

## REVIEW ARTICLE

# The Expected Values and Degrading Morals: The fall of a Noble Profession- Dentistry

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## ABSTRACT

The practice of autonomous self living is considered to be one of the deadliest poisons that degrade the sociality & morality in a society. This has its own impression on the new generation, via influences, temptations and moulding. In such a society, the self defines and creates its own reality. Here reality is social status and measures of satisfying ones ego; not quality patient services. As a curse to this noble profession, today's medicine is degrading and getting rotted due to two major factors, viz. candidates are forced /compelled to join the course, society thinks doing this profession makes them socially superior than fellow human beings. Second are the budding teaching hospitals everywhere in the country and a loop hole in the screening criteria of standards of candidate selection and finally shortage of good and committed teaching staff. Pathetically, what is forgotten is the art of quality patient care, diagnosis, teaching, training and finally- lose of philanthropism. It's high time to reconstruct the framework of this profession and to reconsider Hippocrates oath to think, whether we doing the right! A extensive search was made for the relevant articles supporting the concept of topic amongst health professionals in various data basis archives and is presented in the review.

**Keywords:** Dentistry, Dental Education system, Toxic personalities, Curent generation students, Future dentistry

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**How to cite this article:** The Expected Values and Degrading Morals: The fall of a Noble Profession- Dentistry. Prem Anand P., Neetu Oommen, Sunil S., Deepa.M.S. Int J Cont Med Res. 2015;2(1):47-52

**Source of Support:** Nil

**Conflict of Interest:** None

## INTRODUCTION

Childhood is characterized by an open mind which is flexible and sharp with an open intellect; If properly channeled at this stage, parents or teachers can chisel out the best out from their children; thereby framing a better behavioral quality in all aspects of life. For this to come true, we should educate our children about all aspects of life, with stress insisted on the need for leading a morally uplifted life. Our educational system should support this for all those who sincerely seek it.<sup>1</sup>

If we go back into the history, we can see parents of seventies and eighties were more interested in making their children more mature and brilliant respectively (David Elkind).<sup>2</sup> But today's parents blindly follow both the trends and are becoming the victims of commercial overselling and unreliability of modern educational practices. If you want to become a health practitioner, the source of motivation should be generated from your own deep self, based on the professional core values;<sup>3</sup> not accounted by financial or any other profit seeking criteria's for satisfying the craving for higher ranks or dignity in a society.

## ROLE OF MODERN PARENTS AND CURRENT MORALLY DEGRADED SOCIETY IN CAREER PREFERENCE

Parents/guardians and the current degrading morals in society play a pivotal role in victimizing the new generation a scape goat, at

the door step of decision making, in choosing the career choice of their own.<sup>4</sup> Parents with high educational and career expectations, because of social insecurity or as a part of competition, in this sophisticated and dynamic society, demand their children to choose a course, which promises a sound financial gain in their future career.<sup>5</sup> The fact everyone forgot, when forcing a subject into something that he/she never fits in or has not been interested in, is you are destroying the natural talents of an individual, which helps him/her to choose or take their own right career decision. You are merely confirming his/her failure, which might also be followed by a feeling of low self esteem, unsatisfaction and depression in the later years of life ; to the extreme an attempt to run away from life itself.

### **THE CHOICE OF DENTAL SURGERY**

Since there are a lot of budding colleges in our country, the selection criteria too is getting diluted so that candidates with lesser than the minimum expected standards too is getting permitted to sit in academics, thereby compromising the candidature; added up with covenant facilities in these institutions; standards will naturally get copout. As per the President, Indian Dental Association, Kerala state,<sup>6</sup> the present day dentistry is going through a transition<sup>7</sup> with 11,000 registered practitioners with nearly an output of 1,600 freshers pass out from 24 dental institutes within the state every year, in addition to the dental graduates passing out from neighboring states. Candidates with real quest for the profession are not getting admitted, since there is a shortage in the availability of merit seats. Those least interested and below the borderline standards easily gets into the course because of boon of commercialization in health educational institutions. So naturally we can think about the outcome in the upcoming years. A drop in the standards of professional ethics is an alarming trend, which we should strive against and the government should take necessary steps to hold back the flourishing and prospering of the new dental institutes. Still there are efforts going on to start new teaching schools, even after the recommendation of a 5 year plan by The Indian Dental Council, 2010 on opening of new colleges

in the state.<sup>6</sup>

Today due to the tough training in interpersonal skill development, enabling clinical efficiency as well as integration of knowledge that is usable in practical work desk, dentistry is considered as a profession with utmost stress.<sup>8,9</sup> The reasons for building up anxiety and imbalance in this health care practice includes a broad spectrum ranging from patient scheduling to management, accountancy works integrated with business, limitation of time, equipment problems and the précising nature of the work.<sup>10,11</sup> For the trainees, provoking stress factors arise from financial break ups, personal relationships, examinations, practice, or management.<sup>12, 13</sup>

From the past few years, it has been noticed by experienced and dedicated dental school faculty that the caliber of students is going down and they are not in the expected levels of basic standards, both morally and academically. Instead they are incorporated with immense egoism and social superiority, thereby associated attitude, often showed to the teaching faculty by the current generation students, when they are criticized for doing what not to do.

On verbal enquiry, students from various colleges in Kerala admitted because of compulsion from parents, joined dental school. There is another group, who thinks pursuing a medical degree will raise social standards in their community. Pathetically there is another group, not even able to tolerate the normal academic stress. Unfortunately most of these category children belong to the additional/supplementary group in each college. Factors such as talking to relatives or friends in the dental profession, advice from teachers and parents may affect the career choice of dental students in most developed countries.<sup>14,15</sup> That should be taken into account before arriving at the final judgment of joining a course.

### **THE STANDARD OF DENTAL EDUCATION**

According to the data collected by us from young fresh graduates of one of the dental schools, we noticed that the current students, not all, but to a great extent always are bothered about the amenities and ambience of health care campus

schools, not in a state of mind, to learn and keep updating. Present day life, the priority has changed a lot amongst students. It is pathetic to note that we often find it difficult to meet parents of current generation students, who blindly supports and nourish their children, for what ever they do, even if they perform very low in academics. As student progress through current commercialized education systems, their attitude scores too declines.<sup>16</sup>

There is a shortage in dedicated teaching faculty, who are available full time in the campus for helping out the trainees; since many of them are engaged in their own private consultations.<sup>17</sup> In addition there are institutes that promotes completion of internships in an another institute far away from the parent teaching hospital to compromise the pressure of training students in complete residential rotatory internships. The other institutes, where the trainee joins during residential ship may be inadequate in providing proper training in patient services. Often, students in private colleges lack the necessary clinical exposure, and hence are not properly trained<sup>18</sup>. An area of traffic in this career is shortage in the availability of post graduate seats (around 3,000), when compared to the undergraduate seats (of around 25,000).<sup>19</sup>

## THE TOXIC PERSONALITIES IN HEALTH CARE

Attitude of a person goes hand in hand with behaviour.<sup>16</sup> Unethical practices<sup>20,21,22,23</sup> are very common today in all sectors of life. This is seen in health care too, manifested in the form of loss of basic discipline, empathetic and sympathetic approaches, affection and care. The victims of these issues often come across conflicts between moral imperatives in their workplace.<sup>19</sup> The essentiality of behaving or exhibiting professional qualities, whether being a practitioner or an academican in health care profession, has a direct impact on the quality of care delivered to the patients and obviously, it in many ways influence the moral built of each youngster coming into this profession.

Literature review suggests presence of toxic faculties in nursing profession.<sup>26</sup> Wherever there is promotion of unethical practice, there all we

can see these sorts of personalities. Flynn, 1999 defined a toxic personal as, "*The person who bullies, threatens, yells. The person whose mood swings determines the climate of the office on any given workday. Who forces employees to whisper in sympathy in cubicles and hallways. Poor interpersonal skills, unfortunate office practices: but some people, by sheer, shameful force of their personalities, make working for them rotten*". They can harm or damage hiding behind<sup>26</sup> and usually take much more interest in taking credits for others accomplishments, try to find reasons to blame colleagues or trainees in departments, shares information with inner circle of loyal followers, repulsive to new innovations and ideas, never concern about the goodness of others.

Here the patients and students, sometimes even colleagues suffer. Totally irradiating confidence of patients and by putting a big blame over them will give some sort of ego satisfaction in these individuals. Whether you are a medical professional or any other qualified officer, we all should bear one thing in mind that we all are basically human beings. We know an incident where 'the practitioner initially denies consultation of a subject, by arguing with the bystander in the reception, for being the case diagnosed (by junior physician) as non critical, curable with antibiotics, not like what this toxic person has suspected and later by cursing the subject that it is some other life threatening condition, after going through the subject, without attending the chief complaint for which the subject reported to this OP.' Moral courage<sup>24</sup> is needed to face such an uncomfortable situations or unethical behaviors from such instances. The same type of experience some times students or junior faculty faces. Victims always feel that there is no safety and satisfaction in work place, no decision making and no problem solving, no critical thinking and finally there will be a total turmoil with complicating innovations. Thus these toxic personalities can truly hit an organizations social performance. These personalities who were more likely to have a lower quality life,<sup>27,28</sup> are identified as being harmful characters always tend to cause harm; drastically reduces the efficiency of work morale thereby changing the outlook of trainees or co-professionals, hampering creativity, and creating

unnecessary job stress. It is strongly suggested that these types of practices be terminated and practitioners should be eliminated from such departments to avoid loss of reputation of the institutions and to avoid negative role models for students. Toxic personalities are not born; instead they are created by our society. Either these characters will be a product trained under totally different orientation or will be a victim of carrier disaster from compulsive parents.

Literature shows that amongst the dental graduates there has been a retardation in positive growth as when they slowly progress from days of early academics, with regard to their emotional and physical exhaustion.<sup>29</sup> The reason they point out is shortage of sources to qualify the huge barrier of quotas to finish and unnecessary intervention of faculty in personal issues of students or trainees. Under this scenario, we must remember that as a faculty of teaching, we should stick on to principles that elevate the academic caliber of the students not the stress; and we should focus only on uplifting moral aspects of a student, not on their personal/interpersonal issues. There are so many issues today's health graduates are facing, when it comes to higher education. In many cases, we felt patients are good teachers<sup>3</sup> rather than following the current generation preceptors, since in the clinical side students learn a lot from patients by communicating or sharing with them their experiences. Defining guidance in academics or clinics is not the exhibition or display of authority, dominance or power, instead it points out loss of professional integrity. These are instances where students think of discontinuing their courses all on the sudden in the middle or reports of suicidal death in campuses points out the same. Necessity for staff training<sup>30</sup> is mandatory in dental academics to balance stress, psychological well being and academic performance amongst students.

Prosocial behavior intended to benefit another<sup>31</sup> such as caring for, helping, comforting, or protecting others is very essential, when it comes to higher grounds of health science education. The attitudes of students will be critical in reducing the incidence of torture, since many of them turn out to be practitioners, some into academicians. Good teachers with real caliber and parents with high values of moral principles can

only play a good role in framing good doctors. The ideal health professional according to the Mayo clinic proceedings journal are: confidence, empathy, humane, personal, forthright, respectful, and thorough; ('the seven unique expected behaviors of a physician')<sup>32</sup> to create a pleasing healthy relationship with patients are recommended for those who really want to improve the profession. Before choosing a clinic/hospital for consultation or before joining an institution for higher education, we should be careful enough to screen out the disrespectful, cold, uncaring and callous personalities in this noble profession of art of cure and the teaching respectively.

### **ALTERNATIVE CAREER PATHWAYS ADOPTED BY DENTAL GRADUATES**

Countries like USA, UK, and Australia are popular destinations for dental graduates, who opt a path other than doing M.D.S in India. A large number of dentists are now migrating to places like Russia, Romania, and Germany for higher education. Most of these countries require clearing a licensing exam and few years of further study. In the initial stages, there is a need to get support. Courses like Public Health; Healthcare Management, Clinical Research and Administrative services<sup>33</sup> are becoming popular with dental graduates. If done from good institutes, better opportunities<sup>33</sup> await them in the corporate health care and pharmaceutical companies. Some dental graduates consider working at Knowledge Process Outsourcing units, while others move to Insurance sector.<sup>33</sup>

### **CONCLUSION**

Day to day the number of dental graduates are shooting up. It is high time to think about novel ideas in dentistry like student exchange programmes, DNB's and fellowships, to raise the competence and proficiency of professionals with global standards. The associations of various specialties should think about raising opportunities for securing the future of budding graduates and for securing the future of this noble profession. And it is finally concluded that the raise or fall of a particular profession depends so-

-lely on its people, not on anything else.

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