

Career Influences on Passing out Dental Graduates - A Survey

Author**Roghith Kannan**

Saveetha Dental College, Saveetha University, Chennai, India.

Corresponding Author**Dr. Nashra Kareem**

Senior lecturer

Department of Periodontics

Saveetha Dental College,

Saveetha University, Chennai, India.

ABSTRACT:

Introduction: The choice of career is of the most important decision in one's life. However the choice of dentistry may become forceful at times by peer pressure, cultural thrust or inability to procure medicine. Choosing dentistry as a career is one of the most difficult and stressful decisions among dental students in India due to the uncertainty of the career and fear of employment. The aim to the survey is to assess the various career perspective opted by Indian dentists post under graduation.

Materials and method: A self-structured questionnaire of sixteen questions was designed to assess factors for choosing dentistry as a career and the future of the individual's career was adapted from previous studies. The online questionnaire was distributed to the 86 interns of Saveetha Dental College, Chennai. The questions were designed in accordance with the factors pertaining to students' decision in choosing a career after BDS; these included personal, economical, professional, and other factors. The data was collected and tabulated using Microsoft Excel.

Results: 86 students answered the questionnaire containing 16 questions and based on career preferences, 85.9% of the participants wanted to continue in the field of dentistry after under graduation and 14.1% of the participants wanted to change their career to business and management and other streams of professionalism after BDS.

Conclusion:

The goal of an undergraduate course in dentistry is to train students to become ethical, skilled professionals capable of practicing dentistry on a level that is consistent with the expectations of society and to seek passion and interest in further higher studies pertaining to dentistry. From our study almost 86% of the participants were satisfied with their course of study and prefer further higher studies and 14% of the participants wanted a change in the career due to lack of interest towards dentistry.

Keywords: Dentistry, undergraduate, BDS, survey, questionnaire.

INTRODUCTION

Career refers to the process and actions taken by a person throughout a lifetime especially those related to the person's occupation. [1] There are various career options available for everyone like the medical, dental, law, engineering, company secretary, accountant, fashion designing etc. Among these, the medical and the dental professions are considered as noble professions because they serve the humanity and for decades they have been preferred as the most suitable career options. Hence, selecting the right career is a sure thing for success in life. Schools of Dentistry based in the India provide dentistry courses spanning five years, with the prospect of earning a Bachelor of Dental Surgery (BDS) at the end of the programme [2]. Such studies provide students with the career preparation required by the modern dentistry world through bringing together clinical training and both basic and advanced knowledge about dental sciences. Students' motivations in choosing a career in the health professions are of great interest for educators and admission committees, particularly in the field of dentistry. The dental education system in India is currently one of the largest in the world. It started with the establishment of the Calcutta Dental College and Hospital in 1924 by Dr. Rafiuddin Ahmed [3]. The total numbers of dental colleges in India according to Dental Council of India [2013] are 300 and the numbers of dental graduates passing per year are over 25,000 [4]. The estimated dentist to population ratio according to WHO is 1:7500 [3]. In last 10 years, the dentist population ratio in India has increased considerably. Due to the increase in the number of colleges and number of dental graduates passing every year, the dental profession has also witnessed tremendous changes. The current dentist population ratio in urban cities in India is 1:10,000.

Student's motivations for choosing a career in the health professions is of great interest for admission committees and educators, particularly in the field of dentistry [5]. Also, determining the level of satisfaction among dental students provides a key source of information for the future of dental education in any country [6]. There is a serious lack of authentic and valid data for assessment of dental students' motivations to enter and attitudes about the field of dentistry in India. The choice of a career is influenced mainly by advice from parents, relatives, friends, teachers, and counsellors [7]. The choice of a career is a critical decision because it has an obvious impact on the individuals' future life pattern. [8] At present, the number of people being admitted to dental colleges in India is decreasing as the rapid growth in the number of dentists tends to discourage some prospective candidates who feel that the increased competition would limit their future earnings [9]. The professional socialization begins with admission to the dental school and continues through the entire study period of the student. However, the peak of socialization is seen during the period of internship. By now the students are expected to have a good clinical skill and have a firm theoretical background. Compared to the

other dental students/cohorts, the interns are at a crossroads with numerous options and uncertainties. Thus at this stage, it is very important for the undergrads to understand students' motives for choosing dentistry and their views concerning the future of their profession so as to preserve a motivated workforce [10].

Hence in order to shed a light on these aspects, the aim of this study was to assess perspectives on choice of dentistry, dental education, profession and to assess the future career options of students after the BDS programme.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

A self-administered structured questionnaire of sixteen questions, written in English and designed to assess factors for choosing dentistry as a career and the future of the individual's career was adapted from previous studies. The online questionnaire was distributed to the 86 interns of Saveetha Dental College. The questions were designed in accordance with the factors pertaining to students' decision in choosing a career after BDS; these included personal, economical, professional, and other factors. The data was collected and tabulated using Microsoft Excel. The questionnaire consisted of the following questions.

1. Was dentistry your first career option?
a. yes b. no
2. Did you have any alternatives to dentistry before opting dentistry as a career?
a. yes b. no
3. Reason for choosing dentistry as your career?
a. did not get other disciplines b. easier to get a job c. likes dentistry d. others
4. What was your first impression when you joined BDS?
a. happy b. ignorant c. others
- 5) Do you agree BDS has given required competencies for professionals to avail a job at the present day?
a. agree b. disagree
- 6) Do you agree dentistry has given you a platform for research work?
a. agree b. disagree
- 7) Do you agree there is development and advancement in the field of dentistry?
a. agree b. disagree
- 8) Do you feel you will get a good recognition for work related practice after BDS?
a. yes b.no
- 9) Do you agree a job or career from BDS will give you a steady employment?
a. agree b. disagree
- 10) Do you agree that only BDS degree will be sufficient for a stable career in the future?
a. yes b. no
- 11) How would you envision yourself in another 10 years in practice of dentistry?
a. Very satisfied b. satisfied c. dissatisfied d. change career e. others
- 12) Have you ever thought of teaching dentistry rather than that of practising it?
a. yes b. no c. maybe
- 13) Over the past few years of education and practice, has the course given you more interest towards dentistry?
a. yes b. no
- 14) What does BDS mean to you at the present?
a. just a course or another job b. others
- 15) Do you want to continue in the field of dentistry after under graduation?
a. yes b. no
- 16) Given the choice would you like to change from dentistry to another field?
a. yes b. no

RESULTS

From our study, a total of 86 students completed all the questions, the questionnaire contained 16 questions and based on career preferences, out of which 85.9% of the participants wanted to continue in the field of dentistry after under graduation and 14.1% of the participants wanted to change career after BDS. Dentistry was a first career option for 66.3% of the participants. From our study 83.7% of the participants have agreed that dentistry has given a platform for research, also 85.7% of the participants were affirmative in getting recognised for work related practice after BDS. 80% of the participants have gained more interest towards the course in the past few years of study.

S.No	Questions	Frequency	Percentage
1	Was dentistry your first career option?	Yes:57 No:29	Yes: 66.3% No: 33.7%
2	Did you have any alternatives to dentistry before opting dentistry as a career?	Yes:58 No:26	Yes: 69% No: 31%
3	Reason for choosing dentistry as your career?	Did you get other disciplines:11 Easier to get a job :11 Likes Dentistry:48 Others :16	Did you get other disciplines:12.8% Easier to get a job :12.8% Likes Dentistry:58.8% Others :18.62%
4	What was your first impression when you joined BDS?	Happy:60 Ignorant:6 Others:20	Happy:69.8% Ignorant:7% Others:23.2%
5	Do you agree BDS has given required competencies for professionals to avail a job at the present day?	Agree:72 Disagree:14	Agree:83.7% Disagree:16.3%
6	Do you agree dentistry has given you a platform for research work?	Agree:72 Disagree:14	Agree:83.7% Disagree:16.3%
7	Do you agree there is development and advancement in the field of dentistry?	Agree:75 Disagree:8	Agree:90.4% Disagree:9.6%
8	Do you feel you will get a good recognition for work related practice after BDS?	Yes:72 No:12	Yes: 85.7% No:14.3%
9	Do you agree a job or career from BDS will give you a steady employment?	Agree:64 Disagree:21	Agree:75.3% Disagree:24.7%
10	Do you agree that only BDS degree will be sufficient for a stable career in the future?	Yes:59 No:25	Yes: 70.2% No:29.3%
11	How would you envision yourself in another 10 years in practice of dentistry?	Very Satisfied:33 Satisfied :31 Dissatisfied :0 Change Career:14 Others :7	Very Satisfied:38.8% Satisfied :36.5% Dissatisfied :0% Change Career:16.5% Others :8.2%
12	Have you ever thought of teaching dentistry rather than that of practising it?	Yes:29 No:14 Maybe:32	Yes:45.9% No:16.5% Maybe:37.6%
13	Over the past few years of education and practice, has the course given you more interest towards dentistry?	Yes:68 No:17	Yes: 80% No:20%
14	What does BDS mean to you at the present?	Just course or another job :54 Others :31	Just course or another job :63.5% Others :36.5%
15	Do you want to continue in the field of dentistry after under graduation?	Yes:75 No:12	Yes: 85.9% No:14.1%
16	Given the choice would you like to change from dentistry to another filed?	Yes:15 No:54 Maybe:16	Yes:17.6% No:63.5% Maybe:18.9%

DISCUSSION

The study was conducted in Saveetha dental college and hospitals, Chennai. The results presented here are the first reported data regarding the factors involved in the choice of dentistry as a career by dental students in India in the current era. Dental students' motivations for pursuing dentistry as a career were found to be chiefly economic and professional. The students were also encouraged by their families for the reasons of higher income, professional status, interpersonal motives, self-employment, career opportunities, working with people, and interest in science [11] [12]. Understanding the factors that lead to the choice of career is important because that decision establishes expectations for one's future and may affect one's satisfaction with the career [13]. The

goal of an undergraduate course in dentistry is to train students to become ethical, skilled professionals capable of practicing dentistry on a level that is consistent with the expectations of society. A number of studies have found that dentistry was not the occupation of choice for most students and that medicine was the general preference. In our study 33.7% of the participants didn't choose dentistry as their first option and 69% of the participants had alternatives to dentistry before choosing it as a career. In India, admission into the medicine/dentistry course is highly competitive and requires a high grade on the admission test, which is in multiple-choice format. Entrance examinations usually assess the applicant's knowledge in fundamental sciences; some universities place an emphasis on biology. As a result, students who are not accepted into medicine may decide to go into dentistry. A few universities have additional criteria. Likewise most of the participants chose likes dentistry for the reason for choosing dentistry as a career standing at 58.8% and 18.62% opted for others. In correlation with other studies, it shows that studies conducted by Karibe et al.,[11] Marino et al.,[14] Jover et al.,[15] and Tangade et al.,[16] who reported that parents were very influential among Asian students. Increased awareness of Indian patients has raised their expectations from the dental practitioners.

In our study, the social and economic factors that lead to professional satisfaction and financial security were reported to be of the highest priority; this indicates the deep influence monetary factors have on the minds of most of the students. Also, the social and economic status attached to practicing dentistry played a major role in students' choosing this field. 85.7%, and 70.2% stand positive for getting a good recognition after BDS and securing a good job career from our study and 75.3% considered that definite source of income and assured job as the main influencing factor to pursue MDS degree. A Qualitative research in one study supports the view that features of a professional job are important; and the student prefer to concentrate on flexibility, security and quality of life [16] [17]

From our study 75% were satisfied with the future aspects of practicing and also 83.7% had agreed that BDS has provided a good platform for research. In contrast a study was reported that dental students in India are trained to excel theoretically, but there seems to be a problem between what is learned and what is applied in the clinics [18].

The awareness of dental education has comparatively decreased and many of the student try to consult a specialist for the problem. This is the reason why the aim of dental graduate is to get the master's degree (MDS). A survey of dental students graduating in Gandhi Dental College and Hospital, Bhubaneswar has shown that around 40% of students in first year of graduation were interested in pursuing post-graduation. There was an increase in trend of final year of graduation towards further future studies pertaining to dentistry [19] and in our study 85.9% of the participants want to continue in the field post under graduation.

Due to many other reasons, young graduates who did not seek interest and passion towards dentistry, they then try to search other alternatives for career growth. In our study 17.6% of the participants wanted a change in career after BDS. For those who want to pursue MDS but aren't able to look for overseas as an option where after an initial period of struggle, the opportunities and returns are better. Countries like Australia, USA and UK are popular destinations for dental graduates. Most of these countries will require clearing a licensing exam and few years of study.

The limitations of this study did not compare the perception and motivational factors according to gender and in detail about the career options available after BDS [20]. The nature of the study did not allow us to find if this career related intentions would vary over time. Also by the open-ended nature of questionnaire, we could have missed other factors that might influence career aspirations. Further investigations are needed for a deep analysis and identification of implications that may influence policy and admission decisions.

CONCLUSION

The results presented here are the reported data of the factors involved in the choice of dentistry as an occupation by dental students in India. The goal of an undergraduate course in dentistry is to train students to become ethical, skilled professionals capable of practicing dentistry on a level that is consistent with the expectations of society and to seek passion and interest in further higher studies pertaining to dentistry. From our study almost 86% of the participants were satisfied with their course of study and prefer further higher studies and 14% of the participants wanted a change in the career.

REFERENCES

- 1) Available from: <http://www.business.dictionary.com/definition/career.html>. [Last accessed on 2013 Jun 10].
- 2) Bernabe E., Icaza J.L., Delgado-Angulo E.K. Reasons for choosing dentistry as a career: a study involving male and female first-year students in Peru. *Eur. J. Dent. Educ.* 2006;10:236–241.
- 3) Virdi MS. Reforming undergraduate dental education in India: Introducing a credits and semester system. *J Dent Educ.* 2011;75(12):1596-602
- 4) Thomas S. Plenty and scarcity. *Br Dent J* 2013;214:4.
- 5) Aguiar CM, Pessoa MA, Camara AC, Perrier RA, Figueiredo JA. Factors involved in the choice of dentistry as an occupation by Pernambuco dental students in Brazil. *J Dent Educ* 2009;73(12):1401–7.
- 6) Haidar Z. Professional satisfaction among Saudi dental students. *Saudi Dent J* 1999;11(2):60–4.
- 7) Patel D, Saiyed MH. Factors for choosing dentistry as a career: a study of first-year dental students, India. *J Int Oral Health* 2009;1:10–9
- 8) Gallagher JE, Patel R, Wilson NHF. The emerging dental workforce: long-term career expectations and influences—a quantitative study of final-year dental students' views on their long-term career from one London dental school. *BMC Oral Health* 2009;9:35.
- 9) Bean CY, Rowland ML, Soller H, Casamassimo P, Sickie RV, Levings K, Agunga R. Comparing fourth-year dental student productivity and experiences in a dental school with community-based clinical education. *J Dent Educ* 2007;71(8):1020–6.
- 10) Baharvand M, Moghaddam EJ, Pouretemad H, Alavi K. Attitudes of Iranian dental students toward their future careers: An exploratory study. *J Dent Educ* 2011;75:1489-95.

- 11) Karibe H, Suzuki A, Sekimoto T, Srithavaj MLT, Iamaroon A, Warita S, et al. Cross-cultural comparison of the attitudes of dental students in three countries. *J Dent Educ* 2007;71(11):1457–66. Abstract/FREE Full Text
- 12) Acharya S. Factors affecting stress among Indian dental students. *J Dent Educ*. 2003;67(10):1140-8.
- 13) Aguiar CM, Pessoa MA, Câmara AC, Perrier RA, de Figueiredo JA. Factors involved in the choice of dentistry as an occupation by pernambuco dental students
- 14) Marino RJ, Morgan MV, Winning T, Thompson WM, Marshall RI, Gotjamanos T, et al. Sociodemographic backgrounds and career decisions of Australian and New Zealand dental students. *J Dent Res* 2006;70(2):169–78. Google Scholar
- 15) Jover M, Doudoux D, Deveaux E. Representations of the dental surgery profession and the motivations given by second-year French students for applying for dental surgery. *Eur J Dent Educ* 2006;10(1):2–9. MedlineGoogle Scholar
- 16) Tangade PS, Mathur A, Gupta R, Chaudhary S. Assessment of stress level among dental school students: an Indian outlook. *Dent Res J* 2011;8(2):95–101
- 17) Dhima M., Petropoulos V.C., Han R.K., Kinnunen T., Wright R.F. Dental students' perceptions of dental specialties and factors influencing specialty and career choices.
- 18) Elangovan S, Allareddy V, Singh F, Taneja P, Karimbux N. Indian dental education in the new millennium: Challenges and opportunities. *J Dent Educ*. 2010;74(9):1011-6.
- 19) Gallagher JE, Clarke W, Eaton KA, Wilson NHF. Dentistry professional contained career in health care: a qualitative study of vocational dental practitioners' professional expectations. *BMC Oral Health* 2007;7:16.
- 20) Hawley NJ, Ditmyer MM, Sandoval VA. Predental students' attitudes toward and perceptions of the dental profession. *J Dent Educ* 2008;72(12):1458–64.

