EFFECT OF COUNSELLING ON PREFERENCE OF SPECIALITY IN DENTAL STUDENTS OF KHYBER COLLEGE OF DENTISTRY

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ABSTRACT
Objective: To identify the preferences of dental graduates in the field of post-graduate specialty, factors that may influence their decision to select a particular specialty, and the effect of counselling on specialty preferences.

Material & Method: A pre-counselling and post-counselling questionnaire based study was carried out among final year students and House surgeons of Khyber College of Dentistry, Peshawar, between May to June 2020. A self-administered questionnaire, inquiring about the preference of specialty program, specialty subject and the reason for the preference, was given to the students. After filling the questionnaire, the participants were given a session on dental career counselling. After the session, they were again asked about their preference for a specialty for their future career. Both results were then compared.

Results: The most prevalent specialty before counselling was Endodontics (36.2%). The second one was Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery (21.3%) and then Periodontics (16.3%). After counselling, preference for Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery remained the same, however, Endodontics and Periodontics were reduced to 33.8% and 13.8%, respectively. Among post-graduation specialty programs, FCPS was the most prevalent program (77.5%).

Conclusion: Endodontics is the most preferred specialty among graduates followed by Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery. The most preferred program was FCPS. A single counselling session did not change the preference significantly. The reason most likely behind the preference was possession of unique set of skills for the specialty.

Key words: Dental graduates preferences, Specialties, Counselling
Effect of Counselling On Preference of Speciality in Dental Students of Khyber College Of Dentistry.

Table 1: Perception of Specialties before and after Counselling

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Specialty</th>
<th>Before</th>
<th>After</th>
<th>Margin Homogeneity Test</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No. of participants</td>
<td>Percentage</td>
<td>No. of participants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Endodontics</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>36.2</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oral &amp; Maxillofacial Surgery</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>21.3</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Periodontics</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>16.3</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orthodontics</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7.5</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pediatric Dentistry</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dental Public Health</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oral Pathology</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Restorative &amp; Esthetic Dentistry</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prosthodontics</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


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DISCUSSION

This study was conducted to determine the preferences of dental specialty by the final year dental students and house surgeons, and also to investigate whether a single session influenced the dental specialty selection.

This study demonstrated that the most preferred specialty subjects were Endodontics, Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery and Periodontics, which is slightly different to a study done in Saudi Arabia where the preferred specialties were Orthodontics, Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery and Pediatric Dentistry. One of the likeliest reasons why orthodontics is less of a preferred specialty among the participants of this study is the relative lack of oral hygiene awareness of the population and the length of the treatment orthodontic patients require.

Although the participants in the counselling session asked many questions about different specialties from the conveners of the session, however, there was no statistically significant difference in the preference of specialties before and after the single counselling session. A study done in Rawalpindi showed a similar pattern where the preferences before and after two counselling session did not change dramatically. However, the counselling session did show significant difference in the preference of specialty subject selected. In terms of programs of specialty, there was no difference in the preferences of participants. Our results can signify that one counselling session, regardless of how elaborate, cannot bring a difference in the preference of the participants. From a different perspective it can also imply that the participants were already clear on the preferences beforehand and had made up their decisions.

In terms of main reason for the preference, Jonathan et al revealed that dentistry as a career was selected mostly by students due to less demanding duty hours. Another study in Saudi Arabia showed that majorly, the preference is influenced by the family members and the scope of the specialty in private practice. In our study the participant usually preferred the specialty they believed they had the unique skills set for. The participant preference in our study was, like the above-mentioned study, influenced by the private practice. The influence by family members was the least selected reason in our study probably because families are more interested towards medical profession then dental profession.

One of the concerning finding in our study was that the specialty of dental materials was not opted by any of the participant. Also clinical specialties were selected by majority of participants with very little heed towards non clinical specialties even though the council’s session had discussed them as a good option as well.

The main limitation of this study is that it was conducted in one dental college. Future studies should concentrate towards taking participants from all the dental colleges to understand preferences of dental specialties. Also, our study did not take into account gender preference of specialty. In our study the participants were only exposed to one counselling session and in future studies longer and more abundant counselling sessions can be scheduled. In our study, their least preferred specialty and the reason behind them were not inquired or recorded. Future studies should inquire these perspectives as well.

Conclusion: Our study concluded that Endodontics is the most preferred specialty among graduates followed by Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery and the most preferred program was FCPS. A single counselling session did not change the preference significantly. The reason most likely behind the preference was possession of...
unique set of skills for the specialty and financial perspectives.

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AUTHOR’S CONTRIBUTION

Following authors have made substantial contributions to the manuscript as under


Naz T: Data collection results discussion writing.

Shabir S: Questionnaire Formatting

Saif U: Final approval

Wadood S: Final approval

Shah AM: Literate search, Questionnaire formatting and overall supervision

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.