

MOTIVATION AND ATTITUDE OF NEWLY INDUCTED DENTAL STUDENTS TOWARDS DENTISTRY AS A PROFESSION

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ABSTRACT

Objective: To determine the motives and attitude of newly admitted first year dental students towards dentistry as a profession at Khyber College of Dentistry, Peshawar

Material and methods: A cross-sectional study with questionnaire consisting of 12 questions regarding decision making for choosing dentistry as a profession, motives and attitude were given to newly admitted 50 students of first year at Khyber College of Dentistry, Peshawar. The study was done at the start of session 2020-2021. The data collected was statistically analyzed using Microsoft excel 2016 and IBM SPSS Statistics Version 22.0

Results: Most of the students were internally motivated for selecting dentistry as a profession, 60% of the students didn't have any relatives in dentistry, 30% thought that it is an honorable profession, 30% thought that it is a financially good profession and 35% selected dentistry because of independent practice

Conclusion: Independent practice, good financial profession, honor in the society were the main factors in the selection of dentistry as a profession. It is important to know the reasons behind selecting a profession as it helps train the students accordingly

Key words: dentistry, motives, students, career, profession, practice

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INTRODUCTION

Every individual has an inborn wish to grow and evolve with social, academic and ethical values.¹ The selection of a particular profession or career is largely advised by parents, relatives, colleagues, teachers or counsellors. The major driving forces of choosing a career varies over time and between nations. Obtaining the reasons behind entering dental field as a profession is very important for policy making, and in turn is very important for the health care system.²

There is a massive opportunity for professional and commercial growth in dentistry, with career opportunities such as a general practicing dentist or a specialist.³ One of the few common reasons of why people opt dentistry as a career is economic stability, job security, or an easy going routine, where it is easy to spend time with family.⁴

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Dentists enjoy a very significant role in community as a professional health care provider.⁵ The chance to involve in dental education, especially in the developing countries and the third world countries, is narrowed to only a minor chunk of the society.⁶

In some studies, the motivation levels based on gender have also been investigated. The studies in United States concluded that there some variations among the male and female students' motivations.⁷ Female students were less bothered than their male counterparts in regards to the business element of selecting a profession and were more focused on providing their services to the people.

The results were similar to the studies done in Peru on first year dental students.⁸ It is necessary to recognise and record the students' motivation and driving force behind selecting dentistry as a profession so that the future healthcare workers' motivation could be preserved.⁹

MATERIAL AND METHODS

After approval from the ethical committee of Khyber College of Dentistry, Peshawar, this cross-sectional study was done among the newly inducted students of academic year 2020-2021 at Khyber College of Dentistry, Peshawar.

shawar. In each academic year, 75 students are inducted.

The students were informed about the purpose of study and a questionnaire containing 12 questions was given to the students to fill. The questionnaire covered information related to the students' socio-demographic features, their inspiration and driving force behind selecting dentistry as a career, their views and mindset about dentistry as a profession.

Some questions were left open-ended while some of the questions were close-ended, to which the students had to reply in yes/no, or tick options answering the question. The information was processed and analyzed using Microsoft excel 2016, SPSS statistics version 22.

RESULTS

A total of 50 students participated in the study. Thirty two (64%) were females and 18(36%) were males with an age range between 18- 21 years. There were 30 (60%) students of age 18 years, 10 students (20%) of age 19 years, 5 students (10%) of age 20 years and 5 students (10%) of 21 years of age. All the 50 students had graduated from a regular high school. To the question "How many times did you apply for dentistry? Forty eight (96%) students responded first attempt, 2 (4%) students had applied twice.

Thirty eight students (76%) responded that they had decided to choose dentistry while in high school, 10 students (20 %) had decided after their high school and 2 students (4%) had decided before high school. 35 students (70%) chose the profession on their own will, 10 students (20%) were influenced by their parents and 5 students (10%) were influenced by their family dentists. Thirty students (60%) were found to have no relatives in the medical and dental profession and 20 students (40%) confirmed having close relatives in dentistry.

When asked about their first vs second choice for dentistry, 40 students (80%) chose dentistry as their first choice and 10 students (20%) as their second. Twenty students (40%) believed dentistry to be a very honorable and prestigious profession, 15 students (30%) thought it generates a good income and 15 students (30%) believed it to be a tough & competitive degree.

Lastly, the students were inquired about the reason that could make them end their education to which they responded as follows: 10 students (20%) due to financial problems, 15 students (30%) due to loss of interest while for the rest no reason could make them end their education.

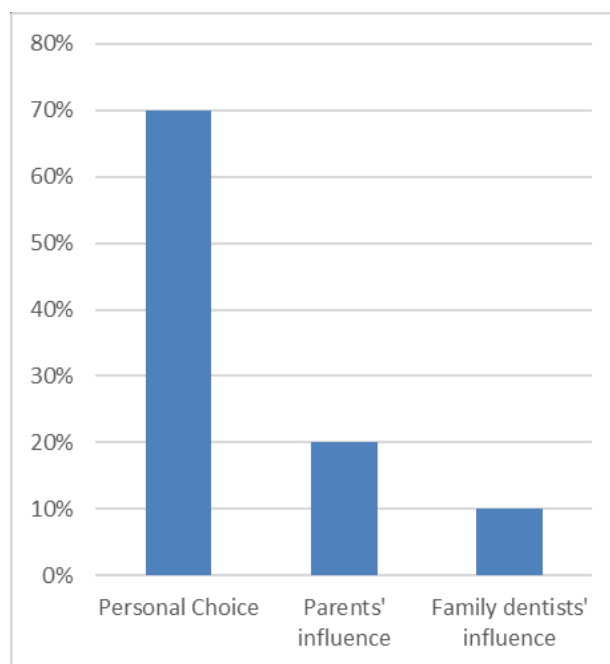


Fig 1: Influence behind choosing dentistry

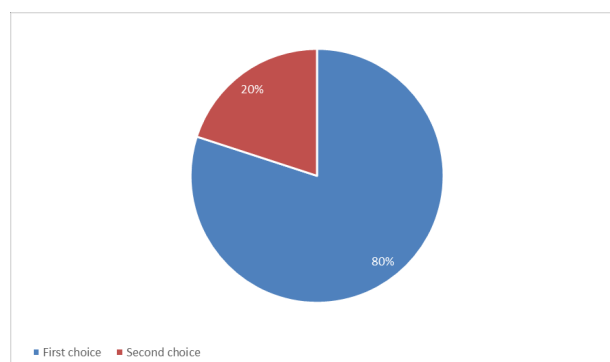


Fig 2: Dentistry as a choice

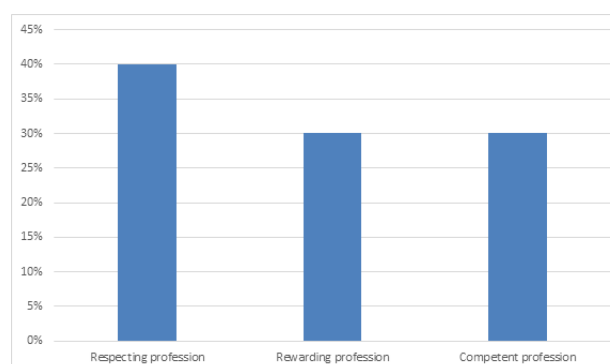


Fig 3: Consideration of Dentistry as a career

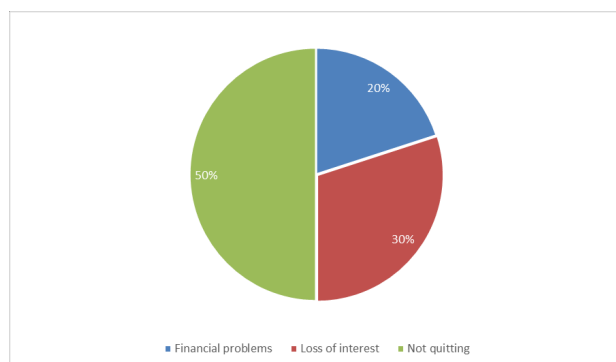


Fig 4: Consideration of Dentistry as a career

DISCUSSION

In order to decide the profession to pursue, it is important to fully understand the pros and cons of that profession and this requires time. In our study, most students were found to have taken the decision at the higher secondary school level. Findings in this study indicate that most of the students were internally motivated for choosing dentistry. Yotov in 1986 in Bulgaria performed a study on 327 dental students and found that most of them (83.5%) had selected dentistry on their own will and the rest (16.5%) were either forced by family members and relatives or joined due to a low exam score. Job dissatisfaction among those who had not chosen the profession on their own will was high.¹⁰ Similar results were obtained from a study by Marino *et al* in Australia in the academic session 2009-2010.¹¹ He found that 85.3% students were internally motivated.¹² The results of our study show that the impact of family members was less than the students' own will. About 2/3 of the students had no relatives in dentistry. Comparatively, the study by Tanalp *et al* showed that the influence of relatives was more than self-motivation.¹³

Hawley *et al* in 2008 performed a study on 152 students of the first year, in Nevada,¹⁴ to determine their reasons for choosing dentistry as a profession and found that most of the students were influenced by dentists in their families, however, in our study, only 10% of the students chose dentistry as a profession because of dentists in their families.

There was one study in which economic motivation was found to be the primary factor for selecting dentistry. Aguiar *et al* (2009) in Pernambuco performed a survey on 1024 students and found that 73.5% students had opted for dentistry due to financial motivation.¹⁵ While in our study, 30% of the students thought dentistry as a profession generates a good income.

CONCLUSION

It can be concluded that although more than half of the students had relatives in the medical/dental field they still were enthusiastic enough and internally motivated towards dentistry to choose it as a profession. It was

revealed that they opted for dentistry because it was their first choice and weren't choosing it because of any lack of career options. The main factors that motivated the students for selecting dentistry as a profession were honor in the society as well as independent and good financial practice. This study further went on to express that majority of the students were not willing to quit dentistry as a profession and that nothing can persuade them to change their minds regarding quitting dentistry as a profession.

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AUTHOR'S CONTRIBUTION

Following authors have made substantial contributions to the manuscript as under

Shah AM: Data collection, literature search, writing up

Yousufi S: Data analysis

Khan J: Writing up

Saood M: Conceived the idea

Shafi H: Bibliography

Shah AM: Data collection

Authors agree to be accountable for all aspects of the work in ensuring that questions related to the accuracy or integrity of any part of the work are appropriately investigated and resolved.