



WORK PROFILE OF DENTAL PRACTITIONERS IN BELAGAVI CITY: A CROSS-SECTIONAL STUDY

Dr. Rohit Dasharath Bamane

Post Graduate, Department of Community Medicine Jawaharlal Nehru Medical College Belagavi.

Dr. Yogesh Kumar S*

MD, Fellowship in Preventive Oncology, Department of Community Medicine, Jawaharlal Nehru Medical College, Belagavi. *Corresponding Author

ABSTRACT

Background: Dental practitioners face significant occupational stress, particularly working hours and more number of patients, which leads to decrease in work efficiency, so a study was planned to assess the work profile of dental practitioners in Belagavi city, Karnataka. **Methods:** A cross-sectional study was conducted among 491 dental practitioners using universal sampling. Data on demographics and work habits were collected via a structured questionnaire and analyzed using SPSS Version 20. **Results:** The study highlighted important demographic and professional characteristics of dental practitioners in Belagavi city, showed a predominantly young workforce, with 29.5% aged 25–34 and 54.8% female. Most practitioners were Hindu (85%), married (74.1%), and from nuclear families (73.4%). Educationally, 57% held a BDS degree, while 43% had an MDS degree. A majority (51.4%) worked over six hours daily, with 40.5% working 3–6 hours. Patient load was moderate to high, with 32.3% seeing 6–10 patients/day and 22.9% handling >15. **Conclusion:** This study reveals key insights into dental practitioners' work profiles in Belagavi, showing that 51.4% work over six hours daily and 22.9% handle more than 15 patients per day, indicating a highly demanding workload. The findings underscore the need for strategies to improve work conditions and practitioner well-being in this setting.

KEYWORDS : Dental practitioners, Work Profile, Occupational health, Belagavi.**INTRODUCTION**

Dental practitioners face varying work demands, including long working hours and high patient loads, which can impact their health and professional efficiency. Previous studies have highlighted regional disparities in the workload of dental practitioners. Studies suggests that although structural and organizational factors may influence the health care provision, factors related to the work profile, such as professional development training and working hours influence performance and service delivery.¹

Another study revealed that females preferred to practice for less working hours which increased their work efficiency.²

However, limited data exists on the work patterns of dentists in Belagavi City, Karnataka. This cross-sectional study aims to assess the daily working hours, patient volume and associated challenges essential for improving workplace conditions and patient care. The findings from this study will provide insights into workforce sustainability, helping policymakers and institutions develop strategies to enhance dentists' well-being and service delivery.

OBJECTIVES:

To assess the demographic and professional work profile of dental practitioners.

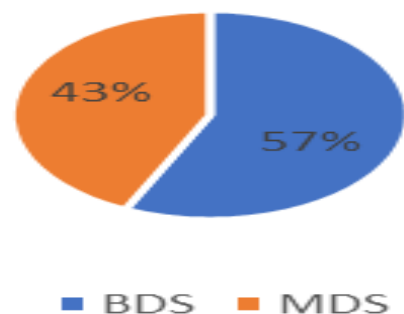
METHODOLOGY:

This cross-sectional study was conducted among dental professionals in Belagavi city, involving 491 participants with 467 respondents (response rate: 95.1%). The study population comprised faculty members, postgraduate students and private practitioners who completed a validated questionnaire. Universal sampling method was employed, with inclusion criteria encompassing: registered dentists engaged in clinical practice within Belagavi city corporation limits; teaching faculty from two dental colleges in Belagavi; and postgraduate students from these institutions. Exclusion criteria eliminated undergraduate students and interns from the two colleges. Data analysis was performed using SPSS version 20, employing appropriate statistical methods to examine the collected responses.

RESULTS**Table – 1: Demographic Characteristics Of Dental Practitioners In Belagavi (n=467)**

Characteristic	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Age (years)	≤24	43	9.2%
	25-34	138	29.5%
	35-44	98	21%
	45-54	113	24.2%
	≥55	75	16.1%

Gender	Male	211	45.2%
	Female	256	54.8%
Religion	Hindu	397	85%
	Muslim	48	10.3%
	Christian	15	3.2%
	Jain	6	1.3%
	Others	1	0.2%
Marital Status	Married	346	74.1%
	Unmarried	112	24%
	Divorced	9	1.9%
Family Type	Nuclear	343	73.4%
	Joint	98	21%
	Three Generation	26	5.6%

Education**Figure 1:** Distribution Of Participants As Per Education**Table 2: Distribution Of Participants As Per Work Profile (n=467)**

Practice	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Hours of working (in hrs)	<3hrs	38	8.1
	3-6	189	40.5
	>6hrs	240	51.4
No of average patients	1-5	66	14.1%
	6-10	151	32.3%
	11-15	143	30.7%
	>15	107	22.9%

The study of 467 dental practitioners in Belagavi revealed a predominantly young workforce, with the largest age group being 25-34 years (29.5%), followed by 45-54 years (24.2%). Female

practitioners were 54.8% compared to males (45.2%), and most were of Hindu religion (85%). The majority were married (74.1%) and from nuclear families (73.4%). Professionally, more practitioners held BDS degrees (57%) than MDS qualifications (43%) (Figure1). These findings demonstrate the demographic profile of dental professionals in Belagavi, characterized by a young, predominantly female workforce with strong representation from nuclear family structures (Table 1).

The study also revealed that a majority (51.4%) reported working more than 6 hours daily, while 40.5% worked between 3-6 hours, and only 8.1% worked less than 3 hours. This indicates that most practitioners have long working hours.

Regarding patient load, the largest proportion (32.3%) saw 6-10 patients per day, closely followed by those handling 11-15 patients (30.7%). About 22.9% managed more than 15 patients, while only 14.1% had a lighter load of 1-5 patients. This suggests that a significant number of practitioners deal with a moderate to high patient volume daily. (Table 2)

DISCUSSION:

Our study found that most dental practitioners in Belagavi were aged 25–34 (29.5%), followed by 45–54 (24.2%), 35–44 (21%), and ≥55 (16.1%), with the smallest group being ≤24 (9.2%). A similar age distribution was observed among Italian dentists.³ Female practitioners predominated (54.8%), aligning with trends in Kerala (52.4% female)⁷ and Indonesia⁵ (78.8%). Marital status data showed 74.1% married, 24% unmarried, and 1.9% divorced, comparable to Lebanese dentists (57% married).⁶ Nuclear families were most common (73.4%), consistent with Kerala's findings (69%)⁴. Educationally, 57% held a BDS and 43% an MDS, mirroring Kerala's distribution (68.6% BDS, 31.4% MDS).⁴

Our findings indicate that a substantial majority (51.4%) of dental practitioners in the study work more than six hours daily, while 40.5% work between three to six hours, and only a small fraction (8.1%) work fewer than three hours. This suggests that extended working hours are common among the surveyed population.

Comparatively, a Finland study examining dentists and dental students found that most respondents (47%) worked fewer than 16 hours per week, largely due to the dental students balancing part-time work with studies. Meanwhile, 35% worked 16-30 hours weekly, 15% worked 31-40 hours, and only 4% exceeded 40 hours. These differences highlight the contrast between full-time practicing dentists, who often work longer hours, and students with more flexible schedules. The Finland study also emphasizes the need for work-life balance, as prolonged hours can lead to physical and mental strain.⁷

Similarly, research from Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, found that 45.7% of dentists worked 15-30 hours weekly, 35% worked 31-40 hours, and 19.2% worked 41-50 hours. This indicates that while many dentists in Jeddah maintain moderate work hours, a notable portion face heavier workload.⁸

According to the study conducted in Lithuanian dentists, 26.6% of general dentists and 39.2% of dental specialists work overtime (> 40 hours per week) and practice in multiple clinics (1.4 ± 0.6 and 2.0 ± 1.2 , respectively). One third of general dentists (31.3%) and dental specialists (31.4%) stated to have a low number of patients.⁹

Collectively, these studies reveal regional and career-stage variations in working hours among dental professionals. Future research should explore strategies to promote sustainable work practices, ensuring better well-being for practitioners and improved patient care.

Regarding patient load, our study found that most dentists treated a moderate to high number of patients daily: 32.3% saw 6-10 patients, 30.7% handled 11-15, and 22.9% managed over 15. Only 14.1% had a lighter caseload of 1-5 patients.

In contrast, a UAE study reported a more balanced distribution, with 47.8% of dentists seeing eight or fewer patients daily and 52.2% treating more than eight.¹⁰ Meanwhile, research from Sana'a, Yemen, showed a significantly lower workload, with 70.6% of dentists seeing just 1-3 patients per day, 20.6% treating 4-6, and only 6.12% handling 7-9.¹¹

These comparisons highlight regional disparities in patient volume, with our study reflecting a heavier workload than both the UAE and Yemeni studies. Such differences may influence stress levels and decrease occupational efficiency among dental professionals, underscoring the need for workload management strategies tailored to varying practice environments. The emphasis given to work-life balance in other countries should be implemented in India as well.

CONCLUSIONS:

This study provides valuable insights into the work profile of dental practitioners in Belagavi city, revealing key trends in working hours, patient load, and ergonomic practices. The findings indicate that a majority of dentists (51.4%) work more than six hours daily, with a significant proportion (22.9%) handling over 15 patients per day—highlighting a demanding workload.

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