

Medical Profession: A Career Choice for females of Fatima Jinnah Medical College, Lahore

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ABSTRACT

Objectives: To find out the factors associated for choosing medicine as a profession.

Method: The study was done at Fatima Jinnah Medical College. The study design was a cross sectional survey. One hundred female medical students answered a close ended questionnaire. The results were analyzed by using Pearson's coefficient correlation.

Results: 76% responded that they chose the medical profession on their own determination, 83% responded that it was their parent's desire to choose this profession, 88% of the students thought that it is a respectable profession for females. Eighty one percent of the students thought by choosing this field they will be able to explore new dimensions in health, where as 69% thought that by becoming a doctor they can improve the health conditions of Pakistan. Seventy percent had a childhood desire to become a doctor and 72% thought after graduation they will become independent, 95% wanted to serve humanity. However 78% had other alternatives but they preferred this profession. One third of the students had their siblings as doctors. There was a significant positive correlation between choosing the medical profession and exploring new dimensions in health, serving the humanity, becoming independent, and improving the health status of the community ($p \leq 0.01$).

Conclusions: Most of the students chose the field on their own and wanted to serve the humanity and also they wanted to explore new dimensions in health and were happy that they selected the profession.

Keywords: Medical students, Career choice, profession, humanity, parental choice,

INTRODUCTION

Hippocrates the father of medicine proposed that doctors should have natural skills, culture, disposition for studying, a strong background, and perseverance, enjoy work, and time availability. It is an old aged concern that what should be the personal characteristics for entering medical profession¹.

In the selection of the new medical students the emphasis is on cognitive aspects rather than the characteristics outline by Hippocrates. Initially women were considered unable to become doctors on the arguments that their personality profile was not suitable. The 19th century witnessed the women were gradually accepted in medical profession and were socially accepted in the profession².

It is worthwhile to find out the reasons why women want to join this profession. Many factors have been cited as determinants for choosing the medical career: personality, conscious factors such as the desire for helping people, preference for biological knowledge, and scientific curiosity;

unconscious factors such as the capacity for reparation and sublimation; socioeconomic factors including family influence, amongst others³.

In Pakistan medicine is widely sought after and is considered as one of the respectable of all professions despite increase number of females in medicine issues of gender continue to have a substantial impact on the medical education of females. Knowledge about students and their motivations to become doctors provides for improved educational action, and support during the study period

The purpose of this study was to determine the reasons for choosing the medical profession by female students studying at Fatima Jinnah Medical College.

METHODOLOGY

The study was done at Fatima Jinnah Medical College. The study design was cross sectional survey. The sampling technique used was non probability sampling. One hundred female medical students of final year of session 2010-2011 participated in the study.

A pilot study was done in which the researcher collected views that why they opted the profession to become a doctor. The responses were noted through content analysis and in the light of this study a close ended questionnaire was developed.

The students filled the questionnaire after taking their consent and ensuring that anonymity will be maintained through out the research and findings of the research will be shared with them.

The questions asked were the reasons for joining the medical field :was it students own choice, influenced by parents, by joining this profession will she be able to serve humanity, earn more become independent, change the health status of Pakistan, was she satisfied with her decision.

Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS 19) a computer program was used for data entry and analysis of data. Pearson's coefficient correlation (*r*) test was used to compare the correlation between different variables $p \leq .01$ was used as level of significance.

RESULTS

One hundred female medical students of final year participated in the study. Majority of the students (46%) were of 1st birth order where as 23% belong to birth order 4 and more. There was a direct significant relationship among those students whose birth order was 1st and their family members belonging to the same profession ($r=.299, p \leq .01$).

Statistical Analysis:

Table 1: Thereasons for choosing medicine as a profession

Items	Yes	Neutral	No
1. Did you choose the medical profession at your own choice <i>N=100</i>	76	19	5
2. Is it your parents desire to become a doctor <i>N=100</i>	83	13	4
3. Did your parents or other relative forced you to join this profession <i>N=100</i>	12	9	79
4. Is it more respectable profession for females <i>N=100</i>	88	12	0
5. Do you think medical field is helpful to explore new dimensions in the field of health <i>N=100</i>	81	14	5
6. Do you think that after becoming a doctor you will be able to improve health conditions in Pakistan <i>N=100</i>	69	22	8
7. Did you choose this profession after getting information from the masses that it is the best one <i>N=100</i>	31	17	52
8. Was it your childhood desire to become a doctor <i>N=100</i>	70	16	14
9. Do you think after witnessing catastrophic events you opted this profession <i>N=100</i>	18	22	60
10. Do you think that after becoming a doctor you can earn more or sufficiently <i>N=100</i>	35	35	30
11. Do you think by opting this profession you will become independent or autonomous <i>N=100</i>	72	21	7
12. Did you join this profession because there was not any other alternate except this <i>N=100</i>	15	7	78
13. Is it helpful profession to serve humanity <i>N=100</i>	95	3	2

When asked the reason for becoming doctors 76% responded that they chose the medical profession on their own determination, 83%

responded that it was their parent's desire to choose this profession, 88% of the students thought that it is a respectable profession for

females. Eighty one percent of the students thought by choosing this field they will be able to explore new dimensions in health, where as 69% thought that becoming a doctor, they can improve the health conditions of Pakistan. Seventy percent had a childhood desire to become a doctor and 72% thought after graduation they will become independent, 95% wanted to serve humanity. However 78% had other alternatives but they preferred this profession (Table1). One third (33%) of the students had their siblings as doctors (Table 2).

There was significant correlation among the students who joined the medical profession at their own choice and their interest in exploring new dimensions in the field of medicine ($r=.311 p\leq.01$).

A significant positive correlation among the parental choice of becoming them a doctor and the level of student's satisfaction was observed ($r=.321 p\leq.01$).

Table 2: Frequency of the students whose family members were doctors

Family Members	Frequency	Percent
Father		
Mother	7	7.0
Uncle	2	2.0
Aunt	16	16.0
Brother or sister	13	13.0
no one	34	33.0
Total	28	28.0
	100	100.0

The result showed significant correlation among those students who responded that they wanted to explore new dimensions in the field of health and were also interested in improving the health condition in Pakistan ($r=.316p\leq.01$). A significant relationship also existed among these students and their childhood desire to become a doctor ($r=.422p\leq.01$). Seventy percent of the students having childhood desire of becoming a doctor also wanted to serve the humanity, results showed a positive correlation among them ($r=.412 p\leq.01$). Forty five percent of the students were satisfied that they had chosen the medical field where as out of the 55 students who were not happy on becoming doctors ten of them wanted to become house wives and 23 wanted to follow any other profession while 22 didn't respond. A significant direct relationship was found out among the responses of the students who wanted to serve

the humanity and were happy in choosing this profession ($r=.261 p\leq.01$).

DISCUSSION

In our study majority of the students 46% of the students were the first child of their parents and 70% of the students had a childhood desire of becoming a doctor;a fact Mutha in his study also documented that choosing the profession of medicine included job prestigious and societal needs⁴.

The findings of the studies suggested that 76% of the students wanted to become doctor, the study conducted by Saad et al at Dow Medical College, Karachi highlighted that most of the students wanted to join medical profession as an independent career⁵. The studies done in the West reported that 70% of the males and females chose this profession because they had high interest in it⁶. In the present study one third of the students joined the medical profession because of monetary reward, the study conducted by Saadshowed that 52% of the students consideration was also the monetary reward, the difference of percentages in this study and Saad'scould be due to the fact that only female students were studied.

The 95% female medical students who participated in the study wanted to serve humanity, Mcmanus in his study on medical students documented that the students were motivated to alleviate the sufferings of the disease and disabled and wanted to help people⁷.

Seventy two percent of the students joined the profession so they could become independent, a convincing factor highlighted by the medical students that the medicine could be adopted as an independent career⁵ although 55% of the students were unhappy to join this profession, the other studies indicated that the doctors insist on a higher quality of life and more flexibility to arrange their lives according to their preferences^{8, 9}.

In our 88% of female students thought it to be a noble profession for females, the study conducted by Wagner supports that medicine is a noble profession as during their education, medical students work as health educators helping and advising people about basic health issues solving their everyday issues thereby they enjoy respect and honor¹⁰.

The medical students who participated in the study were motivated to alleviate the sufferings of the disease and the disable.According to the report of Royal College of physicians the core values of

the medical profession are integrity, compassion, altruism and excellence that are glued to a set of values team work and continuous improvement^{11,12}.

The limitations of the study are that only female students from one college were included in the study therefore to generalize the findings more studies in different medical colleges both public and private sector are needed

CONCLUSIONS

Most of the students chose the field on their own and wanted to serve the humanity and also they wanted to explore new dimensions in health and were happy that they selected the profession.

RECOMENDATIONS

Several factors appear to drive students toward medicine, most notably having a societal orientation and a desire for a varied scope of practice. If the factors that influence medical students to choose medicine can be identified accurately, then it may be possible to use such a model to change medical school admission policies so that the number of students choosing to enter medicine can be increased.

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