

Choosing Dentistry As a Career at IUST-Syria

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□ ABSTRACT □

The motivations for choosing a career are yet not clearly defined.

Aims: The purpose of this study was to investigate why students at IUST dental faculty had chosen dentistry as their career.

Methods & Materials: A sample of 785 students was conducted. Questionnaires were handed to students comprised of 20 options. 27 % of participants were females. The data were encoded and analyzed using the SPSS software package. Chi-square was used to determine the relationship between the variables.

Results: Both males and females like to work with their hands 13%. Although 12% chose Q5 and Q1 which indicate that they want to be self-employed or one of their relatives or friends are dentists, 5% chose dentistry because their GPA. The results presented are the first reported data for a sample of students in Syria. In total we noticed that 36% of the whole participants chose dentistry for economic status, and 18% because one of their relatives is a dentist or family dentist who encourages them and this proves that dentists in Syria are satisfied with their profession.

Conclusion: It is recommended that the survey is repeated for students in public university and comparing the results obtained with the results reported here. Understanding students reasons may aid concerned authorities to provide them with a full and accurate picture of the profession.

Keywords: Career, Dentistry.

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اختيار طب الأسنان كمهنة في الجامعة الدولية الخاصة للعلوم والتكنولوجيا

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□ ملخص □

خلفية وهدف البحث: إن دراسة سبب اختيار مهنة ما لم تُعرف بشكل واضح، لذلك تهدف هذه الدراسة الى التحري عن سبب اختيار طلاب الجامعة لطب الأسنان كمهنة. المواد والطرق : بلغ عدد المشاركين في البحث 785 طالباً وطالبة، وزعت عليهم بشكلٍ شخصي استبيانات تحوي عشرين احتمالاً. تم تحليل وترميز النتائج باستخدام برنامج الحزم الإحصائية للعلوم الاجتماعية، ثم تطبيق تحليل كاي مربع لتحديد العلاقة بين المتغيرات. النتائج : كل من الذكور والإناث يرغب بالعمل اليدوي بنسبة 13%، و12% اختاروا مهنة طب الأسنان لأن أحد أقرانهم أو أصدقاءهم طبيب أسنان. 5% اختاروا لأن معدلهم يؤهلهم لدخول الكلية . 36% من عدد المشاركين اختاروا المهنة لأسباب اقتصادية، و18% لأن عائلتهم أو أصدقاءهم أو طبيب أسنانهم شجعوهم على اختيار طب الاسنان. وهذا يشير إلى رضا أطباء الأسنان من مهنتهم. الاستنتاج: هذه النتائج هي الاولى لعينة من الطلبة السوريين . ننصح بإجراء هذا المسح في الجامعات الحكومية ومقارنتها بدراستنا. ان فهم اسباب اختيار الطلاب لدراسة طب الأسنان يساعد السلطات المعنية على تأمين صورة واضحة وكاملة لمهنة طب الاسنان.

الكلمات المفتاحية: مهنة، طب الاسنان

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Introduction:

Dentistry is the branch of medical science that deals with the prevention, diagnosis and treatment of the teeth, gums, jaws and other related structures of the mouth. In addition dentist must be able to deal with tense and worried patients, with people of all ages and gender. Also dentist can teach and perform research to improve oral health and develop new materials and treatment techniques.

Today a great importance has been placed on the main responsibility of health care professionals, including dentists, to push up the health of

the general public. These efforts require dentists to be committed to high ethical attitude of public services. In these efforts, knowledge of dental students expectations of their profession as well as their reason to study dentistry is of great importance.

These expectations and reasons make studying dentistry meaningful to dental student himself, his/her family, and society. Previous studies have shown that students have several reasons to study dentistry; also these studies have reported differences in the students' motives related to many background factors. Bernabe et al[1] reported that understanding of students reasons for entering the dental school may facilitate a fruitful interaction between student and teacher. Also the great Chinese thinker Confucius said, Choose a job you love, and you will never have to work a day in your life[2]

A lot of studies have shown that high school students own many reasons to choose dentistry as a career[3,4,5,6,7].

Dentistry ranked second to medicine for 2011 in Syria. A high level of academic and well clinical training performance is necessary for entry into a career as a dentist. There were 14,717 active dentists practicing in Syrian Arab Republic in 2010, with 2080 working as specialist dentists, on average 3708 females representing 25,20% percent of whole number[8]. In average dentists works in Syria in private practice more than nine hours a day.

In Syria, those wishing to enter dental school must achieve minimum scores according to the ministry of higher education announcement. This score is different between the public and private universities. This procedure has an extreme effect on the selection of future dental professionals. The dramatically increasing in the number of dentists from 1970 till now coincided with the opening of a number of new public and private dental schools. With this recent increasing of applicants to dental schools, there is a need to explore the factors influencing this situation. Knowing the career choices and aspirations of current early-phase dental students would be useful, as the information gathered from such investigations would be important in developing an academic and marketing strategy aimed at attracting, guiding and selecting students and to successfully follow a career in the profession.

Aim: The aim of this study was to investigate the career choice of early phase dental students in the International University for Science and Technology (IUST), dental faculty, Daraa, Syria.

Methods:

This is a cross-sectional, descriptive study of the opinions of undergraduate dental students at the IUST dental faculty, Daraa, Syria, a private university. A total of 785 students were conducted excluding the non-Syrian nationalities. Questionnaires were handed to students during their regular lectures through the academic year 2009-2010. The survey was delivered amongst students from the first to the last years, (2006 - 2010).

Participation was voluntary and all information collected will remained anonymous and confidential.

The students were asked in the questionnaire about reasons for choosing dentistry as a career. Fig 1 (copy of the questionnaire) The questionnaire comprised 20 questions .

Name..... Sex..... No:.....

Reasons for choosing dentistry as a career :IUST – students

Questionnaire :

1. One of your relatives or a friend is a dentist
2. My GPA encouraged me to choose dentistry as a career
3. I Chose dentistry because of family desire
4. Dentistry pays better than other jobs
5. I want to be self – employed
6. Dentistry has more regular hours than other caring professions
7. I always wanted to be a dentist
8. I can start to practice dentistry independently after graduating
9. I like working with people
10. Dentistry is a science – based profession
11. Dentistry is a prestigious profession
12. I heard about dentistry as a career in high school
13. Dentists usually do not deal with life or death cases on a routine basis
14. I worked or studied in a dental – related field and now i want to become a dentist
15. A career in dentistry offers me a stable job
16. I can work in dentistry without holding a specialty
17. I like to treat people to improve their appearance
18. I prefer to work with my hands
19. My family dentist encouraged me to choose the career
20. Other reasons.....

Fig (1)

The data were encoded and analyzed using the SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) software package. Chi-square was used to determine the relationship between the variables.

Results: The overall findings of this questionnaire were reported in table (1). Two hundred-twelve (27 percent) of participants were female, and five hundred-seventy three (73%) were male table 2. The sum of each year were registered in table 3.

Q	Female						Male						Fr
	C ₁	C ₂	C ₃	C ₄	C ₅	Fr	C ₁	C ₂	C ₃	C ₄	C ₅	Fr	
Q ₁	10	2	4	6	5	27	13	16	13	16	16	74	101
Q ₂	3	4	3	10	3	23	6	8	5	3	10	32	55
Q ₃	2	4	6	4	10	26	4	8	0	4	8	24	50
Q ₄	0	2	0	0	4	6	0	3	0	8	10	21	27
Q ₅	0	3	4	0	3	10	13	16	10	15	21	75	85
Q ₆	0	0	1	2	0	3	0	1	4	3	2	10	13

Q_7	0	2	0	4	4	10	4	11	0	6	10	31	41
Q_8	0	1	0	0	0	1	11	2	12	10	12	47	48
Q_9	2	2	5	6	14	29	6	5	5	2	4	22	51
Q_{10}	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	4	6	3	7	20	21
Q_{11}	2	0	8	4	4	18	0	4	4	1	2	11	29
Q_{12}	0	2	0	0	0	2	0	2	2	4	8	16	18
Q_{13}	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	1	1	3	7	7
Q_{14}	0	1	0	2	0	3	2	4	4	9	0	19	22
Q_{15}	0	0	0	0	3	3	0	7	13	15	16	51	54
Q_{16}	0	0	3	4	5	12	9	10	11	2	4	36	48
Q_{17}	15	8	3	8	20	54	0	3	6	2	8	19	73
Q_{18}	0	2	0	0	0	2	20	16	14	11	20	81	83
Q_{19}	0	1	1	2	4	8	5	11	8	5	11	40	48
Q_{20}	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Σ	34	35	38	52	79	238	93	133	118	120	172	636	874

Q : السؤال

C : السنة الدراسية التي ينتمي اليها الطالب

Σ

Fr: Frequency

Re-FR: Relative Frequency

Cu- Re-FR: Cumulative Relative Frequency

Table (3) Female and Male and Class Year

Year	Female	Male
2006	30	84
2007	32	130
2008	35	113
2009	47	105
2010	68	141
Sum	212	573

According to table (4) both male and female like to work with their hands 13%. Although 12% chose Q5 and Q1 which indicate that they want to be self employed or one of their relatives or friends are dentist ,8% chose dentistry as a stable job,

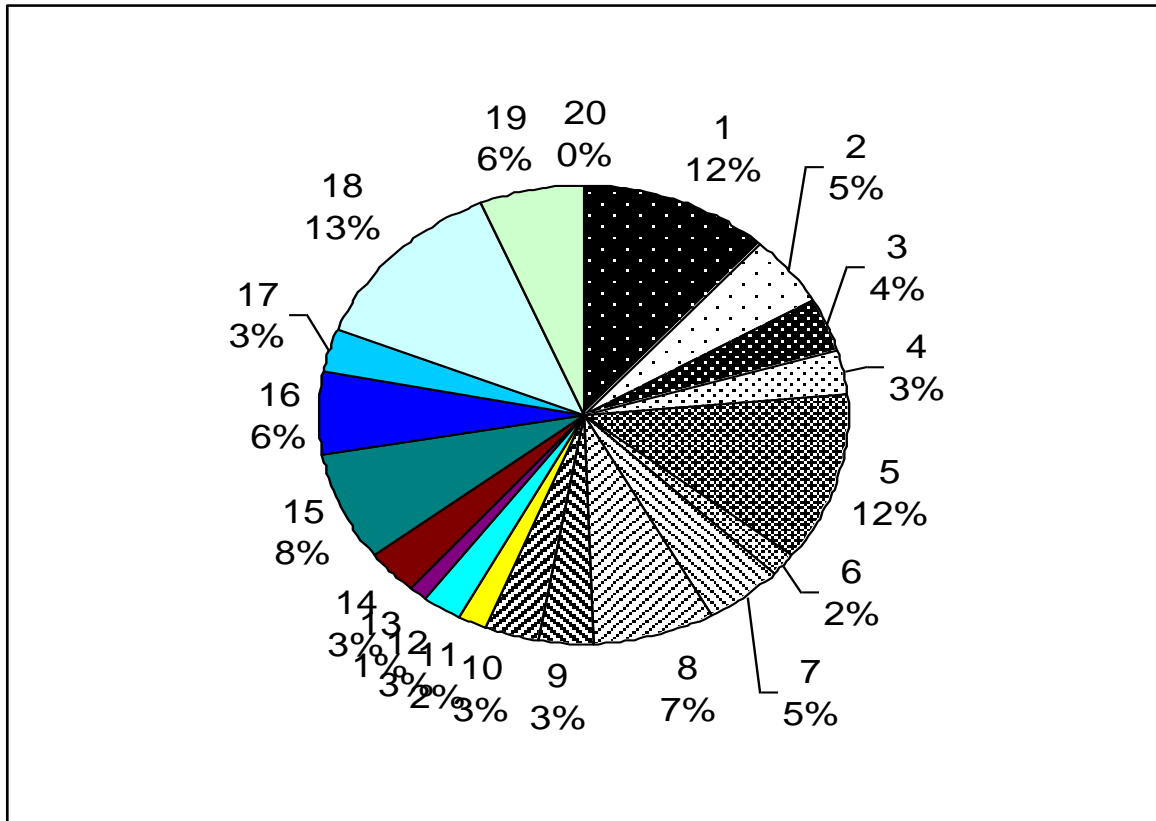


Chart (4): show the percentage of each Q

7% chose to start their practice independently after graduating, 6% chose to work in dentistry without holding a specialty, the same percentage chose dentistry because their family dentist encouraged them to choose the career. 5% chose dentistry because their GPA encouraged them to choose dentistry as a career. 4% chose dentistry as their family desire. Students were given the chance to add any factor that had not been listed in the questionnaire but any of the participants listed any factor.

Discussion:

This study attempted to assess the reasons for choosing dentistry as a career.

Table 5 compares the difference of opinion between males and females for entering in to dental school.

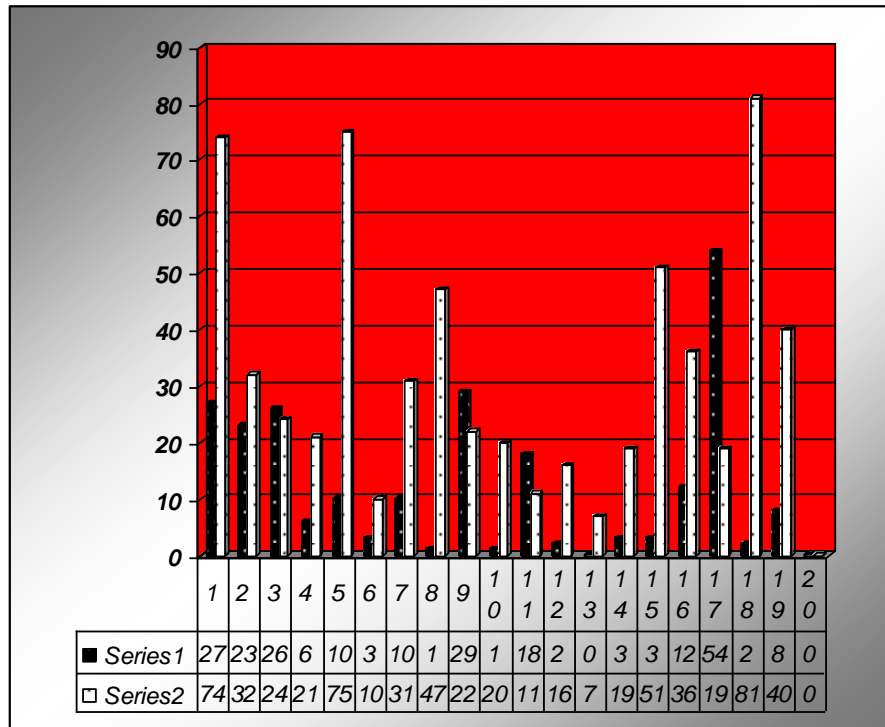


Table5

The 27% percent of the sample that was female is very close to the percentage of females as mentioned in the annual report of the Syrian Dental Association[6] . The relative rating of the items is different for males and females. Maximum number of the students, 101student which mean approximatly12,87% (27F,74M) have chosen dentistry because one of their relatives were dentist and this may be due to the strong family relationship which character our society. In response to question two, my GPA encouraged me to choose dentistry as a career:7,07% (55students) say it is the reason for choosing, this percentage seems to be far away as a reason in public university where high GPA encourage students to choose medical faculties. The choice for family desire was 10,92% for female and 3,77% for male and this reflexes also the character of our families where females response more to their family desires. Questions four, five, eight, fifteen and sixteen revealed an economic status, here the response was 13,07% for female and 37,97% for male, this indicates that the financial status for males appeared to be an important factors in the choice of dentistry as a career ,the same in south Africa[9].In response to question seventeen (I like to treat people to improve their appearance), naturally female 22,69 and male 2,99 we can say because of the smoothness of the female and the roughness of the male .While two female (0,84%) and 81 male (12,73%) chose dentistry because they like to work with their hands and this logically because the differences in the physical form of each. Those who choose question 19 (my family dentist encouraged me to choose the career) 5 female 3, 63% and 40male 6, 29% we think that the encouraging means to support our decision to enter dental faculty nothing more. Significant gender differences were found in career choices. This finding was in agreement with Hallissey et al[3] and Al-Bitar et al[7] in Jordan , but not with Bernabe et al[1] in Peru and Stewart et al[10] in England .We can explain that due to the social manner differences in each country. Brand et al[6] reported in their study at the University of Sydney that the most predominant was to serve others, and to acquire financial security. The least important

motives were status and prestige. Also Patel and Saiyed[9] in India demonstrate that many individuals find themselves in occupations not really knowing why they were propelled in that particular direction. In total we noticed that 36% of the whole participants chose dentistry for economic status, and 18% because one of their relatives is a dentist or family dentist encourage them and this contribute that dentists in Syria are satisfied with their profession. These results harmonize with Karibe et al[11] study which indicate that 74,2% of Canadian and 32,8% of Thailand students chose economic/social reasons, and agree with Crossley and Mubarik [12] who reported that dental students in united kingdom choose their career to financial gain, and professional status, and disagree with the results of Khami et al[5] which reported that dentists in Iran are not satisfied with their profession.

Conclusions:

The results presented are the first reported data for a sample of students in the Syrian Arab Republic on reasons for choosing dentistry as a career. Based on the data collected from this study, we noticed that under graduated students enter this career for many of the same reasons as were identified in the previous questionnaire. Although the students in our study showed interest in financial fields, with family opportunities may have contributed to the appeal of the profession. It is recommended that the survey is repeated for students in public university and comparing the results obtained with the results reported here. Also further study to combine data from several dental faculties across the Syrian Arab Republic. More research should be conducted by extending the study to the whole dental schools in Syria. So all eight dental schools in Syria are invited to participate in this survey.

Understanding students reasons may aid concerned authorities to provide them with a full and accurate picture of the profession.

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