



*Original Research Article*

## **How Dentists Account for Social Responsibility: A Questionnaire Survey among the Dental Graduates of Patna City**

Vikas Vaibhav<sup>1</sup>, Rachna Raj<sup>2\*</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Department of Prosthodontics, BR Ambedkar Dental College and Hospital, Patna

<sup>2</sup>Department of Public Health Dentistry, JSS Dental College and Hospital, Mysore

\*Correspondence Email: rachna.raj09@gmail.com

*Received: 07/06/2012*

*Revised: 12/06/2012*

*Accepted: 14/06/2012*

### **ABSTRACT**

**Introduction:** Dentistry is a primarily business now. This situation has led to insight into conflicting views on who is socially responsible? Whether the individual dentist, the dental profession, or society as a whole for ensuring equitable access to dental care. **Aim and Objective:** To analyze how dentists account for social responsibility. **Material and Methods:** A cross-sectional study was conducted where 100 dental graduates were approached, of which only 59 (27 female, 32 male) agreed to participate in the study. A modified questionnaire with eight questions was finalized on the line of Dharamsi (2007) suitable to the existing situation. **Results:** 48 subjects said finance as a barrier. 100% of the subjects agree with teaching of social responsibility as a curriculum in Public Health Dentistry. 57 subjects said that government should take the responsibility of oral health care among underprivileged population. 70% of the subjects said that they attend the dental conference when held at their place. Maximum participants agree that finance is the biggest constraint; it is also even in developed countries and found in other studies. **Conclusion and Suggestions:** The dentists of today are trying to become socially responsible and it can be done better by inducing a social responsibility chapter in undergraduate curriculum.

**Key Words:** Social Responsibility, society underprivileged and underserved

### **INTRODUCTION**

India is a vast country, with a population which are different socially, culturally, and environmentally, as well as in religion, caste, creed and with different community needs in both the urban and rural

areas. To involve the community and mobilize its resources, it is essential to understand the psychosocial, cultural, and environmental factors of the community before developing strategies. The role and responsibilities of each of the members of the dental faculty for improving the health

of the community through treatment, education, strategies, and services, and foster access to quality oral healthcare, sound public health, and primary preventive measures for all people including the poor, underprivileged and underserved. [1]

The dentist of today are of the opinion that dentistry is a primarily a business and they are practising at a market place providing services to only who can afford dental treatment. Even the dentist's practising in the developed countries seem to have the same attitude and practices. Insight into conflicting views on who is socially responsible? Whether the individual dentist, the dental profession, or society as a whole for ensuring equitable access to dental care. [2]

Fifteen years ago Entwistle asked, "Are we creating socially responsible dental professionals"? and raised a series of related questions that are equally relevant today around issues affecting barriers to care, such as poverty, cultural sensitivity, and the practice of dentistry in a market society. [3]

The concept of social responsibility has been considered in education and moral development, civic engagement, community service, sustainable development, and within the corporate sector and business ethics. However, reference to social responsibility in dentistry has been made usually without a clear explanation of the concept or its application by dentists. We know that the few dentists who attend to the needs of frail elders in residential care struggle to balance financial cost with accessibility of care, but we know little about how most other dentists think about and struggle with their social responsibilities. [4]

In India, the literature regarding social responsibilities among dentists is scarce. Hence, the present study is

undertaken, how dentist account for social responsibility.

## **MATERIAL AND METHODS**

A cross sectional study was conducted with an objective to analyze how dentists account for social responsibility. All dental graduates who have just passed out from the dental colleges were approached and who gave the consent was included in the study.

The study followed convenience sampling methods, 100 dental graduates were approached, of which only 59(27 female, 32 male) agreed to participate in the study with the confirmation that identity will not be disclosed. Informed consent was obtained from all respondents. They were informed that participation was voluntary and confidential. It was emphasized that study is only for scientific purpose.

A questionnaire having eight items was developed in English and was pre-tested. The cronbachs  $\alpha$  was 0.82 .The questionnaire was administrated under investigator.

## **RESULT**

Table 1 shows distribution of study subjects and their responses to the questionnaire.48 subjects said finance as a barrier.100% of the subjects agree with teaching of social responsibility as a curriculum in Public Health Dentistry.57 subjects said that government should take the responsibility of oral health care among underprivileged population.70% of the subjects said that they attend the dental conference when held at their place. Maximum of the subjects (53) had the habit of increasing the knowledge by reading literature.

**Table 1: Distribution of study subjects response to questionnaire**

<b>Questionnaire</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>
1. Do you see finance as major barrier in accessing dental health care?	48	11
2. Are you in habit of reading dental literature to keep yourself update?	53	06
3. Do you attend dental conferences?	33	26
4. I attend if held at my place only?	40	19
5. Do you think social responsibility should be taught as a part of dental public dentistry?	59	00
6. Was public health dentistry taught to you separately?	27	32
7. Who should provide oral health care to under privileged A. Government B. Private dental institutions(Yes/No)	57 31	02 28
8. Dental graduates should provide services to the only emergency needy filling and dentures to needy elderly patients.	28	31

## DISCUSSION

Maximum participants agree that finance is the biggest constraint; it is also even in developed countries and found in other studies. Most of the dental graduates read dental literature to keep their knowledge update. One of the reasons may be that as they have just passed out, they are not much busy with patient.

Almost all the participants attend the dental conference, but many of them attend it when it is held at their place. One of the reasons could be that, it is convenient to them and secondly they can rush to their clinic if in need. All the participants unanimously agreed that social responsibilities should be taught to undergraduates of BDS as part of public health dentistry.

Most of the participants said that government should provide oral health care

to under privileged and less than half of the participant accepts that private institute should also participate in serving under privileged.

Many are not agree with the statement that dental graduates should provide services to the only emergency needy filling and dentures to needy elderly patients, which very positive indicator is showing their concern towards them.

## CONCLUSION

The dentists of today are of the view that dentistry is primarily a business and they are practicing at a market place providing services to only who can afford dental treatment. Even the dentists practicing in the developed countries seem to have the same attitude and practices. Insight into conflicting views who is socially responsible? Wether an individual dentist,

the dental profession or society as a whole for ensuring equitable accesses to dental care. Further studies are required to know the influence of social responsibilities on various aspects of dentistry.

## REFERENCES

1. Parkash H., Kohli A. Kumar A. Nagpal A. Social Responsibilities and Professional Ethics for the Deans of Dental Institutions in India. J. Dentistry India 2008; May/Jun Vol. 2, Iss. 3
2. Bhaskar D.J., Manjunath TR., Aswini YB. Dentist and social responsibility: A questionnaire survey among the dental graduates of Nellore city. J Indian Dental Association 2011;5(1):87-89
3. Entwistle BA. Are we creating socially responsible dental professionals? J Dent Educ 1992; 56(2):109–11.[Medline]
4. Dharamsi S., Macentee, How dentists account for social responsibility: economic imperatives and professional obligations J Dent Educ. 2007;71(12): 1583-1592

\*\*\*\*\*