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Wyobrażenia o zawodzie stomatologa w opinii studentów II roku stomatologii Uniwersytetu Medycznego w Lublinie na przestrzeni lat 2004-2007

Streszczenie

Wstęp. Zawód stomatologa jest specyficzny ze względu na wymagania dotyczące predyspozycji osobowościowych, sposobu zachowania i wyglądu wzbudzającego powszechną akceptację pacjentów.

Cel pracy. Celem pracy było poznanie motywacji wyboru kierunku studiów i wyobrażeń o zawodzie lekarza stomatologa wśród studentów II roku Oddziału Stomatologicznego.

Materiał i metody. Badaniem objęto 347 osób – studentów oddziału stomatologii UM w Lublinie. Materiał zebrano w latach 2004-2007 drogą anonimowej ankiety. Pierwsza część ankiety miała na celu scharakteryzowanie grupy badanej. Druga część zawierała pytania dotyczące: kryteriów wyboru studiów, motywacji, wyobrażenia o zawodzie lekarza stomatologa i wartościach charakterystycznych dla osób wykonujących ten zawód.

Wyniki. Na podstawie otrzymanych wyników stwierdzono, że dla większości badanych decyzja o podjęciu studiów na kierunku lekarsko-dentystycznym stanowiła samodzielny wybór. Zdecydowana większość studentów (99,03%-100%) wskazała, że lekarz stomatolog powinien być zadbane, czysty, powinien pracować w fartuchu ochronnym oraz mieć zadbane uzębienie.

Wnioski. Studenci stomatologii są w pełni świadomi, że praca stomatologa jest trudna, męcząca oraz wymaga dokładności i opanowania. Grupę ankietowaną cechuje tradycyjne wyobrażenie o wizerunku lekarza stomatologa jako o osobie wykonującej zawód zaufania społecznego.

The image of dentist profession in the opinion of dentistry students of the Medical University of Lublin in 2004-2007

Abstract

Introduction. Dentist profession is specific because of the requirements concerning personal predispositions, ways of behaviour and appearance acceptable by patients.

Aim. The aim of the study was to know the motivation for studying and imaginations about dentist job among the second year dentistry students.

Material and Methods. Three hundred and forty seven dentistry students of the Medical University of Lublin were examined from 2004 till 2007 on the basis of questionnaire survey. The questions concerned the criteria of choosing the job, motivation, imaginations about dentist work, characteristics of dentists and their attributes.

Results. On the basis of the performed study we noted that almost all dentistry students decided on their major of study themselves. The majority of examined students (93.03%-100%) indicated that dentists should be neat, clean, should work in an apron and have nice teeth.

Conclusions. The examined dentistry students realize that dentist profession is difficult, tiring and requiring precision. They see dentist as a traditional profession of the common trust.

Słowa kluczowe: lekarz stomatolog, wybór zawodu, studenci, badanie ankietowe.

Key words: dentist, choice of profession, students, questionnaire surveys.

INTRODUCTION

Dental profession is unique because of the requirements concerning the aptness of personality, behaviour and appearance acceptable by patients. The dentist should have a broad general-medical knowledge associated with interpersonal communication skills and team work. Dentists should be aware of the need for further training throughout their working life, and their personal and professional lives should be guided by fully accepted social values [1,2]. Prestige, high salaries and exciting career - this is the common idea of the dentist profession. But this is only a part of the truth. Getting the profession requires many years of hard work combined with studying. Great self-denial, responsibility, excellent memory and a willingness to work hard, are essential [3]. Preparation to work independently with a patient takes at least 6-5 years of study and 1 year of post-graduate internship. Studying, however, is a necessary condition. It is not easy to get enrolled. There is a high competition at enrolment - about a dozen candidates compete per one place, depending on the institution. Admission is determined by the score obtained by the candidate during the examination of maturity in the subjects referred to by the institution. The vast majority of universities take into account the marks in biology, chemistry or physics. Graduation is just the first step towards self-employment. Lifelong learning is also essential, which requires additional financial resources for education and training [4].

Getting to know the opinion of dentistry students – doctors-to-be is very important in shaping the image of a person performing the profession. The method, which allows to know the views of students, is anonymous, voluntary survey [5,6,7,8,9].

AIM

The aim of the study was to know the motivation for studying, the choice of the studies and imaginations about dentist job among the second year dentistry students.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

In the years 2004-2007 the study comprised 347 people, including 241 women (69.46%) and 106 men (30.54%) – second-year students of the Division of Dentistry, Medical University of Lublin (Table 1). The present paper is the first step of a large-scale survey among students of dentistry on their opinions of dentist job, preparing to the dentist work, personal predispositions and an assessment of the way of teaching of conservative dentistry and endodontics. The material was collected with an anonymous survey questionnaire which was designed for the purpose of the study. The first part of the survey was to characterize the study group (place of origin and province). The second part contained questions concerning the studies selection criteria, motivation, conception of the profession of dentist and values characterising people performing the profession. The results were collated and presented in Tables 2-7.

TABLE 1. Number of respondents versus gender and year of carrying out survey.

Number of respondents	Year				Total	
	2004	2005	2006	2007	(N)	%
	82	83	79	103	347	100
Men	27	25	21	33	106	69.46
Women	55	58	58	70	241	30.54

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Basing on the results of the survey data, it was found that the most numerous group of students are people from large cities (94 people – 27.10%) and small towns (93 – 26.80%) – Table 2. Data analysis showed the increasing number of students from small towns. They constituted in 2007 the vast majority of students. A similar growing trend was observed over the years among students from small towns up to 50 thousand inhabitants. A falling trend was confirmed (204 – 30 students; 2007 – 23 students) among young people coming from large cities. A similar number of students, with the exception for 2005 where this group dominated, 28 persons in a year class were noted among the candidates coming from the cities up to 100 thousand inhabitants.

TABLE 2. Characteristics of the studied group of students according to place of origin.

Place of origin	Year				Total	
	2004	2005	2006	2007	(N)	%
Small town	20	14	21	38	93	(26.80%)
Town up to 50 000 inhabitants	15	16	28	25	84	(24.20%)
Town up to 100 000 inhabitants	17	28	14	17	76	(21.90%)
Large city	30	25	16	23	94	(27.10%)

Based on the analysis of the data contained in Table 3, it was found that over the years 2004-2007 the most numerous group among the students of dentistry was a group coming from the Lublin province. This is clearly a trend consistent with the proximity of the university from home. Very large numbers were represented by the persons coming from the following provinces: Podkarpackie and Świętokrzyskie, respectively 79 and 32 people. Medical University of Lublin was also chosen by a group of people coming from the Mazowieckie and this trend is almost constant. A small number of students among the total number, were people from Małopolskie voivodship (only 9 students over 4 years). In each year some individuals took decision to study at Lublin Medical University, a place remote from their place of residence, as they came from such provinces as: Silesia, Pomerania, Wielkopolska, Opole and Łódź.

For the majority of the respondents the decision to pursue the degree studies in dentistry was an independent choice. One of the important criteria determining the choice of this field of study was the fact that a member of the family was a dentist mostly it was the mother (Table 4). The family, peers or friends' suggestions had a minor importance in taking

the decision. Also information from fellow students had a negligible impact.

TABLE 3. Characteristics of the studied group of students according to voivodeship.

Voivodeship	Year				Total
	2004	2005	2006	2007	
Dolnośląskie	1	-	-	-	1
Lubelskie	44	38	41	53	176
Małopolskie	4	1	1	3	9
Mazowieckie	5	10	6	6	27
Podkarpackie	19	24	16	20	79
Pomorskie	-	-	1	2	3
Śląskie	-	-	1	6	7
Świętokrzyskie	5	8	8	11	32
Łódzkie	-	-	2	1	3
Opolskie	-	-	1	-	1
Wielkopolskie	-	1	-	-	1
Foreign students	2	1	-	-	3

TABLE 4. Choice criteria for studying among the questioned students.

Choice criteria	Year				Total
	2004	2005	2006	2007	
Independent choice	70	70	70	89	299
Friends' suggestions	5	-	1	4	10
Information from fellow dentistry students	1	1	1	1	4
Family influence	10	12	7	9	38
Dentist in family	29	21	19	26	95
There is no dentist in family	53	62	60	77	252

The open question: "Why did you choose Medical University of Lublin?" was frequently answered in the following way: proximity of residence or home town. Also family tradi-

tion or reputation of the university, the city's attractiveness, as well as the information of a good relationship between students and academic teachers, played a significant role.

Another issue, which the survey questions was related to perceptions about dentist's work, the most important character traits, as well as how a dentist should look like in the opinion of interviewed students. The findings confirmed that the work of the dentist in the opinion of the majority of the students is difficult and interesting (Table 5). Approximately 50% of all respondents characterized it as tiring, and this percentage is distributed evenly across the study period. A small number of all respondents considered the work of a dentist to be easy (11 persons) or boring (4 persons).

The analysis of "yes" or "no" answers to the question posed in the survey: "According to you, how should, a dentist look like?" revealed that most respondents do not accept extravagant hairstyles and hair color in a dentist, and other than traditional jewelry like, i.e. piercing. The students do not accept extravagant nail colors or chewing of gum when dealing with the patient as well as receiving phone calls at work. According to respondents' general opinion, a dentist should be neat, clean and should wear an apron while at work and have healthy teeth (Table 6).

TABLE 5. Assessment of dentist's work according to questioned students.

Dentist's work:	Year				Total
	2004	2005	2006	2007	
Easy	4	1	4	2	11
Difficult	64	57	58	76	255
Interesting	66	60	53	83	262
Boring	1	3	1	-	4
Monotonous	10	15	14	13	52
Harmful for health	13	26	26	30	95
Tiring	42	45	37	50	174
Stressful	32	7	36	41	116

TABLE 6. Dentist's appearance according to questioned students.

Appearance	According to you, how should, a dentist look like?							
	Answers: „yes”				Answers: „no”			
	Year							
	2004	2005	2006	2007	2004	2005	2006	2007
Neat	100%	100%	100%	99,03%	-	-	-	0.97%
Clean	100%	100%	100%	100%	-	-	-	-
Can have extravagant hairstyles and hair color	43.90%	48.20%	36.70%	31,07%	56.10%	51.80%	63.30%	68.93%
Can have jewelry different than traditional one	35.37%	30.12%	25.31%	20,39%	64.63%	69.88%	74.69%	79.61%
Woman can have tips in extravagant nail color	12.20%	4.82%	7.59%	2,91%	87.80%	95.18%	92.41%	97.09%
Man can have long hair	56.10%	48.20%	49.37%	42,72%	43.90%	51.80%	50.63%	57.28%
Should wear an apron	100%	98.79%	98.73%	99,03%	-	1.21%	1.27%	0.97%
Should have a nice smile (healthy teeth)	100%	100%	98.73%	99,03%	-	-	1.27%	0.97%
Can chew a gum when dealing with the patient	10.98%	14.46%	10.13%	9,70%	89.02%	85.54%	89.87%	90.30%
Can answer the cell phone and have a talk at work with patient	9.76%	6.02%	7.59%	9,70%	90.24%	93.98%	92.41%	90.30%

Results of the surveys presented in Table 7 revealed that the most important character trait of the dentist, in the opinion of students over the years 2004 - 2007, was the precision and composure. Other important features indicated by the respondents were: kindness (by 2004 and 2007 class) and empathy (by 2005 and 2006 class). The personality traits such as kindness, confidence and forgiveness, received the lowest percentage of opinions.

TABLE 7. The most important character trait/skill of dentist according to questioned students.

Character trait/skill of dentist	Year			
	2004	2005	2006	2007
Precision	98.78%	96.38%	96.20%	97.09%
Serenity	45.12 %	34.94%	40.51%	39.80%
Kindness	23.17%	18.07%	16.45%	24.27%
Composure	57.32%	55.42%	46.83%	59.22%
Forgiveness	23.17%	22.89%	21.52%	16.50%
Confidence	24.39%	22.89%	26.58%	28.15%
Empathy	23.17%	46.99%	45.57%	34.95%

The profession of dentist in the common opinion is difficult and cumbersome [10]. It requires patience, perseverance and humility. Students starting to learn the profession are aware of that. They realize that all their lives they will be required to learn something new, develop new techniques. At the same time despite the stressful profession, they need to improve their interpersonal communication skills, because the dentist cannot afford showing impatience or dissatisfaction [11,12]. Patience, peace of mind and composure are basic in a profession requiring great skill and precision, adequate equipment and medical problem-solving skills [4]. Satisfaction and patient gratification, however, can reward for the difficulties of this work.

The responses to the question "What qualities are necessary to practice this profession?" show that there is no single universal quality or skill, which determines the suitability for the profession of a dentist. It is desirable that the profession is performed by people of a certain sensitivity, with the ability of viewing, analyzing and synthesizing of data and logical thinking [11,12]. It is necessary to have spatial imagination and openness to the world. At a later stage of professional career, individual properties of character and personality of the dentist become important. They make the dentists find their place as members or managers of a dental team, academic teachers or representatives of a dentistry company.

Summing up, it is clear that the traditional perception of dentist by the students with regard to the appearance and behaviour results from the well-established opinion of perception of the dentist work as a social trust profession. This is certainly a profession, which gives the job perspectives and possibility of the work in the future. Regardless of the changing socioeconomic conditions, progress in prevention and treatment of caries, the demand for dental services is still enormous. Increasing social awareness and aesthetic demands are important and also affect professional success.

CONCLUSIONS

1. Dentistry students are fully aware of the fact that dentist's work is difficult, tiring and requires accuracy and composure.
2. The respondents' group is characterised by a traditional perception of a dentist as a person engaged in a profession of social trust.

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