

Evaluation of internship program of undergraduate students in a private dental college

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ABSTRACT

Introduction: Dental education is at a critical state due to advances in health-care delivery system. In dentistry, one can gain extensive amount of knowledge only when they are students. **Aim:** This study aims to assess the internship program of undergraduate students of a private dental college in Chennai. **Materials and Methods:** A cross-sectional study was conducted among undergraduates. A pretested questionnaire was used to assess the internship experience such as critical thinking knowledge, problem-solving skills, sense of responsibility, creativity, professional attitude, appearances, quality of work, and ethics. Descriptive statistics were analyzed. **Results:** It shows that about 72.3% of interns were satisfied about their internship achievements. **Conclusion:** The study concludes that the internship program has built in the clinical competency of the interns.

KEY WORDS: Communication, Curriculum, Internship, Learning, Self-evaluation

INTRODUCTION

Dental curriculum changes dynamically; hence, it needs to be monitored and reconstructed according to the needs of the student, community, and profession; otherwise, it becomes stagnant. According to Shetty, a good curriculum should always restructure itself and should receive feedback from all stakeholders.^[1] The dental education is at a critical stake due to the advances and changes in the health-care delivery system. There is a wide belief that the dental students are not satisfied with their experience in the dental colleges which may be due to the stressful environment.^[2] Psychological stress or distress has long been regarded as an important influence on the learning and performance of the students. It serves as a motivation to some portion of the student community and for the rest, it has adverse negative effect on their studies, health, and personal lives.^[3]

Being a consumer of the dental program, the students view must be considered by the curriculum evaluation committee while updating the dental curriculum.^[4]

A self-assessment can be conceived as an ingrained habit or trait to reflect an individual. Students of dental profession are bright, goal oriented and are reflective, sightful, and consistent in academic and in assessing their skills and ability.^[5] Hence, the study was designed to analyze the perception of the interns about the present scenario of dental education, clinical trials, teacher-student relationship, professional outlook, and patient care.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

A pre-tested structured questionnaire was given to 65 students of Saveetha Dental College and Hospitals, Chennai, who were undergoing the internship programme. The feedback of the interns regarding the questionnaire was gathered and the data collected were entered for further evaluation. Evaluation of the data was done and the output was obtained.

RESULTS

The results showed an overall satisfaction in achieving the internship roles and responsibilities along with performance [Table 1], organization and working environment [Table 2], and finally the academic portfolio and extracurricular activities [Table 3].

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Table 1: Internship roles and responsibilities with performance

Items	Strongly disagree %	Somewhat disagree %	Neither agree nor disagree %	Somewhat agree %	Strongly agree %
Achievement of internship objectives	4.6	6.2	16.9	53.8	18.5
Demonstration of communication skill	3.1	13.8	6.2	49.2	27.7
Application of classroom knowledge	4.6	7.7	20.0	40.0	27.7
Critical thinking and problem-solving skill demonstration	7.7	7.7	15.4	49.2	20.0
Professional appearance	4.6	4.6	9.2	53.8	27.7
Response to supervision and criticism	6.2	9.2	20.0	44.6	20.0
Self-sufficient, independent as well as a teamworker capacity	1.5	1.5	15.4	40.0	41.5
Exhibition of responsibility and dependability	3.1	7.7	7.7	50.8	30.8
Exhibition of positive attitude toward work and coworkers	3.1	4.6	7.7	36.9	47.7
Exhibition of professional attitude to behave ethically	6.2	13.8	6.2	49.2	24.6
Sensitive to diversity	6.2	12.3	23.1	40.0	18.5
Adaptation to changing circumstances	3.1	3.1	16.9	47.7	29.2
Sufficient quantity and quality of work production	6.2	6.2	18.5	40.0	29.2
Demonstrated awareness of strength/weakness	1.5	9.2	7.7	52.3	29.2
Was comfortable handling all assigned responsibilities	6.2	0.0	20.0	49.2	24.6

Table 2: Organization and working environment

Title	Strongly disagree %	Somewhat disagree %	Neither agree nor disagree %	Somewhat agree %	Strongly agree %
Providence of sufficient orientation to its mission, purpose, culture, policies, and practices	10.8	1.5	13.8	56.9	16.9
The work environment was stimulating	7.7	12.3	13.8	46.2	20.0
The organization invited me to provide feedback and input on the work in which I was engaged and to discuss organizational matter	13.8	10.8	16.9	43.1	15.4
The work was challenging	7.7	3.1	12.3	44.6	32.3
The internship tasks and experiences helped to meet the learning goals and objectives	4.6	1.5	16.9	49.2	27.7
Providence with access and insight into a variety of activities to contribute to the learning	4.6	3.1	15.4	50.8	26.2
Was conscious of my needs as an intern and made clear the task responsibilities	7.7	1.5	18.5	50.8	21.5
Assigned an appropriate amount of work	7.7	10.8	18.5	41.5	21.5
Discussed ways by which learning objectives could be achieved	7.7	4.6	27.7	43.1	16.9
Providence of regular assistance and willingness to answer the queries regarding work setting and specific tasks	4.6	7.7	20.0	50.8	16.9

DISCUSSION

It is very important to consider the perspective of graduating dental students regarding their curriculum, motivation, and support. Furthermore, it is necessary to assess their internship experience such as critical thinking knowledge, problem-solving skills, sense of responsibility, creativity, professional attitude, appearances, quality of work, and ethics.

The study shows the various perceptions of the interns of a private dental institution should that there was overall satisfaction in achieving the internship roles and responsibilities along with performance. It also gives us an insight into the strengths and weaknesses

of the current curriculum of that dental college which is monitored regularly.

Table 1 shows that about 49.2% of students have necessary communication skills. This is in accordance with the study conducted by Lanning *et al.* who quoted that, communication skills learned in the clinical setting, helps in providing a formal approach toward the patient and it is more efficient in enhancing the students confidence.^[3] Furthermore, 49.2% of the interns have the ability of critical thinking and problem-solving skills. About 50.8% of interns exhibit responsibility and dependability. About 49.2% were comfortable in handling all the assigned responsibilities.

Table 3: Academic portfolio and extracurricular activities

Title	Strongly disagree %	Somewhat disagree %	Neither agree nor disagree %	Somewhat agree %	Strongly agree %
Academic coursework provided preparations of professional knowledge and skills	6.2	3.1	16.9	46.2	27.7
Comparison helped in modulating the internship program	7.7	10.8	18.5	44.6	18.5
Usage of CAD-CAM, RVG, and advances record management system was useful	7.7	10.8	10.8	41.5	29.2
Outreach program helped to explore more unknown problems	4.6	7.7	18.5	47.7	21.5
Participation in conferences, seminars, and presenting scientific papers and posters provided insight	3.1	3.1	18.5	46.2	29.2
Research work helped in career building	9.2	7.7	24.6	35.4	23.1
Library provided adequate resources for various academic and research purposes	9.2	13.8	20.0	40.0	16.9
Usage of Wi-Fi and iPad was beneficial	9.2	10.8	10.8	41.5	27.7
Number of clinical procedures provided adequate training and professional skills	10.8	9.2	13.8	43.1	23.1
UTSAV provided platform to exhibit hidden talents	6.2	6.2	6.2	24.6	56.9

More than 40% of the students expressed that they were able to apply their theoretical knowledge in their clinical practice which is higher than a similar study conducted by Ashri in King Saud University, Riyadh.^[4]

The internship tasks and responsibilities were handled comfortably by about 52.3% of the students which reflect that the students have gained adequate confidence to meet their goals and to understand their strength and weaknesses.^[7]

A study conducted by Kumar in Rajasthan highlighted that students had stress due to the fear of their clinical in charge and the environment provided by the faculty to them during their clinical training.^[8]

The study by Chaudhary mentioned that the way the practitioner carries himself influences the patients image of him or her.^[9] Nearly 53.8% of the interns believed in maintaining a good professional appearance.

Nearly 40% of the students were elated about being a self-sufficient worker as an individual as well as a teamworker. A study in the UK by Evans showed the need for the development of a positive attitude toward interprofessional education which will help in maintaining a good teamwork with the technicians and their colleagues which will lead to a better collaborative practice.^[10]

This was further illustrated in a study done by Leisnert in Sweden where the students responded that patient needs to be approached holistically which should be a permanent part of education.^[11] About 47.7% of the students appraised positive attitude toward their coworkers. This helps them to respect each other's role in providing care for the patient.

The Association of American Medical Colleges considers ethical responsibility to self and others, reliability, adaptability, and dependability as the crucial for effective professional behavior.^[12] Being an intern student who is going to be exposed to private practice soon needs to be aware and exhibit the same. About 50.8% of the students exhibited responsibility and dependability during the course work.

Nearly 50% of the students exhibited professional attitude to behave ethically and 40% of the students were sensitive to diversity at the working environment. Diversity during the clinical practice includes the difference in gender, socioeconomic status, and religion of the coworkers and patients.

About 47.7% of the students were able to adapt to the changing circumstances and 46.2% of the interns believed that the working environment was stimulating for them to perform from better to best.

Table 2 shows that about 56.9% agree that the working environment provides sufficient orientation to its mission, purpose, culture, policies, and practices. About 50.8% of the interns were stimulated by regular assistance and willingness of the faculty to clear their queries regarding specific tasks. Attitude of the faculty toward the intern helped in modulating their perspective of achieving their objectives.

Nearly 43.1% of the interns were satisfied in providing feedback and discussing organizational matters. A similar study was done by Curtis in University of California which the organization invited its students to provide a self-assessment feedback of preclinical examinations.^[13]

The number of clinical procedures done by the interns provided them with adequate training and professional

skills. This was strongly agreed by 66.1% of the students while in a similar approach done in Riyadh reported only 59.8% of its students were satisfied with the quantity and quality of work produced by them in different branches of dentistry that helped them in becoming a self-sufficient clinician at the undergraduate level.^[4]

Adding onto the work production, selection of proper techniques and giving proper care provide a good orientation to their mission as a clinician. This was also sighted in a study by Marchan.^[6]

A major portion of the study population agreed that the work was challenging and will help them in improving their performance and observational skills during their clinical practice.

Table 3 shows that about 41.4% of the interns were highly elated with the usage of facilities such as computer-aided design-computer-aided manufacturing, Radiovisiography, TOUCH ON CLOUD, and dental college record management system using iPad.^[15-19] Furthermore, it has newer methods of learning and opens out vast areas of resources. These revolutionary technologies enhance the dental practice and education.^[18,19] The curriculum also provides opportunities to add credentials to their profile by participating in conferences and seminars. This encourages them to tackle different obstacles that arise while engaged in research work.

A library is an important aspect of every institution, but the usage and the importance of it are lacking in almost all the students. Only 40% of the students realized the benefits of the adequate resources found in the library for various academic- and research-oriented purposes, whereas in a parallel study done by Shetty highlighted its grief of only 35% of its students were satisfied with the library resources.^[1]

Apart from the academic mission and orientation, the institution also provides an equal opportunity for its students to showcase their talents. By providing a platform for these talents to its students, the institution will be able to explore ways to reduce stress among them and increase the efficiency of work produced by them.

CONCLUSION

This study has investigated the internship program of a private dental college in Chennai. Feedback of the interns highlights the success of the curriculum. The enormous work produced by the interns helps to adapt to changing environment and overcome the stress. Patient's satisfaction, time management, and potent assessment become fruitful with efficient communication skills. The strength of the current program was a provision

to critical thinking, problem-solving skills, exhibiting responsibility, providing good working environment, and revolutionary computer technologies.

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