



A Survey on Career Choice And the Difficulties of Final Year Dental Students And Interns Attending A Dental School in Navi Mumbai

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ABSTRACT: A survey of Interns and fourth-year dental students was conducted at D.Y.Patil University School of Dentistry to determine the reasons for choosing Dentistry as a career and the various experiences during the course. Assessment was conducted in order to identify the difficulties faced during the undergraduate programme, stress involved during clinics and examinations and to identify gaps in knowledge.

Methods: A competency-based survey instrument was administered to all Interns and final year undergraduate students of D.Y.Patil University School of Dentistry, Navi Mumbai by the Department of Prosthodontics. The survey evaluated on 15 points ranging from the reason for selecting dentistry as a profession to the necessary skills obtained during the graduation programme and areas related to clinics and curriculum. Participants knowledge, attitudes, and competencies in the dental school were assessed. These data (n=146) were analyzed and percentile conclusions were drawn.

Results: Most of the participants (68%) reported that the present day curriculum did not or somewhat give directions to achieve their goals. A variety of preferred educational strategies and methods were identified and factors for the selection of educational preference, and causes of stresses in the clinic were identified. Overall 36.41% respondent believed that the extensive medical syllabus in Dentistry was a reason for making studying Dentistry difficult.

Conclusions: This needs assessment survey represents a preliminary step in establishing a Dental Graduate program that addresses current gaps in knowledge and in the practice by the dental students in Navi Mumbai India.

Keywords: Dentistry; Career; Questionnaires; Students; Navi Mumbai

I. INTRODUCTION

Every child puts in hard efforts to reach their destination and get the destiny. In India a child has to decide by the age of 18 what he would be doing professionally for the rest of his life. Most of the time the decisions are based on the trends or on parental pressure. The choice of dentistry also falls in the same category. This survey was conducted with the aim of collecting the opinion and correlating the factors that prompted the career choice of under-graduate dental students and their experiences while attending a Dental School in Navi Mumbai, during the academic year 2015–16.

1.1 Aims And Objectives

The aim of this investigation was to rank and correlate the factors that prompted the career choice of under-graduate dental students attending a University Dental School in Navi Mumbai, during the academic year 2015–16. Of particular interest were, the achievement of skills for practice, requirement of taking short term courses before practicing, the teaching methods, the staff /faculty contribution and guidance, the reasons for stress in the clinic and examination

II. METHODS AND SUBJECTS

A competency-based survey was developed for this study that asked the respondents to rank the emphasis placed during their education on 15 aspects ranging from their career choice, the curriculum and its usefulness in private practice, the stress and anxiety faced during the clinical hours and examinations. Data were collected from a self-administered questionnaire that was distributed between January 2016-March 2016 .

2.1. Study participants:

A questionnaire was administered to all Interns and final year undergraduate students of D.Y.Patil University School of Dentistry, Navi Mumbai by the Department of Prosthodontics (n=200) Each respondent was asked to cooperate in the completion of the survey.

2.2. Study questionnaire:

The description and details of the questionnaire used for this study are provided in (Fig. 1).

Questions asked were

(1)Reason for choosing dentistry as a profession (2.)What they want to achieve on becoming a dentist (3) whether the present curriculum gave directions to their goals.(4)how were the teaching methods .(5) suggestions on how the faculty could deliver the topics in a better way (6) suggestion on how the staff/faculty could be motivated to update themselves. (7) whether at the end of the final year they wished that they had not opted for dentistry (8) what were the reasons that made studying for dentistry difficult (9) were they stressed during clinical hours (10)what were the reasons for them getting stressed during clinical hours (11) weather the clinical hours were sufficient to horn theirv skill.(12)whether the present curriculum adequately prepared them for dental practice;
(13)the need to take short term courses before venturing into practice (14) suggestions on how the present examination system improvement (15)who should be responsible for bringing bout a change in the dental education system. Three options were given for every question and the participants were asked to select one. (Fig; 1)

A survey of final year and intern dental students attending Dental School in Navi Mumbai

Q1. What made you choose dentistry as a profession?

1. Lesser marks
2. Lesser fees then other courses
- 3.Parental suggestions

Q2. What do you want to Achive on becoming a Dentist?

1. Oral hygiene awareness
2. Selfless service
3. Respect and position in the society

Q3.Does the present day teaching curriculum give direction to your goals?

1. Yes
- 2.No
- 3.Somewhat

Q4.Are the present day teaching methods...

1. Enquiry based
- 2.Practical based
- 3.Orthodox

Q5.How can the faculty deliver topics in a better way?

- 1.PPT Presentations
- 2.Chalk and Board
- 3.Group Discussions

Q6.How can the faculty /staff be motivated to update themselves?

1. College exchange programme
- 2.Compulsory university Sponsored courses
- 3.Self motivation

Q7.By the end of Final year do you wish you had not opted for Dentistry?

1. Yes
- 2.No
- 3.Maybe

Q8. What are the reasons responsible for making Dentistry difficult?

1. Curriculum
- 2.Extensive medical subjects
- 3.Clinics from 3rd year

Q9.Do you get stressed before “Clinics”

1. Yes
- 2.No
- 3.Somewhat

Q10 Reasons for stress in the Clinic

1. Clinic timings
- 2.Less patient flow
- 3.No Mentor

Q11.Are the clinical hours sufficient to learn your skills?

1. Yes
- 2.No
- 3.Somewhat

Q12.Do you believe you have achieved sufficient skills to practice confidently?

1. Yes
2. No
- 3.Somewhat

Q13. Do you need to take short term courses before starting your practice ?

1. Yes 2.No 3.Somewhat

Q14.How can the present examination system be improved?

1. Biannual assessment 2. Open Text Book 3.Only Practical's

Q15.Who should be responsible in bringing about a change in Dental Education?

1. Institution 2.University 3.DCI

Fig 1: Survey Form

III. RESULTS

3.1. Description of study sample

A total of 173 persons (86.5%) responded to the surveys distributed; among the respondents, 56.2% were interns, 43.8% were final year dental students. (Table 1)

Table 1

sr.no	question	option 1	option 2	option3
1	What made you choose dentistry as a profession	56	45	72
2	What do you want to achieve on becoming a dentist	57	66	50
3	Does the present day curriculum give direction to your goals	59	53	61
4	Are the present day teaching methods	49	76	48
5	How can the faculty deliver topics in a better way	63	47	63
6	How can the faculty be motivated to update themselves	53	64	56
7	By the end of final year do you wish you had not opted for den	53	65	55
8	What are the reasons for making dentistry difficult	56	63	54
9	Do you get stressed before clinics	65	60	48
10	Reasons for stress in the clinic	55	53	65
11	Are the clinical hours sufficient to learn your skills	60	64	49
12	Do you believe you have achieved sufficient skills to practice dentistry confidently	56	53	66
13	do you need to take short term courses before starting your practice	82	46	45
14	how can the present examination system be improved	54	49	70
15	Who should be responsible in bringing about a change			

3.2 Reason for choosing Dentistry as a profession

Approximately 66% responded that it was parental suggestion that made them choose Dentistry as a profession whereas 28% choose Dentistry due to scoring less marks in the common entrance test and 12% of them responded that the lesser fee structure compared to other courses as the reason for choosing Dentistry.

3.3 What do you want to achieve on becoming a Dentist

Out of the 173 respondents 32.94% said they wanted to bring about oral hygiene awareness in the country 38.15% responded selfless service as the reason for choosing Dentistry and 28.90% wanted respect and position in the society on becoming a Dental practitioner.

3.4 Does the present day curriculum give direction to your goal

34.10% of the total respondents agreed that the curriculum gave direction to their goals, 35.26% said that the present day curriculum somewhat directed them in achieving their goals and a total of 30.63% said the curriculum did not guide them enough in achieving their goals.

3.5 How are the present days teaching methods?

Approximately 28.32% of the respondents agreed that the present day teaching method were enquiry based 43.93% agreed that the teaching methods were practical based and 27.74% stated they were orthodox

3.6 How can the faculty deliver topics in a better way?

The preferred teaching strategies for graduate dental education, in Dental School in descending order (27.16%) was Chalk and board, PPT presentations and Group discussion. Most respondents preferred learning mainly in a traditional classroom setting, with some electronic technologies.

3.7 How can the faculty be motivated to update themselves?

36.99% of the total respondent believed that Compulsory University sponsored courses was the best method of motivation for the teachers to update themselves, 32.36% believed Self motivation and 30.63% believed College exchange programme were necessary for the teachers to update themselves.

3.8 By the end of final year do you wish you had not opted for dentistry?

37.57% of the respondent said that they did not feel that they made a mistake in taking dentistry as a profession. Surprisingly 30.63% of the respondent did feel that the choice of dentistry was a mistake and 31.79% said they somewhat felt that they wish they had not opted for Dentistry at the end of Final year and Internship.

3.9 Reasons responsible for making Dentistry difficult

Overall 36.41% respondent believed that the extensive medical syllabus in Dentistry was a reason for making studying Dentistry difficult. 31.79% believed curriculum and 31.21% Believed that clinics from 3rd year were the factors responsible for dentistry to be difficult

3.10 Do you get stressed before clinics?

Majority of the population surveyed agreed in the affirmative that they were stressed before clinical hours (37.57%) followed by 27.74% agreeing that the duration before the clinical posting somewhat stressed them 34.68% of the population were not stressed out before the clinics.

3.11 Reasons for stress in the clinic

37.57% of the respondent selected "No Mentor" as their reason for stress during their clinical hours. 31.79% of the respondent said that the clinical timings were the main cause of stress in the clinics. 30.63% of the population stated less patient flow as their reason for stress during the clinical hours.

3.12 Are the clinical hours sufficient to learn your skills

Approximately 37% of the respondent agreed that the clinical hours were nonsufficient to learn their skills, 34.68% of the surveyed population thought that the clinical hours were sufficient to learn their skills and 28.32% believed that the clinical hours were somewhat sufficient to learn their skills.

3.13 Have they achieved sufficient skills to practice Dentistry confidently?

When questioned if they have achieved sufficient Knowledge, skills, and abilities needed by practitioners to practice Dentistry confidently, most of the respondents 38.15% answered that they were somewhat confident of practice, 32.36% answered that they were confident of practice and approximately 3rd of the population were not confident enough to start their practice.

3.14 Need for short term courses before starting practice

A staggering 47.39% of the respondent agreed that they needed to attend short term clinical courses before they can start their practice, 26% of the population believed they may require to take short term course before venturing into dental practice and only 26.58% of the population believed that they do not need any short term courses

3.15 Improving the present day exam pattern

Approximately 41% of the respondent believed that assessment through practical's only was a better way of assessing their skills rather than the present day theory and practical exam pattern about 31.21% population believed that biannual assessment would reduce the yearly stress and almost 29% of the respondent wanted an open text book exam system.

3.16 Responsibility of bringing a change in the Dental curriculum

The majority of participants strongly agreed that the university should be responsible for bringing about a change in the present day Dental curriculum (42.19%)

IV. DISCUSSION

The goal of the dental school curriculum is to prepare dental students to practice dentistry. One method to evaluate a dental school's curriculum is to assess the particular knowledge graduates find important to their practice of dentistry and whether it was properly emphasized in the curriculum. Several studies have asked dentists and/or dental students to evaluate their dental education.¹⁵ these studies found areas that the respondents considered to be adequately or inadequately covered in their dental school curriculum, these survey data presents a substantial challenge to the dental educator⁷⁻⁹. Hence this survey was conducted with a view in assessing the opinion and correlating the factors that prompted the career choice of under-graduate dental students and their experiences while attending a Dental School in Navi Mumbai, during the academic year 2015–16.

A total of 173 persons (86.5%) responded to the surveys distributed; among the respondents, 56.2% were interns, 43.8% were final year dental students. When developing the survey, an effort was made to include the topics that plague the undergraduate students in a Dental college. However the form did not include all possible topics or alternate suggestions. From 173 final year and intern surveyed, approximately 66% responded that it was parental suggestion that made them choose Dentistry as a profession thereby suggesting the influence of parents on selecting a child's profession in India. Higher parental influence can be attributed to the fact that in India it is a perception that the education of a child is the responsibility of the parents and along with this responsibility comes the decision making powers. It would be interesting to know if the students would have opted for a different profession if they were paying for their own education.

Only a third of the students surveyed confirmed that the present day curriculum gave directions to their goals and more than a third said the curriculum lacked in giving directions to their goals. This response is suggestive of the gap between what is thought and what is desired.

MacKenzie⁸ recommended evaluation of the discrepancies between what exists in the curriculum and what should exist. He also suggested that these evaluations should emphasize what dentists are actually doing to contribute to high quality health care and the educational variables that aid the application of knowledge to the practice of dentistry.

The preferred teaching strategies for graduate dental education, according to the present survey was PPT presentations and Group discussion thereby describing a change in trend and indicating that the teachers should adapt modern technology to impart knowledge to the students 36.99% of the total respondent believed that Compulsory University sponsored courses was the best method of motivation for the teachers to update themselves. Overall 36.41% respondent believed that the extensive medical syllabus in Dentistry was a reason for making studying Dentistry difficult. Whereas more than half the respondents believed that the dental curriculum and clinical posting from 3rd year were the factors responsible for dentistry to be difficult.

37.57% of the respondent selected "No Mentor" as their reason for stress during their clinical hours indicating a desire to be mentored individually as compared to an instructor/mentor allotted to 3-4 students which is the present norm in the clinics in the Dental school Navi Mumbai 31.79% of the respondents said that the clinical timings were the main cause of stress in the clinics. 30.63% of the population stated less patient flow as their reason for stress during the clinical hours.

A staggering 47.39% of the respondent agreed that they needed to attend short term clinical courses before they can start their practice, thereby suggesting that the clinical exposure was not sufficient for the students and they were not confident in starting a dental practice.

The respondents believed that the University should be responsible in bringing about a change in the Dental education system.

The percentage values serve a different function as this research was conducted as a survey and not a confirmatory experiment. The intent in the survey tests was to apply a screening mechanism to identify topics that warrant due consideration. From this perspective, the test outcomes provide a data-descriptive, instead of data-inferential, mechanism in bagging topics of potential interest.

V. CONCLUSIONS

173 undergraduate dental students of 4th year and interns at a University Dental School were surveyed during the academic year 2015-2016. Candidates were asked to score the influence of certain factors on their decision to choose dentistry as a career. The overall response rate was 80.6%. Reasons for choosing dentistry included perceived ease of employment, being self-employed, working regular hours, followed by an opportunity of good income, and the opportunity to help people. The survey also emphasised on the stress involved during the undergraduate level and the reasons for the same.

This assessment survey on the of career choices and difficulties faced by dental students, represents a preliminary step in establishing a Dental graduate program that addresses current gaps in knowledge and in the practice by the dental students in Navi Mumbai India.

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