

PERCEPTION OF MEDICAL STUDENTS FOR CHOICE ABOUT THEIR CAREER

Hafiz Muhammad Yar Malik,¹ Muhammad Tahir Karim,² Jamal Anwar,³ Zahid Mehmood³

ABSTRACT

Background: Career counseling to medical students is vital for future needs of health care system. **Objective:** To assess the perception of students in choosing the medical profession and their future career planning. **Methodology:** This cross-sectional study was conducted at Sheikh Zayed Medical College/Hospital, Rahim Yar Khan Pakistan, comprising 152 medical students. The questionnaire included questions on demographic information like age, sex, and year of study, reasons for choosing medical profession, future plans for specialization and choice of career in Pakistan or abroad, and their plans after graduation. SPSS 16 was used for data entry and statistical analysis. **Results:** Total number of study subjects was 152. Female participants were 62%. Mean age of participants was 22±2 year. 77 (51%) students said they chose the medical profession because their parents wanted them to be doctors; while 50 (33%) chose the career to serve ailing humanity. Regarding specialization, in this study, 13.2% wanted to specialize in Surgery, 14.5% in Medicine, 3% in Public Health, while 24.3% did not want to pursue the medical profession and applied for positions in civil service by appearing in the Central Superior Services (CSS). While 68%(103) students wanted to pursue the medical profession in Pakistan, the rest preferred to go to the United Kingdom 18.4%, 10% in America and 4% in Australia. **Conclusion:** Our study showed that most of the medical students selected medical profession due to parental and peer pressure. It was found that one third wanted to leave the country after graduation and one third wanted to leave the profession after graduation. It shows the lack of career counseling at undergraduate level in country. **Keywords:** Career choice, Specialization, Medical students, Counseling.

INTRODUCTION

The attitudes of undergraduate students and the reasons for selecting one specific career path are of great concern for policymakers both nationally and internationally.¹ At undergraduate level students have multiple career choices and often it is difficult for them to choose one particular career, without proper facilities for career counseling. The decision process to select a career, involves a number of supporting factors that include interest, at personal level, peer pressure, self-motivation, and anticipated better quality of life after attaining qualification.²

Medical career is perceived to be noble and provides opportunity to serve human beings more than any other career.³ The choices made by medical students about their career is important decision for their future and it affect the and availability and performance of physician and thus the resulting quality of service the health care system.^{4,5} The attitude and decision for medical students about their careers affects, the policy makers decisions to anticipate and counsel the students about future needs in health system specifically. This study was conducted to assess the perception of the medical students in choosing the medical profession and future career planning.

METHODOLOGY

The cross-sectional study was conducted from 1st February to 31st March 2015 at Sheikh Zayed Medical College/Hospital, Rahim Yar Khan. A total of 152 randomly selected students were included in the study. The questionnaire used in study included information on; age, gender, year of study, reasons for choosing medical profession, future plans for specialization and choice of career in Pakistan or abroad. Ethical approval was sought from Institutional Review Board for Hospital /College. The data was entered and analyzed by using SPSS 16.

RESULTS

Out of 152 study subjects participated in this study; the mean age was 22.3±2 years and 96 (63.2%) were girls. There were 28 (18%) respondents from 2nd year, while 76 (50%) respondents were from the 1st year and 4th year MBBS, 48 (32%). A total of 2(1.3%) students has chosen the profession because of doctor with their name; 77 (51%) chose it because their parents wanted them to be doctors; while 50 (33%) chose the career to serve ailing humanity. We found that 103 (68%) students wanted to practice the medical profession in Pakistan, while the rest preferred to go to the United Kingdom 28(18.4%), America 15(10%) and Australia 6(4%). (Table I)

1. Department of Community Medicine, Sheikh Zayed Medical College/Hospital, Rahim Yar Khan, University of Health Sciences, Lahore, Pakistan.

2. Nishtar Medical College, Multan, University of Health Sciences, Lahore, Pakistan.

3. Department of Paediatric Medicine, Sheikh Zayed Medical College/Hospital, Rahim Yar Khan, University of Health Sciences, Lahore, Pakistan.

Correspondence: Prof. Hafiz Muhammad Yar Malik, HOD Community Medicine, Sheikh Zayed Medical College/Hospital Rahim Yar Khan

E-mail: drhafiz21@hotmail.com

Mobile:

Received: 20-01-2017

Accepted: 27-02-2017

Table I. Responses of medical students regarding career selection and future planning

Reasons for Choosing Medical Profession	No (%)
Fulfill your parents' wishes	77 (51%)
DOCTOR' with your name	2 (1.3%)
To earn a lot of money	5(3.3 %)
To serve ailing humanity	50(33 %)
Any Other	18(11.8%)
Preferred Country to Pursue Medical Profession	
Pakistan	103(68%)
UK	28(18.4%)
USA	15(9.9%)
Australia	6(3.9%)
Which Field Would You Choose For Specialization?	
Medicine	22(14.5%)
Surgery	20(13.2%)
Public Health	4(2.6%)
Gynae	33(22%)
Paeds Medicine	12(8 %)
Cardiac surgery	15(11.2%)
What would you like to be after graduation?	
General physician	51 (26%)
Consultant	68 (31%)
Teaching cadre	25 (10 %)
Do you want to change your career after MBBS?	
No	106 (70%)
CSS	37(24.3%)
Business	4 (3%)
Politics	5(3.3%)

Regarding specialization, in this study, 13.2% wanted to specialize in Surgery, 14.5% in Medicine, 3% in Public Health, while 37 (24.3%) did not want to pursue the medical profession at all but planning for civil services positions in government by appearing in the Central Superior Services (CSS) examination.

It was found that 30% of the medical students wanted to leave medical profession after graduation. This shows poor career planning on part of students and even worse career counseling at government and school administration before entering medical profession. It was found that 22% of medical students wanted to do post-graduation in gynecology, 14% in medicine and 13% in surgery. This shows that students are not still aware of the much needed specialities like anesthesia, thus showing lack of counseling.

DISCUSSION

The prevailing attitude of our society is that most of the parents wish their children to become either doctors or engineers in future. It was observed in the current study that 77 students (51%) chose the profession because their parents wanted them to be doctors, while 50 (33%) chose it to serve ailing humanity. The perceived noble status of a doctor in society, encourages parents to select this as their career in future.^{6,7,8}

This is comparable to one earlier study that also reported most of the medical students chose Medical profession because of their parent's interest.⁴

It was observed in this study that 68% students wanted to pursue their careers in Pakistan. The remaining wanted to work in the USA, UK, and Australia. Similar results have been observed in other studies conducted in Pakistan. One observed that most students in the fifth year in a private medical college in Karachi, Pakistan, preferred to work in Pakistan.² In this study, 13.2% wanted to specialize in Surgery, 14.5% in Medicine, 3% in Public Health, while 22% wished to specialize in fields like Gynecology and Obstetrics, and 8% Pediatrics. Our results were slightly different from the results of other studies conducted previously in Pakistan. One study conducted in public and private-sector medical colleges observed that the top career preferences were Internal Medicine, followed by General Surgery for both public and private medical school students.^{9,10}

CONCLUSION

Our study showed that most of the medical students selected medical profession due to parental and peer pressure. It was found that one third wanted to leave the country after graduations and one third wanted to leave the profession after graduation. It shows the lack of career counseling at undergraduate level in country.

REFERENCES

1. Baharvand M, Moghaddam EJ, Pouretamad H. Attitudes of Iranian dental students toward their future careers: an exploratory study. *J Dent Educ* 2011; 75: 1489-95.
2. Huda N, Yousuf S. Career preference of final year medical students of Ziauddin Medical University. *Educ Health (Abingdon)* 2006; 19: 345-53.
3. Draper C., Louw G. What is medicine and what is a doctor? Medical students' perceptions and expectations of their academic and professional career. *Med Teach* 2007; 29: e100-7.

4. Lambert TW, Goldcare MJ, Edwards C, Parkhouse J. Career preferences of doctors who qualified in the United Kingdom in 1993 compared with those of doctors qualifying in 1974, 1977, 1980 and 1983. *BMJ* 1996;313:19-24.
5. Matorin AA, Venegas-Samuels K, Ruiz P, Butler PM, Abdulla A. U.S. medical student's choice Of Careers and its future impact on health care manpower. *J Health Hum Serv Adm* 2000;22(4):495-509.
6. Huda N, Yousuf S. Career preference of final year medical students of Ziauddin Medical University. *Educ Health (Abingdon)* 2006; 19: 345-53.
7. Saad SM, Fatima SS, Faruqi AA. Students' views regarding selecting medicine as a profession. *J Pak Med Assoc* 2011; 61: 832-6.
8. Sobral DT. Selective training and cross-year clinical tutoring as educational influences on generalist career choice. *Educ Health (Albingdon)* 2001; 14: 295-303.
9. Aslam M, Ali A, Taj T, Badar N, Mirza W, Ammar A, et al. Specialty choices of medical students and house officers in Karachi, Pakistan. *East Mediterr Health J* 2011; 17: 74-9.
10. Chew YW, Rajakrishnan S, Low CA, Jayapalan PK, Sreeramareddy CT. Medical students' choice of specialty and factors determining their choice: a cross-sectional questionnaire survey in Melaka Manipal Medical College, Malaysia. *Biosci Trends* 2011; 5: 69-76.

Article Citation: Malik HMY, Karim MT, Anwer J, Mehmood Z. Perception of medical students for choice about their career. *JSZMC* 2017; 8(1):1127-1129