

Demographic and Professional Features of Nepalese Dentists

Dr. Sujita Shrestha,¹ Dr. Rabindra Man Shrestha,² Dr. Shyam Kaji Maharjan³

¹Department of Public Health Dentistry, Kantipur Dental College, Kathmandu, Nepal

²Department of Orthodontics, Kantipur Dental College, Kathmandu, Nepal

³Department of Prosthodontics, People's Dental College, Kathmandu, Nepal

Correspondence:

Dr. Rabindra Man Shrestha. Email: rabindraortho@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

Introduction: Oral health has been considered as an individual responsibility. The role of social determinants and institutional responsibility in oral health has not received due attention.

Objective: The study aims to assess the demographic and professional features as well as whereabouts of the Nepalese Dental Surgeons.

Materials and Method: All life members of Nepal Dental Association till August 2008 were included in the study.

Result: The study showed that 58% of Nepalese dentists were female. Approximately 45% of dental surgeons were 26-30 years of age and majority (54%) had graduated from India.

Conclusion: The production of dentists is in expanding trend but the service distribution is imbalanced as more than two-third dentists are providing service in the capital region only.

Keywords: Dentist; graduation; Nepal; service.

INTRODUCTION

A dentist or dental surgeon is a human resource for health in the field of dentistry. It takes 5 to 5½ years of studies to graduate the degree of Bachelor of Dental Surgery (BDS). A dentist is eligible for diagnosis, prevention, and treatment of diseases and conditions of the oral cavity. In 1994, World Health Organization had given importance to dental health by selecting the theme "Oral Health for Healthy life" for global health for the year.¹ Oral disease possesses a major public health problem owing to its high prevalence and significant social impact.

The prevalence of dental caries in Nepal is very high.² Changes in socio-economic conditions have resulted in a shift of food habits leading to rise in dental diseases. Oral health is considered fundamental to general health and well-being. It is well-documented that there is an association of oral health with various systemic conditions and impact on quality of life.³

The changing pattern of oral disease and socio-demographic factors imply that recruitments of oral health manpower and development of health-related

infrastructures are necessary in the country. In current years, the number of dentists and dental schools are increasing in Nepal.^{4,5} The development of human resources for oral health is a part of Nepal National Oral Health Policy and National Strategic Plan for Oral Health 2004.^{6,7} In developing countries, the challenge is to stimulate training programs for oral health personnel which would match the oral health needs and socio-economic situation of the country. Although the production of health workers has expanded in recent years but the problems of imbalances in their distribution persist.¹⁻³

This study aims to assess the gender, age group, graduation year and country, qualification and whereabouts of the Nepalese dentists registered as Life members of Nepal Dental Association (NDA).

MATERIALS AND METHOD

All the life members of NDA till August 2008 were included in the study. The study comprised of 450 dental surgeons, out of them one member was deceased; whose data was not included in the study. Thus, the study population was 449 dentists of Nepalese nationality.

The cross-sectional descriptive study was conducted during September – November 2008 with the permission of Nepal Dental Association. Manual assessment of NDA Life Membership forms was done by the authors. Demographic and professional details were recorded in data collection sheet. Available literatures regarding dental health manpower of Nepal including dental directory,⁸ list of the doctors Registered in Nepal Medical Council⁹ were reviewed. The data were analysed in Microsoft Excel format for demographic and professional variables. The demographic variables included gender and age group, and professional variables included country and year of graduation, qualifications with postgraduate degree (if any), distribution of postgraduate specialists, workingservice sectors and whereabouts. The data obtained were presented in graphical form.

RESULT

Following figures are presented to depict demographic and professional features of Nepalese dentists as per the records of Nepal Dental Association till August 2008.

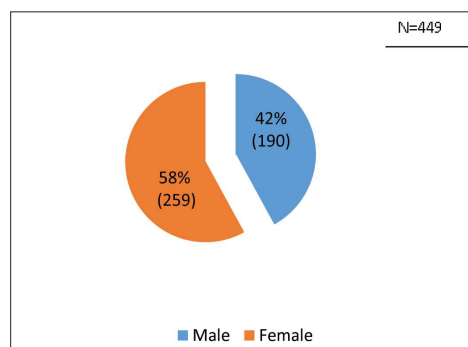


Figure 1: Distribution of Nepalese dentists according to gender (N=449).

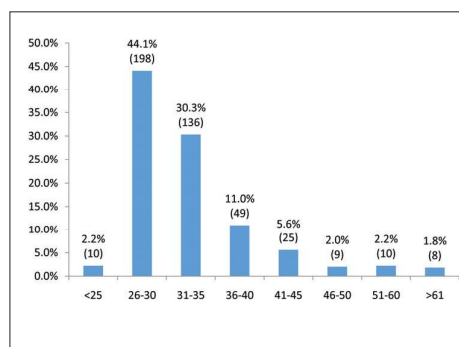


Figure 2: Distribution of Nepalese dentists according to age group (in years).

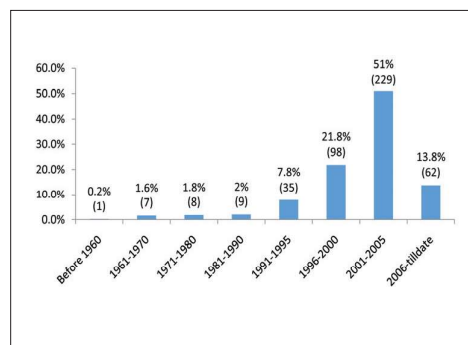


Figure 3: Distribution of Nepalese dentists according to year of graduation.

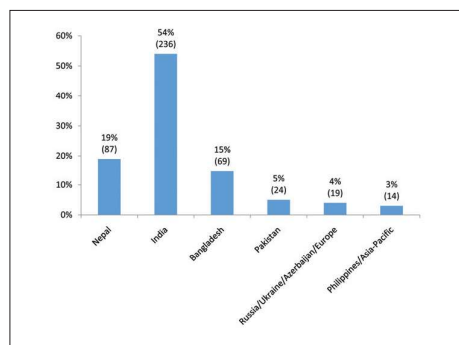


Figure 4: Distribution of Nepalese dentists according to country of graduation.

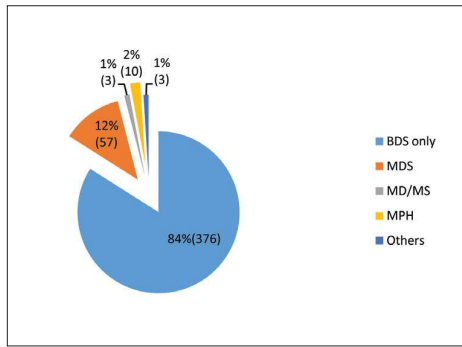


Figure 5: Professional qualifications of Nepalese dentists (N=449).

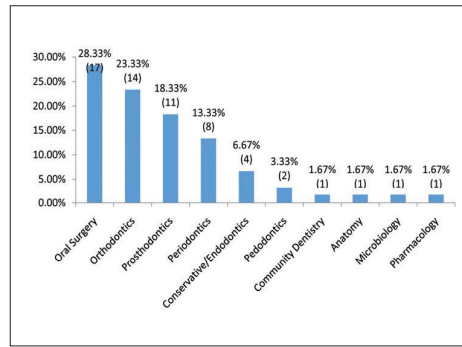


Figure 6: Distribution of Nepalese dental specialists according subject of specialization (N=60).

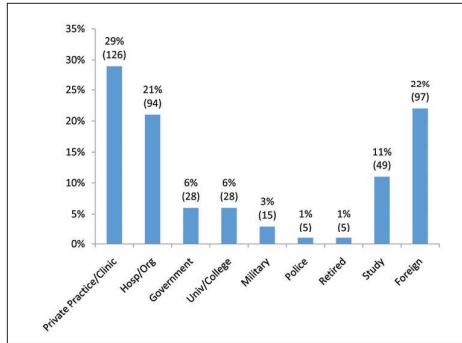


Figure 7: Distribution of Nepalese dentists according to their service (N=449).

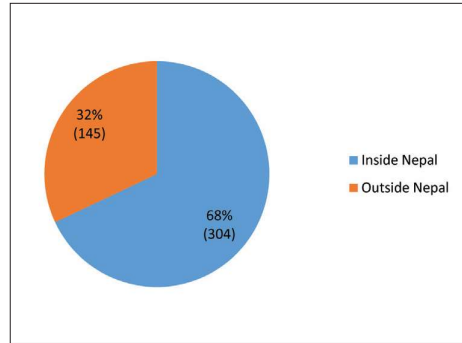


Figure 8: Location of Nepalese dentists inside and outside Nepal (N=449).

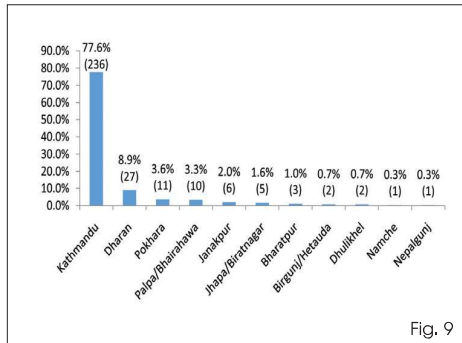


Figure 9: Location of Nepalese dentists inside Nepal (N=304).

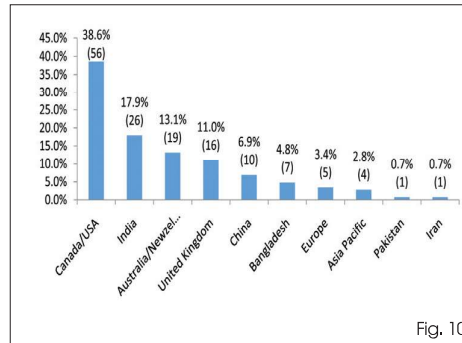


Figure 10: Location of Nepalese dentists outside Nepal (N=145).

DISCUSSION

Oral health services in Nepal are mostly offered in private clinics and hospitals, and in zonal or central government hospitals in urban cities. This study showed that more than two-thirds of dentists were working in Kathmandu valley, the capital region of Nepal; rests of the dentists were working in other major cities. A cluster of dentists were found to be working in Dharan, which is because of a major academic dental institution with hospital established in the region.

The present study showed that more than fifty percent of dentists were females; which is a current trend

internationally in dental profession. A study conducted in Nigeria showed male preponderance among practicing dentists with only 15.3% female practitioners in 1981, which steadily rose to 35.1 percent by the end of 2000; the difference was statistically significant ($p=0.000$).¹⁰ Increase in the number of female in dentistry has been one of the major dental workforce trends during few decades and which is believed to continue. In India, there has been an increase in the number of female than male applicants to dental schools since 1999, this trend is still continuing today.¹¹

The Nigerian study conducted among medical and dental graduates in 2001 indicated that 69% liked to

practice in foreign countries;¹⁰ whereas this study showed 32% of Nepalese dentist are residing outside Nepal.

As the present study was conducted among the members of Nepal Dental Association only; the whole populations of Nepalese dentists were not included in the study. It is because of the availability of the secondary data with the professional association. The total number of Nepalese dentists during the time of present study was

approximately 800; thus the present study provides information of only about 56% of Nepalese dentists.

CONCLUSION

The number of dentists is in expanding trend in recent years due to the increase in number of dental colleges in Nepal. Distribution of dental surgeon is in imbalance as more than two-third of the dentists are accumulated in Kathmandu valley.

REFERENCES

1. www.who.int/oral_health/action/services/en
2. Yee R, Mishra P. Nepal National Oral Health 'Pathfinder' Survey 2004. Kathmandu. Nepal: Oral Health Focal Point, Ministry of Health, HMG Nepal, 2004.
3. Lal S, Paul D, Vashisht BM. National Oral Health Care Programme (NOHCP) Implementation Strategies. Indian J Community Med. 2004;29(1):3-10.
4. Shrestha S, Maharjan SK. Facts about Nepalese Dentists. Dent Nep. 2008;3(1):31.
5. Dixit S. Dental manpower status in Nepal. J Nepal Dent Assoc. 2009;10(1):1-2.
6. Ministry of Health and Population. National Oral Health Policy-Nepal 2004.
7. Ministry of Health and Population. Nepal Health Sector Program-II (NHSP-II) 2010-2015.
8. Dental Directory-Nepal 2004. Published by Nepal Dental Association. Kathmandu, Nepal; 2004
9. List of the Doctors Registered in Nepal medical Council. Published by Nepal Medical Council, Kathmandu, Nepal; 2009.
10. Ogunbodede EO. Gender Distribution of Dentists in Nigeria, 1981 to 2000. J Dent Edu. 2004;68(7) suppl:15-8.
11. Tandon S. Challenges to the Oral Health Workforce in India. J Dent Edu. 2004;68(7) Suppl:28-33.