



# CURRENT REALITIES OF DENTAL GRADUATES ABOUT DENTAL PROFESSION: CROSS-SECTIONAL STUDY FUTURE PROSPECTS OF DENTAL GRADUATES

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## ABSTRACT

**Purpose:** Dentistry is specialized branch for head and neck region. In this field exponential growth in technology has taken place in the last few decades. At the same time dental graduates also increased. As the patient to doctor ratio has increased, it helped in offering services to the needy, but on the flip side, many qualified dentists are shifting careers due to multiple reasons. This study was conducted to know the awareness of dental graduates on their future prospects in pursuing the dental career.

**Materials and methods:** A cross-sectional questionnaire survey was conducted among junior residents who attended the dental conference using a structured questionnaire. Questions are prepared in a customized form which elicits, knowledge and awareness of dental graduates on their future prospects among junior residents.

**Results:** A total of 210 dental graduates/ junior residents participated in the study. Among them, nearly half of the sample, i.e. 42.4% of dental graduates are satisfied only 50% in pursuing dentistry. Most of the participants, i.e., 63.8% are willing to change the profession, while remaining one-third of the sample, i.e., 36.7% are willing to work in government sector. Only a few graduates, i.e. 22.4% of them were interested in teaching or academics.

**Conclusion:** Even though most of the dental graduates were happy in pursuing dentistry, but most of them were willing to change the career option because of a stressful job timing with no expected fruitful returns in terms of income. This problem is also escalating because of fewer job opportunities.

**KEYWORDS:** Dental graduates, practice, profession, and job  
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## INTRODUCTION

The field of modern dentistry has changed a lot by means of

technology. It has sustained in this world. Dentistry is known to be one of the most paid jobs in the world. Dental practitioners are trained to attain

adequate knowledge which is essential to work as oral health care worker.<sup>(1,2)</sup> Many new dental colleges are emerging in the country, offering dental education

to the many students. But, in recent times, students who are interested in pursuing post-graduation after their Bachelor's degree are steadily declining.<sup>(3)</sup> In Southern states of India, most of the students were forced to join dental education because of varying reasons such as not able to achieve MBBS seat. This kind of situations results in a stressful environment to the students who may show less or no interest during the study.<sup>(4,5)</sup>

Discrimination among medical and dental students has negative impact on budding dentists. Pursuing bachelor's degree in, dentistry should be by a separate entrance exam after obtaining MBBS, might be the solution for the above problem. This also helps in creating more intrust in students at pursuing dental medicine as a specialty. This, may also increases job opportunities.<sup>(6,7)</sup>

Most of the dental graduates are struggling in the field due to fewer job opportunities in India. Establishing one's own dental clinic requires more investment. Apart from a this, Indian dental degree has low or almost no recognition in other countries.<sup>(7,8)</sup> Most of the budding dentists showing no interest in practicing dentistry due to many reasons.

So the probable reason for this struggle, could be lack of awareness in dental graduates about the possible prospectus in dentistry and also lack of necessary training to face the challenges in clinical practice. The present study intends to understand the level of awareness of dental graduates on their future prospects.

**MATERIALS AND METHODS**

A cross-sectional study was conducted among house surgeons who attended a state-level continuing dental education program at Hyderabad. Students from nearly eight different dental colleges, from various parts of the state, have attended the program. A pre-tested, structured, self-administered questionnaire was prepared which consists of nine different questions (questionnaire mentioned below). The questionnaire was handed over to the interns by the investigators. Investigators have explained the purpose of the study and also the questions in detail. Answered questionnaires were collected.

The questions tried to elicit various aspects of the future dental professionals including their interest in

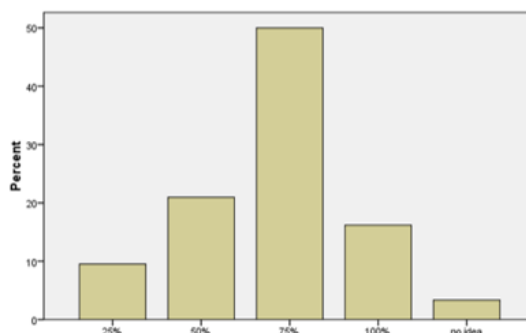
the field of dentistry, awareness regarding various opportunities in dentistry, the scope of dentistry in foreign countries, interest in the specific specialty of dentistry and changing to alternative professions. After receiving the questionnaires, the data was extracted, and was subjected to statistical analysis using SPSS software (SPSS Inc. Chicago, IL, USA).

**RESULTS**

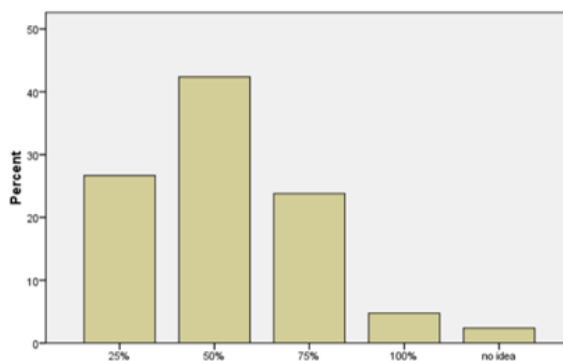
A total of 210 house surgeons had participated in the study. The age group of the participants ranged from 22- 25 years, both genders are involved among which females were more in number.

When they were asked about how convinced they were about pursuing dentistry, in that about 50% of them told that they were 75% convinced

**Graph 1: Q1: How convinced are you in perusing career in dentistry**

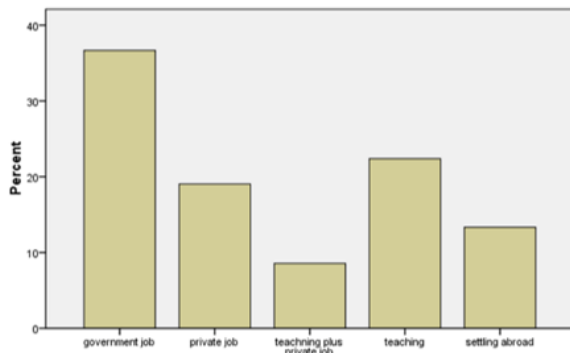


**Graph 2: Q2: In your view - What is the percentage of success in perusing dentistry in India?**



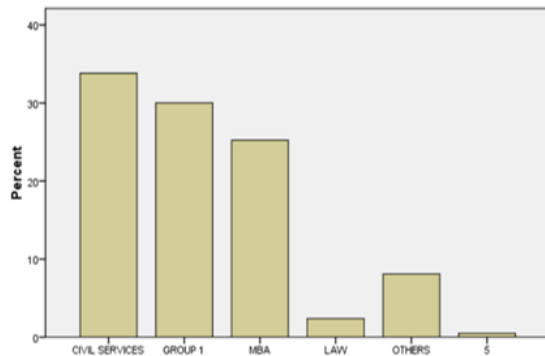
42.4% graduates felt that there is only 50% of success in dentistry while 4.8% felt that there is 100% success in dentistry

Graph 3: Q4: What do you want to do after completion of BDS



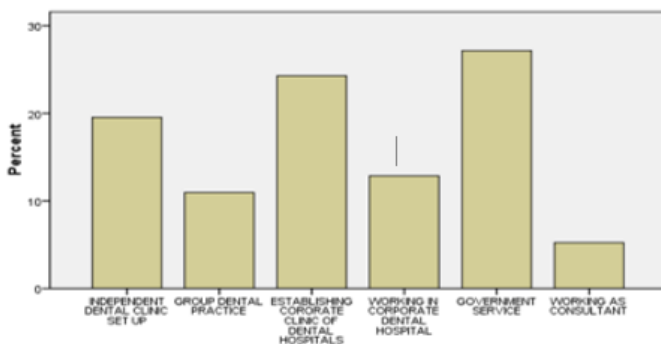
36.7% of the participants wanted to work in government sector after BDS while 13.3% were interested in settling abroad

Graph 4: Q7: Which one of the alternative profession is better after completion of dental graduation



63.8% interns felt appearing for Civil services and Group I exams as a good alternative to dentistry while 25.2% felt MBA would be another alternative

Graph 5: Q8: In your view which of the options is better



27.1% interns strongly believed that government service is a more acceptable option after graduation while 43.8% participants were interested in private dental practice

about perusing dentistry, while 9.5% told that they were only 25% convinced (graph 1). About 42.4% graduates felt that there is only 50% of success in dentistry while 4.8% felt that there is 100% success in dentistry (graph 2). However, 43.8% of people felt that, there is 75% success rate

for dentists in foreign countries. 36.7% of the participants wanted to work in government sector after BDS while 22.4% of them were interested in teaching or academics and 13.3% were interested in settling abroad (graph 3). However, about 29.5% were interested to have their practice after MDS, while

still, 26.7% of students were interested in government jobs. 43.8% of the participants felt that the United States being prospective place for dentistry while 20% felt that Australia would be having better prospects than USA. To our surprise, about 63.8% interns felt appearing for Civil services and Group I exams as a good alternative to dentistry while 25.2% felt MBA would be another alternative to change the profession (graph 4). 27.1% interns strongly believed that government service is a more acceptable option after graduation while 43.8% participants were interested in private dental practice (graph 5). 23.8% interns have intrust in Aesthetic dentistry while 22.9% were interested in dental imaging. Some amount of interest in the latest advances like lasers and impalnts.

## DISCUSSION

In our country, dentistry is being challenged to maintain their professional standards by delivering the best possible education to students, by giving preference to public service, and maintaining regulations and codes of ethics through self-government.<sup>9</sup>

In our study, we found that one-third of dental graduates were decently convinced to carrying on their dental profession, while one-third were poorly convinced about their profession which is in accordance with the study done by J.M Zakrzweska<sup>1</sup> in his study he mentioned one-third of the doctors regretted their choice of the specialty.<sup>10</sup>

In our study, we found that nearly half of dental graduates, i.e. 42.4% felt that there is only 50% of success in pursuing dentistry which is in contrast with the study done by Priya et al., where 90% of the dentists reported being

**Awareness of dental graduates on their future prospects**

- 1) How convinced are you in perusing career in dentistry? { }  
 A) 25% B) 50% C) 75% D) 100% E) No idea
- 2) In your view - What is the percentage of success in perusing dentistry in India? { }  
 A) 25% B) 50% C) 75% D) 100% E) No idea
- 3) In your view - What is the percentage of success in perusing dentistry at abroad? { }  
 A) 25% B) 50% C) 75% D) 100% E) No idea
- 4) What do you want to do after completion of BDS? { }  
 A) Government job B) Private Job C) Private practice  
 D) Perusing MDS/Higher studies E) Settling abroad
- 5) If your option is perusing MDS what do you want to do after completion? { }  
 A) Government job B) Private practice C) Academician + Private practice  
 D) Teaching E) Settling abroad
- 6) In your view which foreign country having better prospects to dental professionals? { }  
 A) U.S.A B) U.K C) Australia/ New Zealand D) Canada  
 E) Middle East countries F) Others (specify)
- 7) Which one of the alternative profession is better after completion of dental graduation? { }  
 A) Civil services B) Group I service C) MBA D) Law E) Others (Specify)
- 8) In your view which of the options is better? { }  
 A) Independent dental clinic set up B) Group Dental practice  
 C) Establishing cooperate clinic of dental hospitals D) Working in corporate Dental  
 Hospitals E) Govt. Services F) Working as a consultant
- 9) If you were given a choice, which particular field of dentistry would you prefer? { }  
 A) Dental imaging B) Dental Laser C) Dental Implant  
 D) Robotic Dentistry E) Nano Dentistry F) Esthetic dentistry

satisfied with their profession. This could be attributed to the lack of experiences in the dental school, perhaps because of an overly stressful learning environment or it could be a forced career option, or it could be fewer dental opportunities in the country, or it could be a higher expectation to a secure the bright future with dental education. <sup>(11)</sup>

In our study, we found that nearly half of the dental graduates felt that the success rate for dentists in foreign countries is more, especially in the US and UK, while the remaining half are either willing to work in government sector after BDS or interested in teaching or academics. Few are willing to settle in abroad. In a study done by Aggarwal, more than half of them wanted to carry on post-graduation, which is in accordance with the present study. While in the study done by Priya: et al., less than 10% are willing to study in other countries. <sup>(12)</sup>

In our study, we observed more than one-third of dental graduates were inclined towards starting an own setup as a part of their career option to secure bright future while remaining one-third

are willing to work in a government setup. This could be attributed to the desire of having a stable life even with heavy workloads. This is in contrast with the study done by Priya et al. <sup>11</sup>

In the present study, we noticed that more than half of dental graduates are opting for Civil services and Group I exams as a good alternative for dentistry after graduation while remaining one-third opted for MBA. This is in contrast with the study done by Priya et al. <sup>11</sup> This could be again attributed to fewer job opportunities for the graduates or higher charges for certificate courses in the general dentistry, or financial issues of an individual to set up a clinic.

While choosing specialty/certificate courses, nearly one-third of interns were willing to pursue aesthetic dentistry while one-third were interested in dental imaging. Dental lasers and implants were next in the order. This could be attributed to an increased number of patients with aesthetic concern.

In the present study, we observed diverse opinions of interns on their future prospects after graduation,

even though most of the graduates are showing a positive perception towards dentistry. However, most of the graduates are still looking for opportunities to shift their career because of stressful professional growth, with less income or job opportunities in our country.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

- Career oriented students should be motivated towards a positive growth during their formal dental education.
- Instead of the stressful learning environment, students should be encouraged in participating in the research and participation in advanced dental programmes in addition to their curriculum.
- Dental graduates who has focus on practiced learning may have the ability to respond flexibly and can address the challenges in the field of dentistry which result in a progressive career graph to dentist.

**CONCLUSION**

Even though most of the dental graduates are not satisfied with dentistry, which depends on their perspective, the dental profession may change with time in terms of skills with continuous innovation in techniques and the materials used.

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