

NEO DENTIST AT FUTURE CROSS ROADS: A SURVEY

Dr. Mohammad Ali Bhat Zabroo¹, Dr. Syeda Shamima Nastaran Quazi², Dr. Nuzhat Ara³, Dr. Arindom Changmai⁴, Dr. Arunoday Kumar⁵

¹ Dental Surgeon, Jaipur Dental College, Jaipur, Rajasthan, India.

² Dental Surgeon, Guwahati, Assam, India.

³ PhD. Scholar, Department of Oral Medicine and Radiology, Jaipur Dental College, Jaipur, Rajasthan, India.

⁴ Lecturer, Department of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery, Government Dental College, Silchar, Assam, India.

⁵ Assistant Professor, Department of Prosthodontics and Crown & Bridge, Dental College RIMS, Imphal, Manipur, India.

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Corresponding author: Dr. Arunoday Kumar

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Abstract

Face in general is an index of personality. Facial appearance has a great impact on overall self esteem of an individual and dentists have a vital role in enhancing their patient's personality. It's not just a tooth treating profession but a personality developing profession. Despite being a lucrative job, recent trend has shown an attitude change in student's pursuing dentistry. Hence a questionnaire based study was conducted in Jaipur Dental College to access the attitude of young dentist's regarding their knowledge, thinking and future goals.

Aim: The aim is to bring the sufferings of dental graduates in light of the peers of the community to take some tough decisions to curb the menace.

Material and Method: A questionnaire related to various aspects of dentistry was prepared. After obtaining proper written permission from the college authorities, the questions were answered in hard copy format of the questionnaire.

Results: The questionnaire results revealed that only half of the dentists have chosen their profession by their own will whereas others have been into the profession by either parents will or some other reasons.

Keywords: Questionnaire, dental graduates, establishments

Introduction

The world of dental science is changing at a fast pace as the technology is reaching higher heights now a days. Dental well-being is becoming a priority in the newer generations, as the dental well-being is related to personality well-being. The dental science is rapidly altering day by day in order to develop new methods for the benefit of human beings. There has been a marked increase in the awareness of importance of early dental treatments in past decades.

The first dental college of India was established in 1951-52 in Kolkata, West Bengal named as Dr R. Ahmed Dental College & Hospital, Kolkata¹. After the foundation of dental science was laid in India the sapling of dental science started flourishing in the nation. The setup of private dental college started in 1966 when government allowed privatization of dental colleges¹. Since then there has been a sharp rise in the number of dental colleges with a majority of them from private sector. (Table 2)

On present date there has been a steep increase in the number of dental graduates passing from these colleges every year adding up thousands more to a lump of 1,61,023 registered dentists in India under part A. As per

the Dentist (amendment) Act, 1972 no fresh dentist are being registered under Part- B. However, as on date, as per record available in DCI, the total of dentists registered under part-B is 979¹.

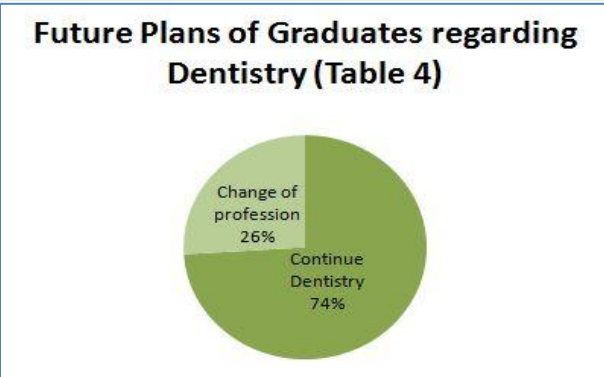
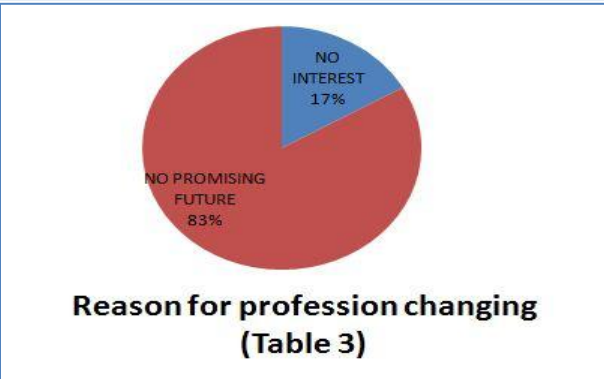
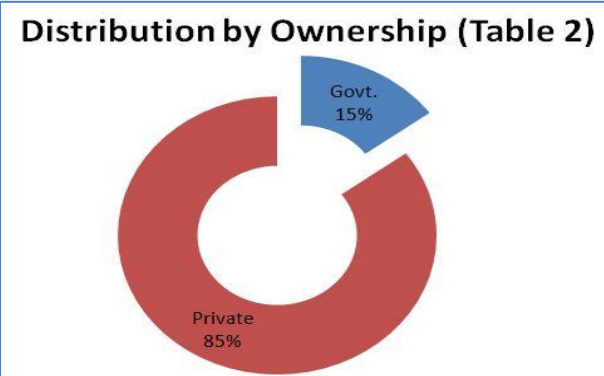
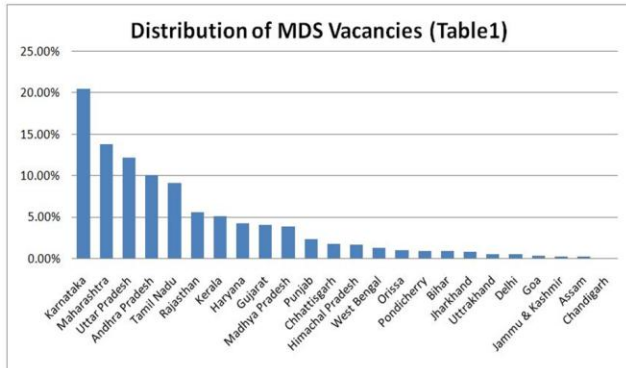
Method

The students undergoing Rotatory Internship program at the time survey was being conducted were included in the study. The students who had completed the Rotatory Internship program not more than three months older at the time of the survey conduction were also included.

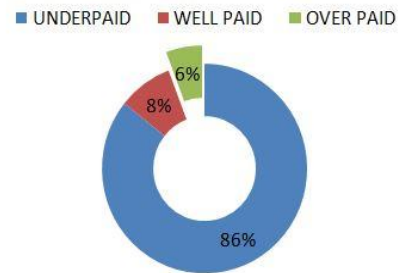
Results

The no of graduates who participated in the survey was 70. Just 54% of dentists had chosen their profession themselves, 39% dentists were in the profession by their parents will, 4% by examination led counseling and 3% by some other reasons. About 29% of graduates thought of leaving the course half way. Mostly the reason was of lack of interest in dentistry and focus on pursuing MBBS. The other reasons were problems regarding the clinical workload during the course. About 67% of dentists think that they are not enough experienced to setup an individual establishment. A huge group 86% of graduates gave response of underpaid salary in private sector, 8%

gave response of well payment and 6% think that a dental graduate is over paid. Only 74% of graduates want to continue with dental profession 26% want to change their profession out of which 83% see no promising future in dentistry and 17% due to no Interest in Dentistry. (Table 3-4) About 33% of graduates of India want to move abroad for their practice because of the problems faced in India.



Finance in Private Sector (Table 5)



Questionnaires:

- What was the reason for taking up dentistry as your profession?
 - Personal choice
 - Parent's choice
 - Entrance examination
 - Other reason
- During the duration of course did u get up any thought of leaving dentistry?
 - Yes
 - No
- If you thought of leaving dentistry halfway what was the reason behind such thought?
 - Perusing for MBBS
 - Heavy clinical workload in dentistry
 - Any other reason
- What is the future plan after graduating?
 - Clinical practice
 - Academic field
 - Administrative field
 - Undecided future
- Do you think at this point of time when you have just completed your Internship, are you enough experienced to individually start clinical practice?
 - Yes
 - No
- Do you think post graduation is necessary for you?
 - Yes
 - No
- Does post graduation give you better job guarantee?
 - Yes
 - No
- Which area would you prefer for clinical practice?
 - Rural area
 - Urban area
- Are you satisfied with the clinical exposure you got during the duration of the course?
 - Yes
 - No

Discussion

Dental profession is among the highly paid profession in the western countries. Every upcoming fresh graduate in the field of dentistry expects an easy bread and butter once starting practice, but the reality is far more painful to gulp down the throat.

Admissions to the dental colleges are being done by a single exam which also fills up the vacancies for other Medical and Para Medical courses, veterinary, agricultural courses etc. this has created a merit based sorting for filling up of the vacancies, regardless the interest based sorting of candidates among colleges. In private colleges a maximum of candidates used to secure their seats on their own interest but now the fate lies again in the hands of National Eligibility cum Entrance Test.

In developed countries like United States of America there is a separate entrance examination for dentistry, Dental Admission Test (DAT) regardless of a common examination for all medical courses². It serves as an Indicator for the enthusiasm of the students towards dentistry. It also minimizes the risk of loss of manpower to the Dental Community. Individual interviews must be also conducted to ensure the interest towards dental field at the time of admission. Being a more clinical oriented branch of science it is necessary to know how much the student is dedicated towards the patient service. The Ministry of Health and

Family Welfare should propose a same pattern of exams in India.

The pattern of conventional teaching in classrooms by the use of board needs to be modified to some extent, colleges should encourage problem based learning and Evidence Based Dentistry. The DCI should take note of colleges using old conventional methods for teaching purpose and give them directions to change to newer methods. The graduates should also be made to assist the residents or senior dentists, which will help them to observe and apply their knowledge in better way.

The study revealed a large number of dentists having hurdles in visualizing their profession clearly. Only 5,928 seats are available for pursuing post graduation in various departments all over India. In contrast to 26,250 graduate seats every year all over India³.

The distribution pattern of the post graduation vacancies has also created a major snag in pursuing masters among the graduates particularly the female graduates in the field of dentistry⁴⁻⁵. (Table 1)

The number of dental graduates is increasing day by day but the maximum numbers of graduates are not able to cope up in the market due to the less exposure to the field during the training period. About 67% of the graduates who were under survey were not satisfied with the clinical exposure they had been to during the graduation.

A maximum of graduates want to pursue masters in one or the other fields of dentistry but the less no of seats in government establishments and costly private establishments puts their dream in shambles. The financial burden of private studies has increased to such a huge level that it has become a mere dream for a middle class family to opt for.

Various colleges all over India have started Bridge courses to enhance the clinical skills of dentists which have been also a new trend among graduates who are incapable to secure a post graduation reservation for themselves. These courses include various certificate courses, Fellowships and Diplomas some of which are recognized by the Dental Council of India⁶.

These courses also provide a platform for young graduates to polish their clinical exposure and outshine in market as specialists. This in turn provides attractiveness among the patient population towards the practitioner. In developed countries every department offers half of course devoted to conduction of original researches. In India although the DCI is planning for the same pattern but has not been implemented yet. These courses help students attain vocation in the various dental material and equipment handling. They even help in bringing about productive help

in field of allied dental materials and well personalized dentists.

There is a high competition level in urban areas where the maximum numbers of dental establishments are present. In contrast there is a deficit of dentists in the rural populations⁷. The survey revealed that 70% of graduates prefer to setup establishments in urban areas while as only 30% of dentists want to opt for rural areas. The high cost of equipments for setting up an establishment also gives a negative mind for starting practice in rural areas because of lower rate of payments from patients.

The finance also adds up to the job insecurity as in the private colleges the payment as an academician is less as expected by the graduates (Table 5). On the other hand where there is better finance in public sector, there are less number of jobs for graduates.

Due to this prevailing situation there has been a gradual shift of mind towards the planning of future outside the country that leads to a great loss to the community as well as the country because there is a large deficit of dentists in the rural populations. The survey revealed that 33% of dentists want to move outside the country for securing their future.

Conclusion

On the way where day by day a new era of dentistry begins with a new invention, the graduates who are the future of dentistry are running out of the profession due to lack of awareness of dental field. The graduates are a major fraction of the dentists in market and need to be handled from lagging behind. The various dental associations running all over the world should take a leading role in helping neo dentists to secure their future in market. Jointly the government and the concerned fraternity of dentists should provide financial support to the new dentists to start new establishments particularly in the rural areas so that the dentist patient ratio will get to better levels among these populations. Also, India is in a need of an oral health mission to be started on national level which will fix up a major gorge between patients and clinicians which is giving rise to a life threatening practice called Quackery.

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