers giving advice on how I should read this or that, or resources which would be helpful. Where I couldn't understand a concept, they are really helpful in showing me and helping me get a clearer view, same to peers in class. We could pose questions in the group which were hard.

Participant 3: My support system I could attribute it to first of all to the family for just being there to support you, to ensure that you are okay by paying the fees to ensure you are in school and do the exam. It was really encouraging just to know they are there. Also, my friend, my classmates, they were there especially because when we joined, we had fears of how will clinical years because we were all going to a new chapter and that helped us to form discussion groups whereby, we could encourage each other.

Participant 4: My motivation stems from first my family. They did their role, they are doing their role, providing fees. On the peer's side, my friends I'll have to pit out the discussion groups where we shared the different interpretations academically.

Participant 5: The support network included the finances from the family, mental and emotional support. Reaching out to parents and peers and faculty members, listening to advice on how to read better and understand. I found emotional, physical and social support which was really impactful for my mental health and peace of mind in order to study.

4. Were there any specific resources or support services you found particularly helpful during the transition?

Participant 1: A great resource for me was my friendship. We used to form groups for times of need where we would meet physically at the school premises, not specifically my friend in pharmacy but other universities or courses we would meet up and decongest. We would unwind and give each other encouragement which really helped me as I progressed during this transition period. Another support service that I found helpful was therapy: therapy really helped me. I have a family member who is a clinical psychologist she really helped me in terms of professional advice when I expressed my emotion on this transition.

Participant 2: My peers from the other classes ahead, who knew how it would be progressing from second year to third year and they kept offering advice on what I can do better and how I can handle the thorns that came my way and also in terms of past papers, how things should be done differently, what should be done differently. Also, advice on what to do when I was at my end, because 3.2 was kind of difficult patch for me.

Participant 3: My friends outside pharmacy was one of the greatest cornerstone during transition because these are the people who knew me better, and I could share a lot with them. They were there to encourage me generally and ensure I was psychologically okay which contributed to me having a good transition.

Participant 4: Friends from the faculty ranging from my senior students by providing necessary resources, past papers which were helpful. Also, my classmates were quite helpful because we used to carry out discussions together, the difficulties that they shared were also my difficulties and they helped me through and made me stronger.

Participant 5: Academically, I had to source books in the library which were more geared towards what we were studying especially the clinical materials, the case studies in hospitals and also to seek internet access for information to help in current affairs and changes over the years. I found information all over the web apart from consulting the lecturers during regular lessons.

5. Can you discuss any changes or adjustments you had to make in your study habits or academic approach during the transition?

Participant 1: The major change that I had to make was planning my reading schedule. In my preclinical years I used to read when the exam or CATS were approaching or a specific assignment was being collected. But for my clinical years, I had to plan my work and start reading early enough before even the CATS were announced. I had to plan on when to go for

discussions. The main thing I changed here was planning my work and being organized in how I studied.

Participant 2: I had to do my studies differently. In first and second year I could spend only 4 hours reading. Coming to clinical years it was pretty heavy, just reading for 40 minutes and need a break. I had to plan for different times for breaks e.g. after every hour or do something different in the middle of my study time. It also improved the way I could plan myself. However, study groups suffered also because there was not much time to discuss, it was mostly reading by myself and after reading I would do past papers.

Participant 3: My study habits changed especially because of the workload that was there in third year such that in my first and second years I never used to have discussion groups but because of the workload I made it more intentional to join discussion groups because initially the perceived little workload, personal studies was enough but at the clinical phase discussions were necessary. I would also read outside of the scope of what was being taught to gain knowledge because it was feeling real and practical to apply and gave me the desire to learn more compared to the preclinical years.

Participant 4: The shift in the way I took my studies is attributed to the time I invested in my studies. In my clinical years I have been investing more time because understanding demands more time. I am obliged to invest more time in my studies.

Participant 5: The changes I had to make were investing more timer in my studies considering that clinical years are really bulky and there are a lot of content. It was no longer about memorizing and relying on short term memory. I had to actively make notes and organize my work and get myself into more groups because I had not seen the relevance in the clinical years seeing that you could manage on your own. Now there was a need for group work.

6. Did you experience any emotional or psychological impacts during the transition period, and if so, how did you address them?

Participant 1: Yes, I did experience emotional and psychological impact. I would get stressed if I didn't perform as well as I normally did in my preclinical years. Also, I got mental block when reading for long hours or even just being busy throughout without taking rest. I addressed them by seeking help from my family and professional help too, they helped me by encouraging and giving me advice on how to be patient that with time I would adjust and for sure I did adjust. Also, they helped me in planning my time such that I didn't get fatigued or tired within the cause of the week and that I had a balance in my social life.

Participant 2: Yes, I had many breakdowns, burnouts when there was too much work and no time to do it, too much reports to write, too many cats a week especially in 3.3 it was a great struggle and I went through a lot. How I handled it- mostly I had places where I could let it out, through music, it helped me rest and relax. And also calling friends, people who have been through the same and who could understand what I was going through. Prayer also helped a lot.

Participant 3: I really experienced some constraints emotionally and psychologically because there were very little time outside studies and that gave me a lot of pressure because you could not have enough time to hang out with friends because you are busy with academic stuff. Sometimes feeling lonely because all the day you are in class and afterwards to read for CATS and exam and at time you lose friends. It was hard. How I handled it; I tried to change my study habits to ensure that I didn't strain for long and I had to get myself breaks especially on weekends by going away from school to relax and come back fresh.

Participant 4: My natural impulse is to embrace challenges. So, when things got tougher during the clinical years it was game on. On the side of friendship, isolation is part of life. When my friends knew that I had to invest more time on the academics they were willing to give me more time. I wouldn't complain much on the psychological impacts.

Participant 5: They were quite profound. First of all, the limited time and the huge workload, time management was a challenge. You have to make time, and read late into the night which has negative impact on the mental health. So, it was really stressful. To manage, I asked the senior students in 4th and 5th year who had already trodden the path we were treading and head prudent insights on how to manage. They told me what to expect with different lecturers, and what to expect in exams and this gives you the guild to know what to expect so that you are well equipped and that way it was a walk over for me.

Y4T1

1. Describe your experience transitioning from preclinical to clinical years in the pharmacy program at JKUAT.

Participant 1: My experience from preclinical to clinical year was not easy because in 3rd year we had huge workload and new units unlike in first year and second year.

Participant 2: Mine was also not easy, because during the preclinical years, the units were not as complex as in third year. The workload was a lot, we were doing Pharm chem, the structures etc and needed a lot of reading.

Participant 3: My transition from second year to third year was stressful and overwhelming because in second year the units were basic units which we would take a short time line to read but in third year we had to extend the reading hours and also the complexity was also there. It wasn't easy but we coped.

Participant 4: My experience transitioning to the clinical years was hard because I has to relate the preclinical content to the clinical content of which I had forgotten the clinical content so it was hard.

2. What were some significant changes you encountered during this transition period?

Participant 1: I had to change my timetable and reading hours because in 1st and second year I used to read during the daytime only but when I transitioned from clinical to clinical years, I had to adjust my timetable overnight.

Participant 2: During the preclinical years the units weren't complex so I used to read during exams and during cats then I didn't use to have group discussions then during clinical years I started doing group discussions and reading before exams.

Participant 3: Some of the challenges I encountered during the transition were the reading hours I had to extend. I had to read early also and also read a lot. It used to take a lot of time because the units were very complex. I also had to look for people to read with because the content was broad and I had to repeat over and over till I had understood everything.

Participant 4: For me I had to change my strategy of approaching the units during the semester and I had to extend the study hours.

3. In what ways did your support network (e.g., peers, faculty, family) contribute to or alleviate the challenges you faced during this transition?

Participant 1: Yeah, my family supported me, they ensured that I had enough money so that I could concentrate in my studies and also when it comes to my peers, especially my classmates, helped me a lot. We could do some discussions and with them I understood the concepts. The faculty was good.

Participant 2: I had told my family of how the clinical years was and they were supporting me emotionally by encouraging me and financially. My peers, I made discussion groups with my classmates and we were tackling the units together. The faculty, the lectures were sharing notes.

Participant 3: My family was aware of the transition and how different it would be from first year and second year, so my mum used to call me each and every time to check up on me, and to encourage me. For my peers, we had to make discussion groups to tackle the units and to shorten them because when you discuss with people you are able to cover more ground. The faculty, the resources were there, and the lecturers shared the notes and were teaching well.

Participant 4: I had support from my mother she used to encourage me. On the side of my peers, I made occasional discussions groups. The faculty, not so much but I used to attend the lessons and get the lecture notes.

4. Were there any specific resources or support services you found particularly helpful during the transition?

Participant 1: There were no specific resources from the faculty.

Participant 2: There were no specific resources or support from the faculty.

Participant 3: From the school of pharmacy I would say that there were no seen resources or support that I got from them.

Participant 4: From the faculty, there was zero support.

5. Can you discuss any changes or adjustments you had to make in your study habits or academic approach during the transition?

Participant 1: For me, I had to read early and adjust my reading hours.

Participant 2: I started attending group discussions and prolong my reading hours and reading extensively.

Participant 3: I had to read for long hours, make group discussions with my peers and also, I had less time to do other activities because I was preoccupied with my studies.

Participant 4: I became serious with my books and I had to trans night for several days in order to succeed in the specific units.

6. Did you experience any emotional or psychological impacts during the transition period, and if so, how did you address them?

Participant 1: At some point, I almost went into depression because I was from preclinical years where I used to score very well, but when I joined clinical years, my results came down. Through peers and my family, I talked to them and they gave me the needed support.

Participant 2: I was very stressed during the clinical years. It was so stressing and I had to tell my parents and they were encouraging me.

Participant 3: My mental health was in trenches, but my family came through for me because my mum used to call me each and every day to know how I was and that encouraged me to finish my third year.

Participant 4: I was depressed for several months and had to seek counselling from a professional counsellor and it helped.

FGDY5T2

1. Describe your experience transitioning from preclinical to clinical years in the pharmacy program at JKUAT.

Participant 1: The experience is difficult, especially given the number of units that you are supposed to do. And previously, you were not handling the clinical units, so it is a difficult transition.

Participant 2: It is quite of a highs and lows. For me it involved now getting more into the practical aspect because I was able to blend in the theories that I got in first year and it was now making more sense as to why I'm pursuing this course.

Participant 3: my experience was quite challenging first because of the workload that remarkably increased and this affected me in my development S A student. I used to participate in extracurricular activities but when I joined clinical stage, I started focussing more in book work than participating in other activities that I thought could help me develop as a student.

Participant 4: my biggest challenge was the work load, the bulk units, moving from doing 8 units per semester to 10 and above was quite challenging. That workload also stopped me doing some extracurricular activities even watching movies become difficult.

Participant 5; It was very difficult for me. Doing on average 7 units per semester to 13 which is double the work, and I wasn't comfortable at all.

Participant 6: I would call the transition experience nothing short of gruesome, it was brutal. Getting out of doing very few units to a large number of units up to 15 and they were not easy units. I feel like they would have better prepared us in first year and second year on what awaited us or counselling sessions to help prepare us. It is like we stopped being who we were, the transition changed us into people we could not even recognize, we were just book oriented people just focussing on academics. Our lives revolved around pharmacy only, and that tipped off the balance for me, because every other aspect of who I am as a person changed.

Participant 7: The transition was difficult, but manageable. We were not prepared enough in the preclinical years but at least those who had gone ahead of us prepared us mentally, so it was not entirely difficult.

Participant 8: The transition was difficult, especially because the units were new, especially pharmacology, pharmaceuticals. We had not covered them in the preclinical years. It was also difficult because of the large number of units. We had to put our social lives aside and focus on books which was a bit inconveniencing. They should have introduced some of the clinical units in the preclinical years we would have known what to expect. They should also have counselling sessions for the preclinical students to know what is expected of them.

Participant 9: my experience was not great at all because of the workload. What I expected to experience was way beyond my expectation. I also thought I was well prepared for the clinical years, mid semester I found that I was behind schedule in almost everything. It was more demanding than preclinical years.

Participant 10: the transition was quite challenging. There was an initial moment of excitement that at least I'm progressing to the clinicals. But soon things became extremely difficult, too much work, limited time spent with friends, doing other activities. It was very difficult transition.

2. What were some significant changes you encountered during this transition period?

Participant 1: One of the changes was that I had to spend a lot of time in school and less time doing other things. I also had to join discussion groups and focus more on my studies.

Participant 2: among the changes was that the social life was deprived. As a student you are supposed to have a well-balanced life, physically, emotionally etc. There was no aspect of balance within life. My world also became more immersed into pharmacy and nothing more.

Participant 3: my social life changed. I lost a number of friends and I stopped calling home. I stopped attending family events.

Participant 4: The classes became too many from coming to class 8 times a week to coming to class 13 times a week. The social life also, my life became pharm school and nothing more. The units were balky and klong not like the ones in preclinical.

Participant 5: I was overconsumed with pharmacy and it was difficult to balance family friends and school. Also, in terms of my health, I didn't have enough sleep and rest time which came back to cause more mental problems.

Participant 6: A lot of things changed. I became a different person, unlike who I previously was. I had to turn into this nerd only focussing on books and nothing else, I missed out on a lot of activities with my friends, and family, I wasn't fully present during family events. Academically, went from just enjoying studying to rely struggling and fighting for your life and in the survival mode, there is very little learning going on. They should have introduced practical learning and clinical skills. We were cramming and reading and not really; earning as much as we should.

Participant 7: The biggest change was social life and the ability to participate in things other than academics because campus life should also offer someone platforms to engage in other things hat could be helpful in life. That one I was denied because of a lot of work. On the positive side, the other change is that it made me more responsible in planning my time

Participant 8: In terms of my mental health, I had to compromise on a lot of things, e.g. friends, important family events and to spend long hours in school, in the library. I had weight problems because of diet change and no time to cook proper food and to exercise.

Participant 9: My social life was adversely affected with the increased workload. I could not meet my obligation to connect with relatives and friends, some complaining that I was quiet and not responding to their calls. On the positive, I started appreciate pharmacy as a course because in the preclinical we were learning general subjects, but in the clinical years we narrowed down to relevant subjects and appreciating the course more.

Participant 10: There was a lot of school work, too much stress. There was reduced time spent with family. The social aspect was affected as you spend most of your time reading.

3. In what ways did your support network (e.g., peers, faculty, family) contribute to or alleviate the challenges you faced during this transition?

Participant 1: My peers really helped me to cope with the situation through group discussions, planning our time together and organizing how we were going to read. The family aspect, emotional and financial support which helped me overcome the challenges. On the faculty, knowledge was impacted, but also on the other hand, there could have been other better ways to do it e.g., by organizing the units in such a way that they are equal.

Participant 2: Peers- I had a string network of people I could sit down and discuss with. Also coming from a family having very strong family values also helped. The support I got from my parents and siblings was useful. Also, for the faculty, the aspect of once in a while, a lecturer would give an encouragement which would get you going.

Participant 3: I got support from my family; my parents supported me financially. The lecturers were really supportive. The lectures were profound but they used to encourage us despite the bulk and complexity and the new encounter in terms of content. They could encourage us that it

is possible, and that encouragement and their commitment to our success they contributed a great deal. My friends were relay understanding, they supported me emotionally, they could understand me and the challenges that I faced.

Participant 4: The biggest support was my family members, they understood what I was going through. They encouraged me that I would make it just as others had made it. My friends were supportive, some lost on the way because they could not understand why you have to spend more time reading not spending time with them. Also, the lectures were quite supportive encouraging us and helping us adapt to the clinicals

Participant 5: My family was there for me in terms of school fees, rent and support me when I could not go home as usual to spend time with them, and occasions that I could attend because of studying. My friends also understood my schedule and were not a hindrance in my study. My peers also in school the discussions and the moral support because we are going through the same thing.

Participant 6: I had a lot of support from my family, supporting me all the way especially my mother and siblings who looked up to me and always thought I was a good student despite feelings such as those of impostor syndrome and anxiety. I had a very supportive network of friends we would study together and they made all this worth it. But as for the faculty I feel like they would have improved on how they would have spread out the units. It would have been possible to levelize the number units per semester throughout the clinical years. They should also have instituted mental health department whereby lecturers get to interact with students and to open up their minds and make us realize that this is what needs to be done. It would have made it easier and bearable.

Participant 7: My friends helped me to cope with the pressure that was there during this period because we use to carry put group discussions and meet and discuss difficult units like pharmaceutical chemistry and that helped me to ease the pressure. Also, I was part of the Christian union whereby being a leader made it difficult to balance the two. Also, the CU was also very positive to help me cope with the pressure, and it helped me to see that it is not entirely difficult and I am not entirely on my own.

Participant 8: My family really helped me especially when I was feeling low, they would assure me and encourage me to work hard. They also brought me to school early in the morning when I had early exams and sometimes when I had to take very long hours in the library. In terms of my friends, we had discussion groups, we used to call each other and encourage each other and go out and have lunch when life got hard and we needed to get a break.

Participant 9: We had group discussions where we would encourage each other on what we were supposed to do and how to cope up. We also advised our colleagues who were not performing well in the CATS and helped them cope up with the stressful moments. In terms of family, I had significant support, I had already told them the workload and the expectations I ad for the third year. They were able to support me financially, and support my mental health.

Participant 10: My family was very supportive infact. They constantly encouraged and motivated me wherever they could. My friends were also supportive, they found time to spend it with me

even though my schedule was tight and I didn't have enough time the little time I had we spent together to get my mind off everything and relax a bit. The greatest support was from my family.

4. Were there any specific resources or support services you found particularly helpful during the transition?

Participant 1: The specific resources that I used were YouTube tutorials, and past papers.

Participant 3: I did not receive enough support in terms of resources that I thought would be necessary for my academic advancements in clinical period. But we had materials from which we could study, and we had enough human resources to take care of our lectures. Also support in terms of resources from our parents.

Participant 4: The resources, e.g. the lecturers were supportive, they gave us the notes and also YouTube. The senior students also assisted us, giving us guidance and revision papers and that came in handy and made the transition somehow easier.

Participant 5: The library, I got to use the library more during the transition, more than before. I also used a lot of reference materials and YouTube videos, which were useful especially in pathology and a bit of pharmacology and other technical units e.g. pharmaceuticals and pharm chem.

Participant 6: YouTube really helped me bring things into perspective in terms of chemistry, pharmacology. I found medical drama useful, particularly for pathology, because I would relate with the theory we were learning. The library was very useful in terms of research, especially with regard to pharmacology.

Participant 7: The library, I used to go and attend my classes and notes there. It was useful to enable me get some quiet time to read. I didn't get any formal counselling sessions as a resource to help me cope with the pressure but the fact that I was in the Christian union and we would meet and share what had happened during the day and shared the difficulties in our classes and through the week was a good psychological resource that helped me to transit well.

Participant 8: listening to lectures, reading the notes, tutorials from you tube, borrowing notes from students who are years ahead of me.

Participant 9: The library, we had extensive review materials, and some of the lectures shared with us the reference materials. We also had group discussion which in some sense were some of the resources that I used to cope up with the work load. We also had resources from outside e from the family and other friends that helped us to cope with the hectic workload we had during that transition.

Participant 10: YouTube, discussing with peers helped a lot. Also, the resource books that are in the library were a good source of information.

5. Can you discuss any changes or adjustments you had to make in your study habits or academic approach during the transition?

Participant 1: I realized that I had to spend more time in my studies than doing other activities so I found that especially during the exam time I had to wake up at 4 am and also sleep very late at night in order for me to be able to capture everything and be able to read. With time, doing that for a period of over 3 weeks takes a toll on your body and you are constantly fatigued.

Participant 3: I had to make several adjustments. I joined active study groups where I joined some of my friends and classmates to study in groups. I had to draft a timetable to guide my studies. I used to sometimes miss some classes but during this time I had to attend all classes and be punctual so that I may be well breast with knowledge and also supplement with discussions and personal study.

Participant 4: I had to read more, in the preclinical the units were short while clinicals are long and many. I had to go the library more and going the extra mile because there was more to learn. Also going through the past papers, internet and not piling my workload trying to read every day so as to reduce the workload and not piling it.

Participant 5: I used past questions and discussed with my peers.

Participant 6: I had to give up a lot of things that I love to do and some that I should have done and I tailored a lot of time towards studies. My sleeping schedules had to change I had to stop doing things like watching movies and going out with friends. I had to change the kind of company that I kept so that they were those that understood this kind of schedule. I had to learn how to get information from textbooks and do a lot of research. I had to learn how to the library as I am not a library person.

Participant 7: I would wake up early enough and study though it was challenging due to fatigue from classes every single day running from 7am till late 4 or 5 pm. I therefore used to get some time in the morning and study, if I am fatigued, I would sleep till 7 and attend classes and set aside time in the evening. Previously, I used to study in the morning with a fixed schedule and this time I had to be flexible and create time in the evening to study. The habits I had previously of going to the library and just relaxing, knowing that I am reading to understand not just for exam, this was shaken because the pressure was mounting up. I would be reading for the sake of exams not really understanding.

Participant 8: I had to read smart, read early, and immediately after lectures so as not to accumulate work. Also, to incorporate reading from other sources like YouTube and group discussions.

Participant 9: I had to increase study time and study late into the night and morning preps that I didn't have before and to maximize the daytime to make sure that I cover all the work load, the class assignments or the personal studies that I was supposed to cope up with the requirements for the semester.

Participant 10: I had to study late into the night. Not being a morning person, I had to extend my study hours, make use of the weekend instead of doing other activities and focus on studying. Maximizing my study hours during the day, doing the assignments during the day and studying during the night.

6. Did you experience any emotional or psychological impacts during the transition period, and if so, how did you address them?

Participant 1: I realized that my mental state was not okay because I was not having enough sleep and I was spending so much time on reading. Ways that I used to address them included talking to friends on what I was going through and to get support from family. As a

recommendation, I would recommend that the units be equally distributed in such a way that the workload is evenly distributed across all the years of pharmacy.

Participant 3: Yes, I did experience some psychological stress and this was a result of expectations not being met. I expected a smooth transition and sometimes I had to question myself whether I made the right choice in taking this course, but I could share with my friends and parents and those who had gone before me and the encouragement that I received I was persuaded that I can pull it through and that motivated me.

Participant 4: Sometimes you could just end up crying because of the workload or finding that you failed the CAT because you did not know the bulkiness, because you are not that prepared. The emotional support I got from my peers and classmates encouraging and supporting each other. Also, family, I could call my mum and tell her I was feeling and how pharmacy was tough. I also prayed to God which helped so much, giving me confidence that God was with me.

Participant 5: My life was not as easy and I was not excited about anything because academics was taking a toll on me. I decided to create some time to exercise, because exercise really worked on me. I also took some time to spend with my friends, even though it was much less as during the preclinical years.

Participant 6: During my preclinical years, I never felt the need to struggle so much. I was okay and still did good work academically. Upon the transition, anxiety was overwhelming. There was impostor syndrome as I kept wondering whether I was doing the right thing. It was so scary that every time I had to doubt myself, I doubted my abilities and questioned my capabilities academically and it was overwhelming. And with anxiety come depression because you are under a lot of pressure and stress. It was hard to deal with because the things that were supposed to alleviate the challenges, extracurricular activities, family and friends we did not have time for that so you had to be stuck in a cycle of toxic productivity under stress and depression and a lot of impostor syndrome that leaves you wondering if you really deserve to be a pharmacy student. I don't remember dealing with it but moving forward I learnt to be kind to myself, how to manage my time well, and to ask for help and to take it easy and just do what I can to the best of my abilities and not have to have everything figured out.

Participant 7: I experienced emotional impacts. The fatigue and the huge workload and the lack of sleep contributed to the emotional distress. Sometimes I felt anxious and stressed that there are a lot of things and I am expected to perform better. I dealt with it by sharing with friends and family so that they are aware that I am under academic pressure. With the sharing, they were able to encourage me.

Participant 8: I experienced emotional and psychological changes. My mental health deteriorated to some point because of the workload and not having time to interact with people and do extracurricular activities. I looked for ways to channel that and to distract myself and to make my life more interesting by going to church, praying in the morning, talking to friends when I felt like I am having a difficult time. I also incorporated baking

which made me feel better especially after a CAT gone wrong. Also, exercising and going for walks.

Participant 9: Yes, I did experience some emotional impacts. How I dealt with them was by soliciting help from my family in terms of advice and created time to de-escalate from academic pressures e.g., finding time to sleep even if it is 2 hours, or watching some short clips and movies to offload and form social groups e.g. attend friendship gatherings so that I could at least talk about something else other than academics.

Participant 10: I experienced emotional and psychological impacts. There was too much stress, anxiety of how to get good results, how to pass. I addressed them by taking brief moments of break. Despite all the work you still have to refresh your mind. There was so slight episodes of low mood and I addressed them by spending time with friends and watching some movies.