

CHOICE OF PROFESSION AMONG FEMALE MEDICAL STUDENTS AT KHYBER PAKHTUNKHWA, PAKISTAN.

S.Abrar¹, Javaid Akhtar Chawla¹, Tauseef Aman², Akbar Khan², Wagma Sardar³, Mahwish Khan³, Shaha³, Munaza³, Ayesha Zaheer³, Faiza Atiq³, Ayesha Nabila³

ABSTRACT

Background: It had been a general concept that women cannot become doctors but at the end of 19th century they were accepted to enter the profession and became more interested in the profession and in some cases even outnumbered males. It was the time when female medical colleges were established in different countries. In Pakistan, the first female medical college was established in 1948 in Punjab, while in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, the first female medical college was established in 2000. This study was conducted with the objective to know whether there exists any association between the choice of profession among female medical students and specific sector (public or private) of medical college.

Methodology: This cross sectional study was conducted over a period of six months (Dec 2013-May 2014) on a sample of 209 female medical students of the two female medical colleges of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Students of third and fourth year were included. A structured self administered questionnaire was used. Chi sq test was applied on selective variables. Data entry and analysis was done through SPSS-20.

Results: Out of 209 students, 128(61%) were from private sector medical college and 81(38.8%) were from public sector medical college. Association between the choice of profession and sector of medical college was statistically not significant ($p > .05$). 90.4% of students responded that they will continue medical as a career after doing MBBS.

Conclusion: Female medical students from the selected medical colleges join public sector or private sector medical colleges irrespective of the fact whether the choice is their own or of their parents.

Key words: Choice of profession, Medical student, Medical College.

INTRODUCTION

The first ever female medical school in the world is Women Medical College Pennsylvania (WMCP), founded in 1850^{1,2}. London School of Medicine for Women founded in 1874 is the first of its kind in the Britain³. In Pakistan medical school is called medical college. Fatima Jinnah Medical College Lahore, founded in 1948 is the first medical college meant exclusively for female⁴ and Peoples Medical College, Nawabshah, Sindh founded in 1974 happens to be the second one for females only⁵. The Provinces of Baluchistan and Gilgit Baltistan don't have any medical college for females only. The province of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa has Women Medical College; a private sector medical college, as its first female medical college, founded in 2000⁶ and a public sector medical college; the Khyber Girls Medical College founded in 2003 as the second female medical college⁷.

¹ Department of Community Medicine, Women Medical College Abbotabad

² Department of Community Medicine, Khyber Girls Medical College Peshawar

³ Students, Women Medical College Abbotabad

For Correspondence:

Dr S.Abrar

Asstt Prof, Community Medicine, Women Medical College Abbotabad.

Email: abrardr@yahoo.com

Cell#: 0321-9103569

It had been a general concept that women can not become doctors but at the end of 19th century they were accepted to enter the profession and became more interested in the profession^{8,9} and in some cases even outnumbered males¹⁰. A lot of published literature is available about studies on medical students. Majority of these studies don't focus on female students from medical colleges meant for females only but focus on both genders as a whole from different medical schools/colleges^{11,12,13} and main themes of research include career choices^{14,15,16} background factors in childhood¹⁷ and choice of specialties during^{18,19,20} and after graduation^{21,22,23,24}. If there is a study on female medical students, they again are from medical schools/colleges meant for both sexes^{25,26}. This study was conducted on female medical students enrolled in female medical colleges of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) with the objective to know whether there exists any association between the choice of profession among female medical students and specific sector of medical college.

METHODOLOGY

This Cross Sectional study was conducted from December 2013 to May 2014. MBBS students from Women Medical College Abbottabad and Khyber Girls Medical College Peshawar were selected as study population. Students of third and fourth year MBBS were included. Those who were not willing to participate or were repeaters in their respective class were excluded. A list of all students fulfilling inclusion criteria was ob-

tained from the student affair sections of both medical colleges and a stratified random sample was obtained from both the colleges. A self administered questionnaire including close ended questions was designed for data collection and distributed among randomly selected sample from the defined study population. Data collection was done at the end of a lecture, making sure that a study participant fills only one questionnaire. Those fulfilling the criteria of study participants, absent on the day of data collection were given the opportunity when they were on campus. Response rate was 100%. A net sample size of 209 individuals was obtained. Data entry and analysis was done using SPSS-20 and MS EXCELL-2007.

Frequency and percentages were calculated, and Chi sq test of independence was applied for selected variables. Ethical approval was granted by the Ethical Committee of Women Medical College Abbottabad.

RESULTS

Out of 209 students, 128(61%) were from private

sector medical college and 81(38.8%) were from public sector medical college. Association between the choice of profession and type of medical college was statistically not significant at $\alpha = .05$ ($p > .05$).

DISCUSSION

In this study, students free will or parents wish to join a public or private medical college were found independent of each other. In a study conducted in São Paulo, Brazil, on 163 first year medical students; both male and female, 63.33% had medical doctors in their families and majority of the students had completed fundamental and high school in private institutions⁹, while in this study 24.9% of all female students had medical doctors in their families and a majority(45%) had completed fundamental and high school in private institutions. Another study conducted on 200 medical students of Khyber Medical College Peshawar, Pakistan a total of 66% students had chosen the profession on their own free will and 29% chose it because their parents wanted them to become doctors²⁷ while in this

Table : 01. Percentage of different Attributes

Attribute	Public Sector (n=81)	Private Sector (n=128)	Total (n=209)
Continue Medical as a career	%age	%age	%age
Yes	95	87.5	90.4
No	0	1.6	1.0
Don't Know	5	10.9	8.6
Applied to Private Med College			
Yes	1.2	Not Applicable	Not Required
No	98.8	Not Applicable	
Applied and selected	100	Not Applicable	
Applied to Govt Med College			
Yes	Not Applicable	79	Not Required
No	Not Applicable	21	
Applied and selected	Not Applicable	4	
Choice of Profession			
Free own will	71.6	61	65
Parents wish	28.4	39	35
Marital status			
Single	93	79	84.2
Engaged	7	16	12.9
Married	0	5	2.9
Doctors in first degree relatives			
(Father, mother, brothers, Sisters)	23.4	25.8	24.9

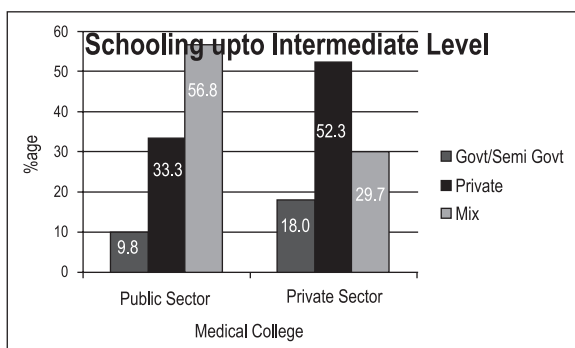


Figure: 01

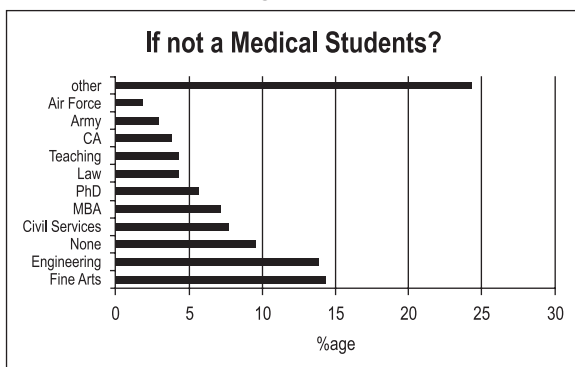


Figure: 02

study, 65% students chose the profession on their own choice and 35% attributed it to their parents' wish. Majority of the students from public sector medical college had their pre medical schooling in a mix way; some classes attended at government and semi government and others at private institutes, while lowest percentage was of those who attended all their classes at government or semi government institutes. Majority of students at private medical college had their schooling at private institutes and like the public sector medical students, lowest percentage was of those who attended all their classes at government or semi government institutes. Out of total, majority mentioned fashion designing as their alternative field; if they had not got admitted to a medical college. Proportions as low as 0.4% mentioned fields like religious education, social work, pharmacy, pharmacology, biotechnology and forty other fields.

This study has some limitations. Study sample is neither representative of all female medical students at Khyber Pakhtunkhwa nor of the two selected medical colleges, as only third and fourth year students were included. Students of private medical college who said they were selected at a public sector medical college were not asked why they had not joined that medical college.

CONCLUSION

This study showed that students join public sector or private sector medical colleges irrespective of the fact whether the choice is their own or of their parents. A limited number of students at these medical colleges

had their primary, middle, secondary and higher secondary education from government or semi government institutes.

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