



A STUDY TO ASSESS THE AWARENESS ABOUT THE OPTOMETRY COURSE AMONG THE MEDICAL ASPIRANTS

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ABSTRACT **Purpose:** The aim and purpose of this study is to determine the awareness about the optometry courses among medical aspirants.

Methodology: A cross sectional questionnaire based survey containing close and open ended questions done on 300 students from biology streams of different schools and coaching institute in Prayagraj.

Result: It was found that out of 300 students only 10% students are aware about the optometry courses and only 7% students are aware about the duration of optometry courses as well as internship i.e., 3 years and 1 year respectively and only 5% Students knows the difference between the ophthalmologist, optometrist and opticians.

Conclusion: There is very less awareness about optometry courses among Medical aspirants. It suggests that there is need to increase the awareness about these courses among the NEET aspirants.

KEYWORDS : Optometry, Allied health care professional, Role of optometrists, Opticians, Ophthalmologists

INTRODUCTION

Ophthalmic science professional is a person who studies eyes related ailments and specializes in the management of disorder of the eye and visual system limited in scope and complexity as performed by a medical doctor having optometrist¹ (As introduced in rajyasabha) with a minimum of 4 years of degree, ophthalmic assistant/ vision technician with a minimum of a two years recognized diploma programmes. It includes:

1. Optometrist
2. Ophthalmic assistant
3. Vision technician

Optometry is an allied healthcare profession that involves examining the eyes and applicable Visual systems for defects or abnormalities as well as the correction of refractive error with glasses or contact lenses and Treatment of eye diseases. Optometrist provides vision care ranging from sight testing and correction to the management of vision changes. Optometry is a profession Which is autonomous licensed and registered primary eye care practitioners who provide comprehensive eye care including refraction, dispensing, detection, diagnosis and management of eye disease along with rehabilitation of visual system². Blindness and the visual impairment are the major problems worldwide. The leading cause of vision impairment and Blindness are uncorrected refractive errors and cataract³. To sort out this problem it is important to increase the awareness about optometry courses among medical aspirants so that this area of allied health care could be explored and easily available to everyone. The scope and practice of optometry is still poorly defined in India which needs more Optometry professional which can be only done by increasing awareness about Optometry among Medical aspirants. The courses available in Optometry are:

1. Bachelor's of optometry (4 years)
2. Diploma (2 years)

Primary eye care is an activity frontline providing eye care and identification of eye disease before it becomes a serious medical problem. Primary eye care can be delivered differently⁴.

Awareness of primary eye care can play vital role in inspiring people to seek timely eye care and can therefore help in reducing the problem of visual impairment⁵.

The objective of this study is to check the awareness about Optometry among Medical aspirants.

METHODOLOGY:

A Cross sectional questionnaire based survey done on 300 students from biology streams of different schools and medical aspirants from different coaching institute in Prayagraj using a validate questionnaire containing a mix of open and close ended questions. A structural questionnaire was designed related to the optometry course. The questionnaire was taken to evaluate the awareness among students about optometry course.

During Evaluation following common questions were asked to students:

1. Do you know about the optometry course?
2. What do you think about optician, ophthalmologist, and optometrist?
3. Do you know which courses are included in optometry course and what is the duration of that course?
4. Are you aware of internship programmes of optometry course?
5. Do you know the difference between optometrist, optician and ophthalmologists?

RESULT:

A comparison of statistical analysis on 300 medical aspirants (n=300) mean age 17.5+- 4.5 reveals that 90% (270 out of 300) students are unaware about the optometry courses. 7% students (21 out of 300) are aware about the duration of optometry course as well as internship i.e., 3 years and 1 year respectively.

Regarding the role of optometrists, only 5% students (15 out of 300) are aware about the difference in the work of opticians, optometrist and ophthalmologists.

DISCUSSION:

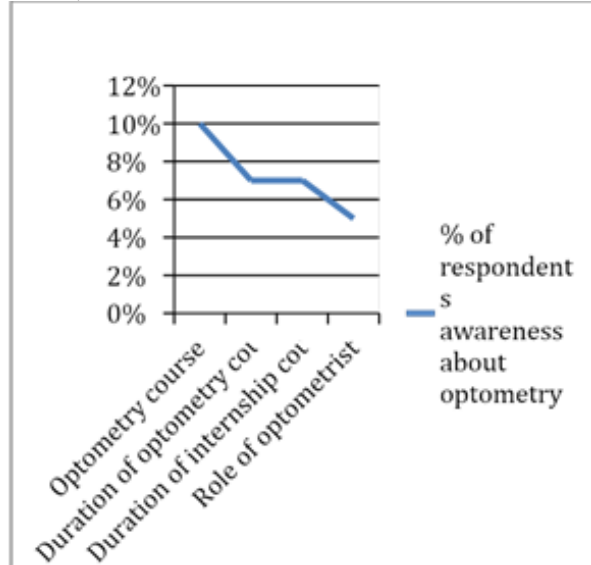
Now - a - days being the part of medical sector is easy as compared to the last decade because new areas and fields have been explored in medical and health care sector but still due to unawareness about very important part of Health care i.e., optometry. Most of the students are not able to explore this interesting health care area. In this evidence with this research only 11% students (33 out of 300 respondents) are aware about paramedical courses. This awareness is very low, and it is urgent need to enhance the awareness about it.

Graph Showing Gender of the respondents

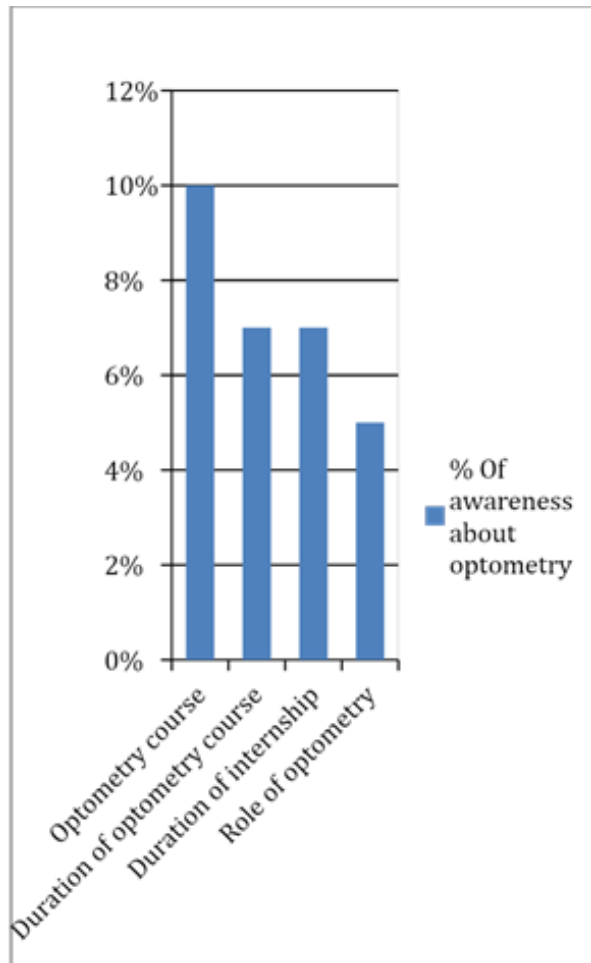


Graph 1.1

Graph 1.1 shows the gender of respondents that is out of total respondents i.e., 300, 21% are male (63 students) and 79% (237 students) are female.



Graph 1.2



Graph 1.3

Graph 1.2 and 1.3 shows that 10% Students are aware about optometry course whereas only 7% Students knows the duration of optometry course and 7% Students knows about Internship and its duration. Only 5% Students are aware about the role of optometrists, opticians, and ophthalmologists.

All these data were statistically analyzed and extremely significant.

CONCLUSIONS

There are many challenges in eye health care which is increasing avoidable blindness and visual impairment. The most important reason behind it is unavailability of optometry professionals, resources and unaffordable treatment. The optometrist provides the solution to all of these problems. These challenges are overcome by optometrists by diagnostic, technical and direct patient care and support services. Finally from this study it is concluded that there is very less awareness about optometry courses among Medical aspirants. It suggests that there is urgent need to increase the awareness about these courses among the medical aspirants so that this sector of health care can be explored and easily available to everyone.

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