

Assessment of students perception regarding the career options after BDS- A Cross Sectional Study

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Abstract

Background: One of the most important decisions one will ever make is choosing a career option. It is of utmost importance to choose your working field wisely. So, the awareness about various career options after a Bachelor of Dental Surgery (BDS) plays an important role in achieving professional security.

Materials and methods: The present study was a cross-sectional survey conducted online through Google Forms. The study was conducted on dental undergraduate students [Interns and Final year] studying in 3 dental institutes of Maharashtra state in Vidarbha region India. A web link for Google Forms was sent to 200 students. The responses were collected, compiled,

and tabulated in an MS Excel sheet and presented as descriptive statistics.

Results: Students mostly appeared to have a positive perspective regarding the dental profession. They consider dentistry to be a prestigious profession and mostly prefer to work in private practice rather than public clinics.

Conclusion: Career counseling seminars need to be arranged to create awareness regarding the importance of specialization, and encourage students to choose sub-specialty fields, public health, etc. A critical review by the policy-makers is required to strengthen the fields that are being overlooked by the students and take appropriate steps to motivate students to join those fields.

Keywords: Career choice, Dental Postgraduation, Future career

Introduction

The attitudes of students and the reasons for choosing a particular career are of great significance for policymakers around the world.¹ There are a number of career choices for students but out of it choosing one's career wisely is a difficult task for them especially when they are unsure. The decision process is determined by various factors that include personal interest,² peer pressure, self-motivation, financial reasons, better quality of life, etc. Medical career is considered to be unique as it is perceived to be very noble, providing an opportunity to serve fellow human beings more than any other career.³

The **Bachelor of Dental Surgery** is solitarily the only educational and professional program of dental surgery in India. This course is now in profound demand by the students after 12th in the medical field. This degree owes the “Dr” domain too and is considered equivalent to an MBBS course. After MBBS it is the second choice of

students in the medical educational field. The students are trained in all types of dental problems throughout their four-year academic curriculum. After which students need to do a compulsory one-year internship program. After completing BDS, one is qualified to practice as a dentist. Also, they are known to have various opportunities in the hospital, pharmaceutical, and medical device manufacturing industries, or else students also have an opportunity to do post-graduation in specific subjects or an MBA in hospital administration.⁴

Under a BDS degree, a person is known to play a vital role in teeth-related problems. They can do prevention, diagnosis, and treatment of all oral health-related diseases. It is very challenging to pursue the BDS course and you should have enthusiasm, a hard-working attitude in the study, and a focused mind for doing the BDS course.

Fresh graduates face the dilemma of choosing a field for specialization after graduation. They are hardly ever aware of the scope of each specialty and the number of training spots and slots available for consultants in different specialties. A study observed that the career choices of medical graduates are influenced by their experiences during their clinical years in hospitals.⁵

The current study was planned to investigate the motivations of dental students of the Vidarbha region of Maharashtra state in choosing a dental profession and their attitudes toward their future profession.

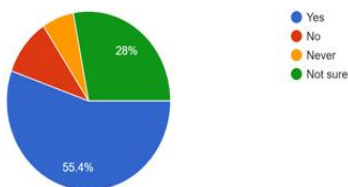
Methodology

The present study was a cross-sectional survey conducted online through Google form. The study protocol was approved by the Institutional Review Board and ethical clearance was obtained from the Institutional Ethical Committee of a private dental college in Maharashtra. The study was conducted on

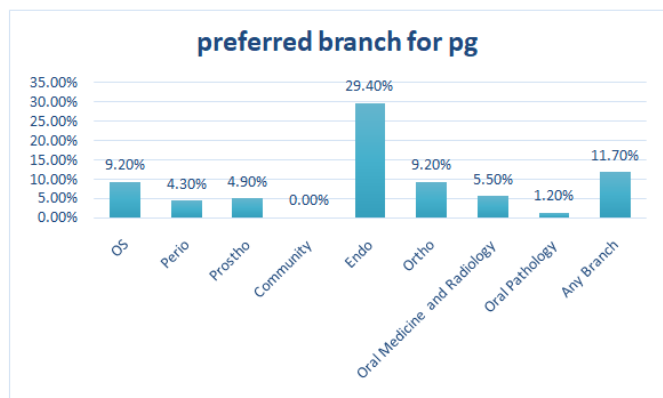
dental undergraduate students [Interns and Final year who were willing to participate in the study] studying in 3 dental institutes of Maharashtra state in Vidarbha region India. The email addresses of students were obtained for study purposes. A web link for Google form was sent to 200 students. A self-designed questionnaire consisting of 16 closed-ended questions was prepared. A pilot survey was conducted by self-administering this questionnaire to 20 Interns and Final-year students to check for reliability. The required changes were made in the questionnaire after getting the responses and again it was administered to another 20 students. The web links were mailed to 200 students out of which 176 students responded. The responses were collected, compiled, and tabulated in an MS Excel sheet and presented as descriptive statistics.

Results

Will you go for PG ?
175 responses

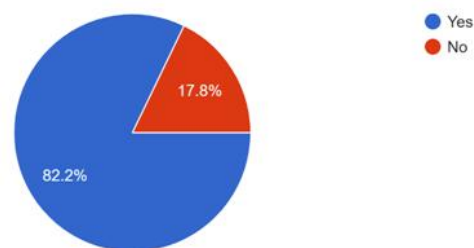


Graph 1



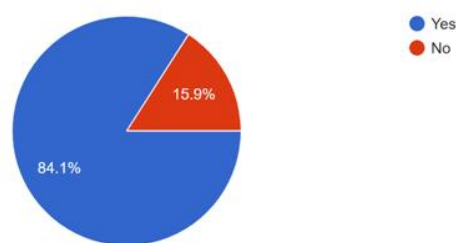
Graph 2

You wish to apply for a Government job after BDS ?
174 responses



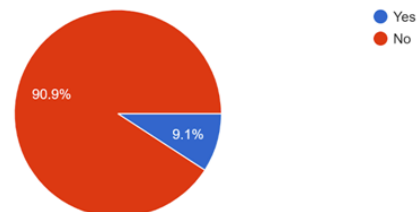
Graph 3

Do you think setting your own clinic is a very expensive task ?
176 responses

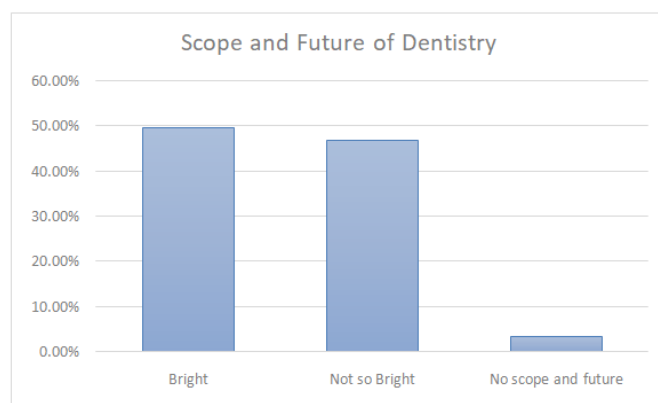


Graph 4

Will you setup your own clinic immediately after completion of your internship?
175 responses



Graph 5



Graph 6

Discussion

In the present study has provided information about the motivations of dental students of the Vidarbha region of Maharashtra state in choosing a dental profession and their attitudes toward their future profession. Till date, there has been very scarce data published on the present topic.

In our society majority of parents want their children to become Engineer or a Doctor. It is quite understood that if anybody gets a good score they will surely select one amongst the streams. The students who excel in entrance exams mostly prefer taking admission in MBBS and then in BDS and other paramedical degrees, including nursing, physical therapy, pharmacy, and occupational therapy are usually the options available to lower ranks in the entrance [6]. Thus, most if not all, BDS admissions are not by choice and this leads to a lack of interest in the dental practice.

In this survey, 66.5% of students mentioned that they will continue practicing dentistry throughout their lifetime. Also, 55.4% of students were seen in favour of continuing education after completing BDS. However, among stall the various branches maximum preference was given to Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery and second highest to Endodontics. Such similar findings were also seen amongst the dental students of Japan and Sweden as a future career option. About 80% of students wanted to pursue specialization after B.D.S where maximum preference was given to Oral Surgery (29%), Endodontics (12%), and Orthodontics (9%) as seen.[7]

In the present survey, 49.7% of students assume that there is a bright future for dental students. Some of the other studies have shown similar findings as well. Students' attitudes toward and reasons for choosing careers are of great interest for educational systems around the world. Overall, these dental students

appeared to have positive attitudes about the dental profession. (1,8,9)

In the present study around 91% students wish to setup their own clinic immediately after internship but 84% students think that setting own clinic is very expensive task. [7,10] Hence around 82.2% students answered yes to applyingfor Government jobs. But the shear fact is there are not so huge vacancies present in the Government sector for dental studentsin India. Records confirm that only 5% graduated dentists are working in the government sector [6, 11].

Conclusion

Students mostly appeared to have a positive perspective regarding the dental profession. They consider dentistry to be a prestigious profession and mostly prefer to work in private practice rather than public clinics. All students possessed positive perceptions of the working conditions they expected. It would seem that these favorable perceptions would ensure the continuous development of dentistry in the next decades.

Career counselling seminars need to be arranged to create awareness regarding the importance of specialization, encourage students to choose sub-specialty fields, public health, etc. A critical review by the policy-makers is required to strengthen the fields that are being overlooked by the students, and take appropriate steps to motivate students to join those fields. Further studies need to be undertaken with a larger sample size to determine the changing trends in career preferences.

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