



DETERMINING THE PERCEPTION AND OBJECTIVE TOWARDS CHOOSING DENTISTRY AS A CAREER BY THE DENTAL STUDENTS OF SRINAGAR CITY, JAMMU AND KASHMIR, INDIA

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ABSTRACT **AIM AND OBJECTIVE:** To study the perception and objective of choosing dentistry as a career by the dental students studying in Srinagar city, Jammu And Kashmir, India.
MATERIAL AND METHODS: A survey was conducted in the form of a questionnaire and circulated among 262 undergraduate and postgraduate dental students through email. The response was collected, accumulated and analysed statistically.
RESULTS: Only 28% students choose dentistry out of their own will as the first career choice. 96% stated that it was a noble and respected profession. 56% of the students would opt for private practice after completion of their degrees. 42% were Male students and majority 58% were female students. Only 20% of the female students would opt for private practice. 80% female students wanted to work only if they got jobs in private or government hospitals. The results varied among the 1st year BDS students upto the post graduate students.
CONCLUSION: According to the response of the students. This profession was a very highly respected profession but had lot of negatives also. Their was a sense of scarcity in terms of jobs in this field and trust deficit for female dentists.

KEYWORDS : Students, dentistry, questionnaire, career.

INTRODUCTION:

Dentistry is a highly respected profession. A dentist is a professional health worker and a community figure that is highly respected and trusted by the community in which he/she works.

Being a dentist is challenging, but rewarding profession. Every profession has its positives and negatives like any other profession. Both are considered when deciding it as a career choice.

Dental patients rely on and trust their dentists to provide them with best possible healthcare.

The percentage of dental awareness among villages in many countries, especially in developing countries is very low.⁽¹⁾

Perceptions and objectives for choosing dentistry have been studied in many countries. A range of reasons has been mentioned including status and security, the nature of occupation, patient care and working with people. The reasons for choosing dentistry as a career has been carried out in developed countries such as the France, Middle East, Australia, Ireland, Nigeria, USA and Japan.⁽²⁻⁹⁾

Students in the US reported self-employment and business-related motives as important,⁽⁸⁾ and in Ireland, perceived ease of employment, being self-employed, working regular hours and good income and the opportunity to help people were reported as reasons for entering the profession.⁽⁶⁾

In India, the dentistry program is for 5 years, which includes 4 years of study and one year of clinical rotary internships programme. Admission into the dental colleges for undergraduate and postgraduate programs is done through entrance exams like NEET (National Eligibility Cum Entrance Test) or other combined exams, which analyse the academic knowledge and skills of the dentistry aspirants.

MATERIAL AND METHOD:

There is a lone dental college in the Srinagar city, and the study was conducted by collecting the details of the students and then the responses of the questionnaire of around 262 (undergraduate, interns and postgraduate) students studying in only Government Dental College and Hospital, Srinagar and students studying outside the state

in other dental colleges pursuing BDS, residents of the same city during the month of January - March 2019.

The response was then collected, accumulated, analysed graphically and statistically.

The questionnaire was closely related to the study, career choice as dentistry.

The questionnaire was divided into two sections.
 -Sections 1 asked about the personnel details of the students i.e. gender, year of study, undergraduate student, intern or postgraduate student.

-Section 2 asked students about the choosing dentistry as a career and what next after the completion of degree.

The data was collected, accumulated and well calculated in the forms of percentage, graphs, pie charts etc using statistics.

RESULTS:

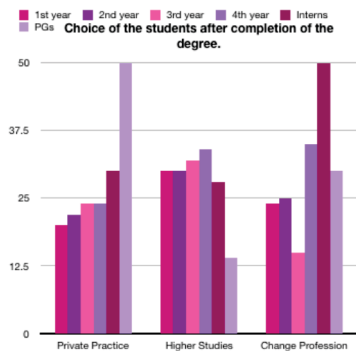
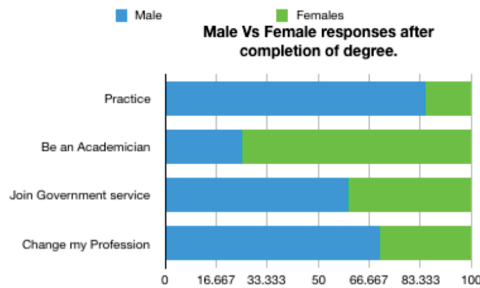
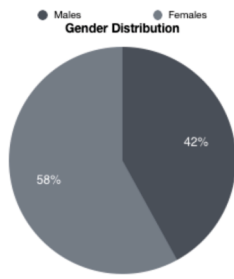
Among the total 262 respondents or dental students, 42% were males and 58% were females.

Out of 262 students there were total of 46(17.5%) postgraduate students 90(34.3%) interns and 126(48%) other undergraduate students.

For only 28% students dentistry was their first choice. 56% of the students would prefer private practice.

Majority of Female students considered dentistry a caring profession as compared to the Male students. Majority of the Female students did not want to do private practice as compared to Male students. When asked why? , the reason was trust deficit from the patient side in this region so most of the patients wanted to treat by Male dentists.

56% of students had heard about dentistry as a career in college while 34% had knowledge of it at high school while rest had knowledge about it through their families.



DISCUSSION:

Why to choose dentistry has been a research topic for years. The findings, based on comparisons between universities, different classes at the same university and different demographically constituted classes, as well as comparisons over time, demonstrate a remarkable consistency.[4] Students typically become Dentists because they wish to serve others, to be independent, work with their hands, acquire status, prestige and financial security, and work a 9 a.m.-5 p.m. day.⁽⁴⁾

58% of the students that participated in this study were females. The increased percentage of females entering the field of dentistry is comparable with other studies^(1,9)

Dentists are highly regarded by the communities they serve for their contributions to the general health of the public as well as their drive to improve the lives of those around them. Dentistry offers many opportunities, challenges and rewards. It is a rapidly changing and expanding profession. The Doctor of Dental Medicine is a member of the primary healthcare professions on the front line of disease prevention, intervention and wellness promotion. Dentists are often the first health care professionals to recognise and identify a wide variety of diseases, ranging from hypertension to oral cancer. They diagnose and treat problems affecting the teeth, gingival tissue, tongue, lips and jaws. These oral diseases often reveal other health issues that may require a follow-up with the patient's primary physician. In the modern era of health care, dentists utilise new and advanced technology such as computers, digital radiography, cone beam computed tomography and magnetic resonance imaging in diagnosing patients.

The work of a dentist extends beyond the dental chair. Patient education is as important as the actual dental procedures as dentists teach good oral habits to promote good health. Dentists educate the general public on the importance of oral health and disease prevention. They interact with people of all ages, cultures and personalities. The dentist's typical day is diverse and interesting.

In the current study, there is a changing perception of dental students towards dentistry throughout the first year upto the post-graduation. The level of satisfaction goes on decreasing as the students reach higher education year, especially internship or post-graduation. The reason might be due to dissatisfaction with remuneration, poor job vacancy, not competent enough to start practice, trust deficit for female dentists etc., similar observations were also reported in other study.⁽⁴⁾ Thus due to such reasons, there was a high percentage of interns who wanted to change their profession.

However we need to introspect more into it through interactive discussions that would lead us to the final conclusions of all the merits and demerits of dentistry.

CONCLUSION:

About 28% students indicated that dentistry was their first choice of career, and 58% were of participants were females but still majority of females don't want to practice. Hence, we would like to suggest that guidance and counselling of high school and college students to visit dental clinics are desirable and it may be a good idea to establish educational programs in colleges to educate students on their career choice, gender equality, gender based trust issues and employment opportunities, so that they can choose the right career. Exposure to dental training appears to improve the perception of the students about dental practice. A curriculum structured to expose the students to core dental courses earlier in their training may, therefore, enhance the perception and acceptability of dentistry to the students. Teaching staff in addition to teaching the technical aspects should communicate their own passion for the profession. They should also help students to understand the objectives of dentistry and make it easier for students to succeed and become dentists. Dental teachers remain a critical factor in motivating students in the decision process of pursuing dentistry as a career

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