



## Perception of the Medical Students of a Private Medical College on their Future Career

### KEYWORDS

Private Medical College students, Perception, Future Medical Career

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### ABSTRACT

**Context:** Undergraduate medical education in India is currently undergoing drastic changes than ever before. Apart from advancements in terms of technological inputs into health care practices, the fast changing socioeconomic cultural scenario is also a matter of grave concern in the process of producing a competent & quality health care professional. In view of these changing trends it has become necessary to identify & understand students perception towards medical education

**Methodology:** A questionnaire was designed, prevalidated by MEU Faculty & administered to the 1st year undergraduate students of NKPSIMS & results were analysed.

**Results:** - It was observed that 85% of student had opted for medical profession by their own choice & 15 % joined because of parent's wish. The basic driving force for 60% students to opt for this profession was the passion and the challenges in the profession & for 25% it was glamour & money involved. About 78% student were completely aware of the social responsibilities of the profession & 88.8% agreed that will never indulge in or unethical practice.

**On the discipline of the institute:** 83% student disagrees to follow shortcut & unfair means for getting more marks. 72% students were aware of tuitions & 63.2% felt that there was nothing wrong in taking tuitions. For 56% students admit ragging to be an abnormal state of mind. 28 % students preferred 50% as minimum cutoff for attendance, while 40% students suggested 60% and 26% students suggested it to be 75%.

**Conclusion:** The current study indicates that the students though representing different socioeconomic strata of the society are aware of & are mentally prepared to take up challenges of medical profession. It also indicates high level motivation & positive perception towards the profession.

### Introduction :

The Indian Medical Education System, one of the largest in the world, produces many physicians who migrate to US, USA & several other countries. The quality of these physicians, therefore, has a broad global impact. Medical schools in India have rapidly proliferated in the past 30 years almost more than doubling since 1980 to a current total of 356 today. The number of medical colleges is determined by each state, the allocation of income generating payments seats in private medical schools, coupled with high migration may be motivating the increase in physicians production. The selection of students is almost exclusively based on an entrance examination (Supe 2006).

Since ancient times doctors have been equated to God as they are the preservers of health & the life savers. The medical profession is more about giving than taking. It has been accorded the respect of the society, as a noble profession imbued with eminence, dignity, high ideals & the ethical values. Over centuries medical fraternity has maintained ethical standards.

The problems faced by the newly admitted students in the medical colleges are multiple & they include ragging, vast curriculum, exposure to a new teaching learning & assessment pattern & for a good number of students staying in hostels. All these problems induce lot of stress on the students.

In the midst of this the medical profession will face many challenges in the new millennium.

This study has been done to know the perception of medical students of a private medical college in central India about

how they look at their future career in medical profession & how they are preparing themselves to face the challenges of the profession.

**Methodology:** A questionnaire based cross sectional survey was done on 150 students of 1st year undergraduate MBBS students of NKP Salve Institute of Medical Sciences & Research Center (NKPSIMS & RC) Nagpur India. A questionnaire was designed by the researchers & validated by Medical Education Unit Faculty of the institute. The questionnaire was based on their choice of profession and their viewpoints on different aspects of medical profession.

Prior approval was obtained from the Institutional Ethics Committee. Students were briefed about the purpose of study and the questionnaire. Informed written consent was obtained from all participating students. They were assured about the anonymity and confidentiality of responses given through questionnaire.

The questionnaire was administered to the students & results were analysed.

**Results:** - It was observed that 85% of student had opted for medical profession by their own choice & 15 % joined because of parent's wish (Fig 1). The basic driving force for 60% students to opt for this profession was the passion and the challenges in the profession & for 25% it was glamour & money involved ( Fig 2). About 78% students were completely aware of the social responsibilities of the profession & 88.8% agreed that will never indulge in or unethical practice (Fig3&4).

On the discipline of the institute: 83% student disagrees to follow shortcut & unfair means for getting more marks (Fig 5). 63% students felt nothing wrong in taking tuitions or extra coaching to score better in examination (Fig 6).

For 56% students that admit ragging to be an abnormal state of mind (Fig7). 98.4% students were strongly in favor of teacher student mentorship scheme.

**Discussion:** Out of 150 students, 120 students participated in the study. The non-participants were mainly absentees on the day of survey. All the participating students completed and returned the questionnaire thereby giving a response rate of 80%. (The age of students ranged between 17 to 21 years with a mean of 18.5 years and standard deviation of 0.84 years).

Successful career depends on the attitude of a person perusing it. In our study 85% students of the institute have chosen this profession by their own choice, with their own interest & without any pressure indicating their positive view & attitude towards the profession. Two more studies showed similar results (Donnelly, M. B., Jarecky, R. K., Rubeck, R., Murphy-Spencer, A., Parr, P., & Schwartz, R. W. (1996), Hajian, K., & Nasiri, A. (2006), Watt, C. D., Greeley, W., Shea, J. A., & Ahn, J. (2005)). But in another study the results were negative probably because of long duration of education, unemployment, lack of inadequate opportunities for acquisition of required skills & economic problems (Barikani Ameneh, Mahsa Afaghi, Firooze Barikani & Ahmad Afaghi 2012).

NKPSIMS & RC Nagpur is a private medical college in Central India where 150 students are admitted for the MBBS Course every year on the basis of a single entrance test from different states of India. More than 50% of the students are from outside the local region. They have diverse cultural, socioeconomic and educational backgrounds. Against this background it was interesting to find out the basic driving force for joining this profession. It was found that for majority of the students it was the passion & challenges of the profession as against earning a comfortable live hood that attracted the students to medical sciences. This confirms the time tested belief of Medical Profession as the Noble profession and today's students are ready to accept the challenges of the profession.

Each medical professional has to discharge number of responsibilities towards the society. Every physician who has taken the Hippocratic Oath is required to uphold a number of professional and ethical standards to serve the patients with sincerity & to understand that the doctor-patient relationship is of the utmost faith. Over centuries medical fraternity has maintained ethical standards also. In our study we found that 78% students are aware of the social responsibility associated with the profession & 88.8% students agreed that they will never indulge in corrupt practices or unethical deeds.

This becomes important in today's world where the faith in doctor patient relationship is getting replaced by monetary gains and the patients are losing confidence in the medical practice because of the increasing incidences of professional misconducts of the doctors.

Stress is one of the most common and process oriented obstacle in medical education. It often exerts a negative effect on the academic performance, physical health and psychological well being of the students (Mosley TH Jr., Perrin SG, Neral SM, Dubbert PM, Grothues CA, Pinto BM, 1994). Researchers have also worked on various factors inducing anxiety about professional future amongst students and doctors (Bolanosky W, 2005).

Maybe because of this, our study found that nearly 86% stu-

dents agreed to follow the rules of the institute & maintain discipline of the college campus & 85% of students denied to follow shortcuts or unfair means for getting more marks.

Ragging in India is a damaging form of interaction of the seniors with juniors, newcomers in schools & colleges. It is defined as an act that violates or is perceived to violate an individual students' dignity. There are many victims of this sadistic and unhealthy practice carried out in the name of 'socializing' & 'getting to know each other'. (Desai C 2009,). In our study 56% students admitted that ragging is an act of abnormal mind.

When enquired about the need for teacher student mentorship scheme 98.4% students were strongly in favor of this (Fig 8).

NKPSIMS & RC, Nagpur has started a program on mentorship called 'ANUBANDH' where one teacher is the mentor of a mixed group of 10 students from I,II & III MBBS. This group meets once in a month & discuss curricular & co-curricular activities. As this is a mixed group of senior & junior students it helps in minimizing inhibitions, solving problems & promoting healthy habits and giving emotional support to the students.

Declining attendance in classes is a universal phenomenon faced by all the institutes. A number of studies have shown the impact of attending classes during the session on examination results of the students. Research has proved that significant learning occurs during the lectures (Feil NJ).

Students with good lecture attendance show higher examination scores whereas those with poor lecture attendance are at risk for poor performance in the examination (Hammen CS, Kelland JL 1994, Riggs JW, Blanco JD 1994)). Most of the universities consider the % of class attendance to allow a candidate to appear in the university examination. NKPSIMS & RC is affiliated to Maharashtra University of Health Sciences, Maharashtra, India recommends 75 % attendance in theory & 80% attendance in practical as eligibility to appear in the university examination.

In our study it was found that all the students will be comfortable with 50% cut off attendance, 70% students with 60% as cut off and only 27% students would be comfortable with 75% cut off value of attendance. (Fig 9).

When enquired about this declining attendance in Focus Group Discussion students were of the opinion that the timetable is too exhaustive to attend all the classes, the time slot for each lecture should be curtailed down to 45 minutes instead of one hour, teachers should teach only difficult portion & rest should be left to the students for self learning. This will encourage self learning & will also increase the accountability of the students.

**Conclusion:** The current study indicates that the 1st year undergraduate students though representing different socioeconomic strata of the society are aware of & are mentally prepared to take up challenges of medical profession. It also indicates high level motivation & positive perception towards the profession. We are confident that medical profession is still a noble profession and the sacred bond between patients and practitioners will last forever.

#### Further Scope for Extension of this Study-

In this study we sought perception of only 1st year undergraduate students & we found student's positive attitude to look at the profession.

It would be interesting to know the perception of all the students in different phases of graduation & to find out if the same level of attitude persists or changes as the student goes.

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Figure 1: Bar chart showing distribution of students according to Choice of Profession.

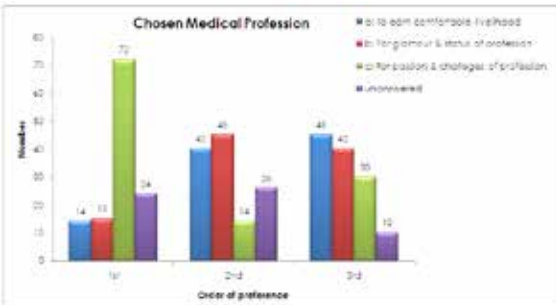


Figure 2: Bar chart showing number of students according to their order of preference.

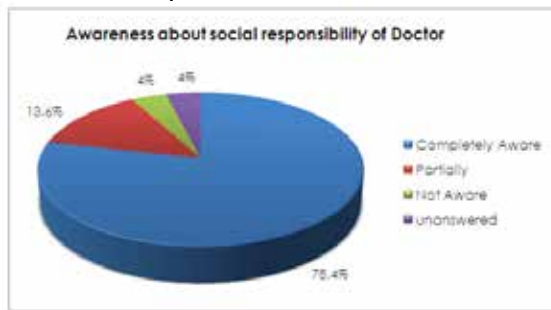


Figure 3: Pie chart showing awareness amongst students about their social responsibility as a Doctor.

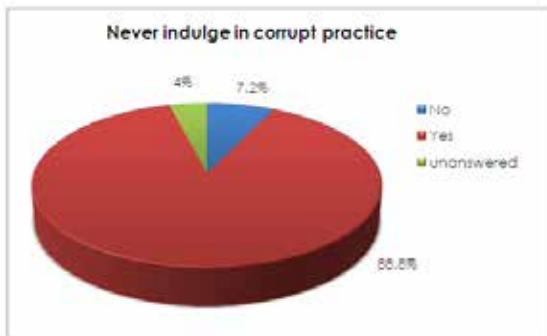


Figure 4: Pie chart showing perception of students about their indulgence in corrupt practices.

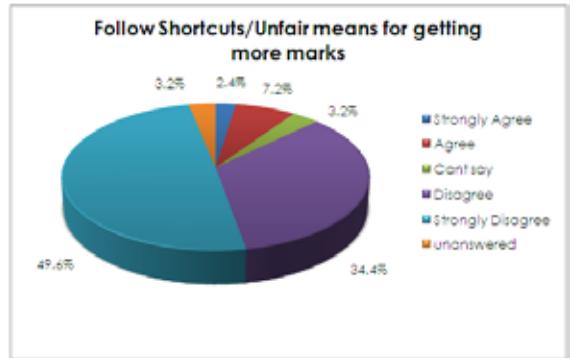


Figure 5: Pie chart showing distribution of students showing their perception about following shortcut or unfair means for getting good marks

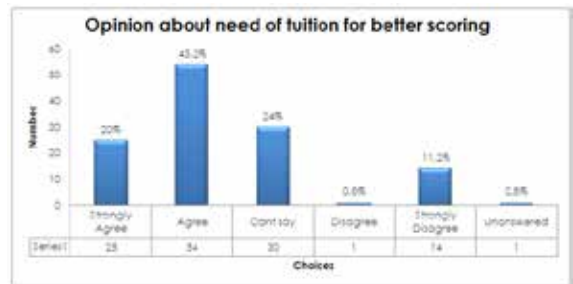


Figure 6: Bar chart showing perception of students about the need of tuitions for scoring better.

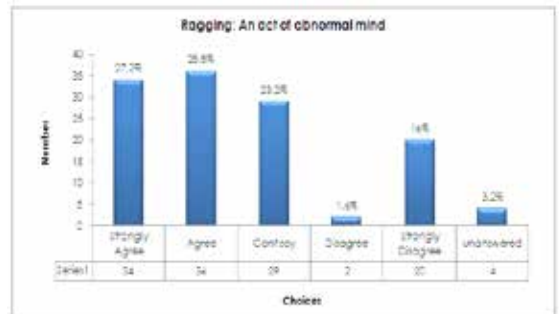


Figure 7: Bar chart showing perception of students about ragging as an act of abnormal mindset.



Figure 8: Pie chart showing perception of students about need for Teacher-student Mentorship.

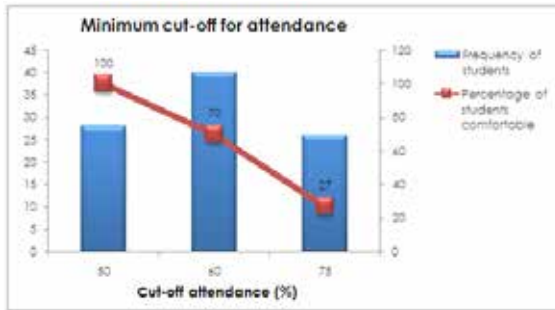


Figure 9 : Bar chart showing number of students agreeing to the cut-off attendance and the percentage of students who would be comfortable with different cut-offs.

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