

Original Research Article

Reasons for choosing medical profession as the career among medical college students in Kancheepuram district

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ABSTRACT

Background: A career in medicine is one of the most respected and highly rated professions among most of the parents and students. It has been observed that many of the students choose medicine due to parental pressure and many more can't prefer the course due to financial problems. Hence the present study was conducted to find out the reasons for choosing medical profession as career among the medical college students.

Methods: A cross sectional study was conducted among 300 undergraduate medical students of Karpaga Vinayaga Institute of Medical Science and Research Centre from October to November 2019 with a pretested semi structured questionnaire. Data were entered in Microsoft Excel sheet. Analysis was carried out by using SPSS version 23.

Results: The mean age of the students was 20.79±1.3 and majority of them were females (60.3%). Majority (76%) of the students chose MBBS out of self-interest. 45% of the students chose the medical profession for saving life which gives them immense happiness. 18% of the students felt regret for choosing medical profession out of which 76% had stress as the reason for regretting the medicine career. 95.7% students wanted to pursue postgraduation.

Conclusions: Self-interest or a passion for the medical profession was the most common reason for choosing medicine as the career. Few students felt regret for choosing medicine as the course due to stress and lifelong reading. Special attention and counselling are needed to be given to such students and also need to encourage them to have a successful life.

Keywords: Career in medicine, Medical profession, Regret, Self-interest, Undergraduate medical students

INTRODUCTION

Medical profession is the most essential and one among the top most profession in the modern society. To become a doctor is the most ambitious profession among most of the school children and their parents. To enter into the medical field- MBBS- Bachelor of Medicine and Bachelor of Surgery, one has to clear a tough competitive entrance examination and there after the selection into the medical college, one has to study for four and a half years followed by compulsory one-year internship.¹ It has been noted that not all the students who have good academic background gets selection for the medical course but

many of the students choose their carrier because of parental pressure and to fulfil their parents wish. Choosing the medical profession depends upon the various factors like self interest in the profession, job opportunities, respect in the society, doctors among family members, and many more.^{2,3}

To become an eminent doctor, one has to work hard endure lengthier periods of training both at undergraduate and postgraduate level. One should have passion towards the profession rather than being pushed by others or peer pressure. Perseverance and patience towards the profession is very important. Considering all these

aspects, the present study aimed to find out the reasons for choosing medical profession as career among the medical college students.

METHODS

A cross sectional study was conducted among undergraduate medical students of Karpaga Vinayaga Institute of Medical Science and Research Centre. The study was conducted for a period of 2 months from October to November 2019.

Inclusion criteria

The inclusion criteria were all MBBS students from first to final year who were present on the day of the survey.

Exclusion criteria

The exclusion criteria were students who were absent for a long period and those students who didn't filled up the questionnaire.

Out of total 400 students, about 300 students participated in the study. A pretested semi structured questionnaire which consisted of socio demographic information, reasons for choosing the medical profession and their regret for choosing the profession. The study was conducted after obtaining the necessary clearance from Institutional Ethical committee. The study was conducted after getting the permission from the principal of the medical college. Questionnaire was administered to the students after explaining them the importance of study and each question in the questionnaire. Confidentiality regarding the participant response for the questions was ensured. Data were entered in Microsoft Excel sheet. Analysis was carried out by using SPSS version 23. Baseline data were expressed as Mean and Standard Deviation for continuous variable and proportion for categorical variable. Chi square test for categorical data was used.

RESULTS

Out of the 300 students who had participated in the study, 181 (60.3%) were girls and 119 (39.7%) were boys. The mean age of the students was 20.79 ± 1.3 years. Among 181 female students, 60.2% of students were more than 20 years and among 119 male students, 55.5% of the students were more than 20 years. There was no statistical significance between the age and the gender of the students. About 67.3% of the student's residence were from urban area. Majority (81.7%) of the students were hostellers (Table 1).

Most of the student's fathers (43.7%) and mothers (40%) were graduates. 91% of father's occupation and 95% of mother's occupation were non-medical. Only 30.3% of student's family members were doctors. About 43% of

students got >10000 rupees as financial support from family per month (Table 2).

Table 1: Socio demographic profile of the study participants (n=300).

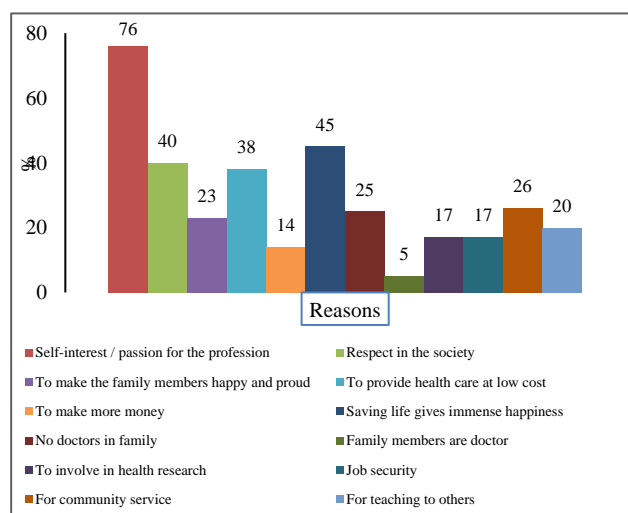
Variables	Female (181)	Male (119)	Total (300)	X ² (p value)
Age in years				
≤20	72 (39.8)	53 (44.5)	125 (41.7)	8.880 (0.180)
>20	109 (60.2)	66 (55.5)	175 (58.3)	
Year of study				
1 st year	46 (25.4)	33 (27.7)	79 (26.3)	2.570 (0.463)
2 nd year	51 (28.2)	29 (24.4)	80 (26.7)	
3 rd year	47 (26)	25 (21)	72 (24)	
4 th year	37 (20.4)	32 (26.9)	69 (23)	
Residence				
Rural	45 (24.9)	53 (44.5)	98 (32.7)	12.637 (0.000)
Urban	136 (75.1)	66 (55.5)	202 (67.3)	
Current residential status				
Hosteller	146 (80.7)	99 (83.2)	245 (81.7)	0.307 (0.580)
Days-caller	35 (19.3)	20 (16.8)	55 (18.3)	
Students decided to join MBBS				
Before 10 th standard	124 (68.5)	50 (42)	174 (58)	20.68 (0.000)
After 10 th standard	57 (31.5)	69 (58)	126 (42)	
Chose MBBS				
Fulfil parents wish	30 (16.5)	39 (32.8)	69 (23)	11.941 (0.003)
Parents pressure	1 (0.5)	2 (1.7)	3 (1)	
Self interest	150 (83)	78 (65.5)	228 (76)	
Feel regret for choosing medical profession				
No	147 (81.2)	99 (83.1)	246 (82)	0.190 (0.777)
Yes	34 (18.8)	20 (16.8)	54 (18)	
Quit MBBS				
No	180 (99.4)	116 (98.3)	297 (99)	0.925 (0.630)
Yes	1 (0.6)	2 (1.7)	3 (1)	
Doing rural service				
Yes	58 (32.1)	43 (36.1)	101 (33.6)	2.273 (0.518)
No	123 (67.9)	76 (63.9)	199 (66.4)	
Pursue postgraduation				
Yes	176 (97.2)	111 (93.3)	287 (95.7)	2.716 (0.99)
No	5 (2.8)	8 (6.7)	13 (4.39)	

About 58% of students decided to join MBBS before 10th standard. Majority (76%) of the students choose MBBS as their career with their self-interest (Table 1).

Table 2: Family profile of the study subjects (n=300).

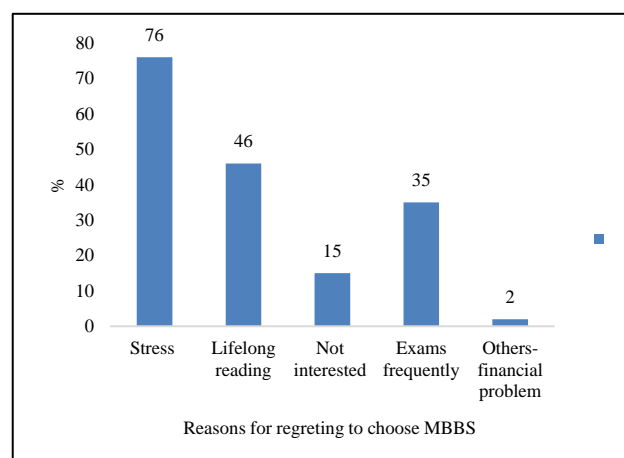
Variables	Frequency (%)
Father education:	
Below graduate	74 (24.7)
Graduate	131 (43.7)
Post graduate	95 (31.7)
Mothers education	
Below graduate	84 (28)
Graduate	120 (40)
Post graduate	96 (32)
Father occupation	
Medical	28 (9)
Non-medical	272 (91)
Mothers occupation	
Medical	16 (5)
Non-medical	284 (95)
Any of the family members are from any medical profession	
Yes	91 (30.3)
No	209 (69.7)
Financial support from family per month	
Rs. <2000	58 (19)
Rs.2000- Rs.5000	73 (25)
Rs.5000-Rs.10000	39 (13)
Rs. >10000	130 (43)

There was multiple response among students for choosing medicine as their career. Majority 76% of the students have chosen passion for the profession as the reason for choosing MBBS as their career. About 45% of the students chose saving life gives immense happiness and 40% students chose the profession as a respect in the society (Figure 1).

**Figure 1: Motivating factors/reason for choosing medicine as a career.***

*multiple response

Out of 181 females, 83% chose MBBS as self-interest and among 119 males 65.5% chose MBBS with self-interest. There was statistical significance between the gender and reasons for choosing MBBS (Table 1).

**Figure 2: Reason for regret feeling after choosing medicine as career.***

*multiple response

Only 18% of the undergraduate students felt regret for choosing the medical profession and they gave multiple answers for regret feeling. Among those 54 students who had regret feeling for choosing MBBS, 76% of the students had stress, 46% of the students chose lifelong reading as the reason for regretting the course, 15% were not interested, 35% answered there were exams frequently and 2% due to financial problem. When compared with the gender, 18.8% of girls and 16.8% of boys felt regret for choosing the medical profession (Figure 2).

About only 3 students responded that they want to quit MBBS after they have joined the course. Thus about 99.4% of girls and 98.3% of boys responded that they won't quit MBBS on any circumstances. No statistical significance was found between gender and quitting MBBS (Table 1).

Out of the total 300 students, 33.6% of the students wanted to do rural services, when compared with the gender, 32.1% of girls and 36.1% of boys responded that they were willing to do rural service. There was no association found between genders and doing rural service among students (Table 1).

95.7% of the students have responded that they will pursue post-graduation. When compared with the gender, about 97.2% of girls and 93.3% of boys responded that they will pursue post-graduation after completing MBBS. No statistical association found between genders and pursuing postgraduation (Table 1).

Table 3: Association between year of study and having regret feeling for joining in MBBS of the study subjects (n=300).

Variables	1 st year (79)	2 nd year (80)	3 rd year (72)	4 th year (69)	Total (300)	Chi-square (p value)
Feel regret for choosing medical profession						
No	69 (87.3)	64 (80)	58 (80.6)	55 (79.7)	246 (80)	2.091 (0.554)
Yes	10 (12.7)	16 (20)	14 (19.4)	14 (20.3)	54 (18)	
Quit MBBS						
No	79 (100)	80 (100)	71 (98.6)	67 (97.1)	297 (99)	9.124 (0.167)
Yes	0	0	1 (1.4)	2 (2.9)	3 (1)	
Chose MBBS						
Fulfil parents wish	14 (17.7)	17 (21.2)	17 (23.6)	21 (30.4)	69 (23)	4.549 (0.603)
Parents pressure	1 (1.3)	1 (1.2)	0	1 (1.4)	3 (1)	
Self interest	64 (81)	62 (77.5)	55 (76.4)	47 (68.1)	228 (78)	

DISCUSSION

In this study, 181 were female students which was more than the 119 male students. Similar finding was observed in other study done by Jothula et al 28% were boys and 72% were girls.¹ Another study done by Padmanabhan et al 51.64% were girls, Also a study done by Seetharaman et al female student were more than the male students.^{4,5} But in a study by Tiwari et al boys (65.39%) were more than the girls.⁶ That may be because girls prefer to study medical courses and have chosen science group more than the boys. The mean age of the students was 20.79 ± 1.3 years. All the years' students had participated in this study to see whether due to pressure load in studies they wanted to quit the course and their status of pursuing post-graduation. Many of the students were from urban area and they presently stay at hostel. In a study by Tiwari et al, majority of the students were from urban area but they were day scholars.⁶

Most of the students' father as well as mother were graduates. Similar finding was found in study done by Rani et al and Tiwari et al.^{2,6} Only 9% of student's father and 5% of student's mother were from medical profession. In the study by Tiwari et al majority of the student's father were doing government or private service and mothers were housewife.⁶ About 91 student's family members were from any of the medical profession. Whereas in the study by Rani et al out of 126 students, 45 student's family members were doctors.² Majority of the students receive more than 10000 rupees as financial support from their family.

Majority of the students chose MBBS with their own interest to become a doctor. In a study done by Jothula et al self-interest was the most common answer students opted for choosing MBBS, also a study by Radhika et al majority of the students have responded self-interest as the reason for choosing medicine as career.^{1,7} Also, in the study by Rani et al majority of the students responded that decision to join MBBS was not influenced.² A study done by Seetharaman et al self-interest and financial security were the most common reasons for choosing

medicine as a career.⁵ In this study, only 3 students due to the parent's pressure they have opted the medical course as the career. Similar finding was observed in Jothula et al study.¹ But about 35.8% students responded that they chose medicine due to parents pressure in the study done by Seetharaman et al.⁵

Even though there is stress and a lot to study, most of the students didn't feel regret for choosing medical profession and also didn't want to quit the course in between in this study. But in Jothula et al study, 40% of the students felt regret for choosing medical profession.¹

In this study, among 54 students who felt regret for choosing medicine as a career stress and lifelong reading were some of the common reasons for feeling regret for choosing medicine after joining the course. Similar reasons were found as the reasons for feeling regretting the medical course in Jothula et al.¹

Most of the students didn't prefer doing rural service after completing internship which may be because more than 95% of the students wanted to pursue post-graduation after completing their under-graduation. Among 101 students who wanted to do rural service 58 students were girls. Whereas in the study done by Rani et al 101 students wanted to do rural service out of 126 students, out of which majority were girls (66.3%). Almost all the students wanted to pursue post-graduation after completing MBBS.²

Passion for the medical profession, saving lives gives immense happiness, respect in the society were the some of the motivating factors most of the students have answered. Only 5% of the student's family members were doctors. Whereas in a study done by Jothula et al earning respect in the society, making family member proud were the most common motivational factors to take up medical profession.¹ In the study done by Rani et al passion for medicine was the major motivational factor for choosing medical profession followed by serving the community.² Study by Giri et al responded that to serve the community was the major reason for choosing medical profession.⁸

Also, in study done by Tiwari et al and Kuriakose et al wanted to help poor and their own choice was the most common reason they responded for choosing medical school as a carrier.^{6,9}

When comparing with the year of study, it was found that 3rd and 4th year medical students had regret feeling for joining medical profession, wanted to quit MBBS and they have chosen MBBS to fulfil parents wish. No statistical significance was found between years of study, regret for choosing the medical profession and reason for choosing MBBS. Most of the studies done were among first year MBBS students or interns.^{1,4-6,8} Comparative studies among all years of medical students were not much found.

CONCLUSION

Self-interest or a passion for the medical profession was the most common reason for choosing medicine as the career. To fulfil parents wish was also found as the reason for choosing MBBS among some students. Few students also felt regret for choosing medicine after getting admission to the course due to stress and lifelong reading. Special attention and counselling are needed to be given to such students and to encourage them to achieve their goal in their life and to come out with flying colours.

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Conflict of interest: None declared

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