

Family influences the decision of undergraduate students to choose medicine as a career

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Introduction

It has been held that every High School student aims to be a doctor or an engineer. However, there is little evidence to support it. The current study aims to understand why contemporary undergraduate medical students choose medicine as a career.

Methods

This cross-sectional study was conducted in a tertiary-care, teaching hospital in March 2010. Medical students in their second semester were asked to fill an indigenously designed structured questionnaire, looking at their reasons for joining the course, inter-personal relationships, satisfaction with the curriculum and future prospects following graduation, after they consented to participation. The data analysis was done using SPSS 15.0.

Observations

The mean age of participants was 19.21 (± 0.85) years. Of 110 students of second se-

mester, most (41, 35.6%) had been influenced by a family member in choosing their career. Only 12 (12.7%) felt that medicine would give them a chance to serve society. 56 students (50.9%) felt that the expectations they had from the course prior to beginning their studies were not being fulfilled. Further, nearly a quarter of the students 31 (28.2%) would not choose MBBS as a career if given a second chance, while 19 (17%) were certain that they would change their profession and take up an alternate stream. Non-fulfillment of expectations from the course was associated with the belief that they would not opt for this course if given a second option (LR 7.12, p 0.008). Students felt that teaching should lay stress on problem based learning including stress and time management workshops. Conclusions: Most students opt for a medical career due to influence of family members and do not have a defined career plan. It is time that the medical curriculum be suitably modified taking students' expectations into consideration.