

Dental manpower status in Nepal

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At the time of the 24th All Nepal Medical Conference in mid April 2009 a number of articles had come out in the lay press commenting that though there were about 7,000 medical / dental doctors registered with the Nepal Medical Council (NMC), only 2000 or so were members of the Nepal Medical Association. This was deduced by the journalist as a rejection of the Medical Association by the younger members of the profession. Corresponding figures for dental surgeons, registered with the NMC till the end of 2008 was:

Total number of dental surgeons	756
Female	457
Male	299

The figures of the dental surgeons who have joined the Nepal Dental Association (NDA) is 491 of which 286 are females and 205 males. Considering the present membership of 756 it seems that only about 65% of the dental surgeons have joined NDA. However, out of 491 members, approximately 150 or about 30% are out of the country. Consequently, we too must look to ways and means to attract newly qualified dental surgeons to become members of our association. Our association headquarters must be a welcoming place where we all come to meet, discuss and react with our fellow colleagues.

What is the status of dental surgeons in Nepal? The number of dental surgeons in Nepal was in the region of 2 to 3 dozens in the seventies and eighties of the last century. Though the first and second medical education institutions started in 1968 and 1991 respectively and dental departments with dental expertise was introduced in the country. Because of the attraction towards the dental profession, more Nepali students went to various places in India and Bangladesh to study for this profession. Subsequently, still larger numbers of Nepali students went to Dhaka and Manipal to do the BDS course. Soon after came the starting of the People's Dental College at Kathmandu. Others came into being subsequently as shown below:

Name of College	University	Year Estd.
Peoples Dental College, Kathmandu	Tribhuvan	1997
BPKIHS - College of Dental Surgery, Dharan	Deemed	1999
Universal College of Dental Sciences, Bhairahawa	Tribhuvan	2001
MB Kedia Dental College, Birgunj	Tribhuvan	2005
Kantipur Dental College, Kathmandu	Kathmandu	2006

KIST Medical College is due to start the BDS course too in the near future. Nepalgunj Medical College has also expressed a desire to start a dental college too. Taking an average of 40 students per year in the each of the five dental colleges and adding another 20 as studying outside we can estimate that an average of an additional 220 workforce will be joining our profession every year.

But talking about services existing and planned one has but to think of the manpower existing in the country. With the number of training institutes in the country it is but natural that we have to consider the number of persons with Master degrees. It may be worth noting that at the end of 2007 there was a total of 43 out of which were 30 males and 13 female Master degree holders.

What is the number of Master degree holders that Nepal needs and has? In all the 15 medical colleges and National Academy of Health Sciences (NAMS) there are or should be at least 2 personnel with MDS. This means a total of 34.

The five dental colleges each with 9 sub-specialities will be providing the different services in the country. Requirement of these schools is that they will have to have a minimum one lecturer in each area and two in some. There will be a approximate requirement of fifteen faculty members in each dental college or a total of $15 \times 5 = 75$. To meet just the requirements of the teaching

institutions one requires about 110 Master Degree holders. The total number of MDS at the end of 2008 was 49 of which there were 34 males and 15 females. There is thus almost 50% shortage of faculty members.

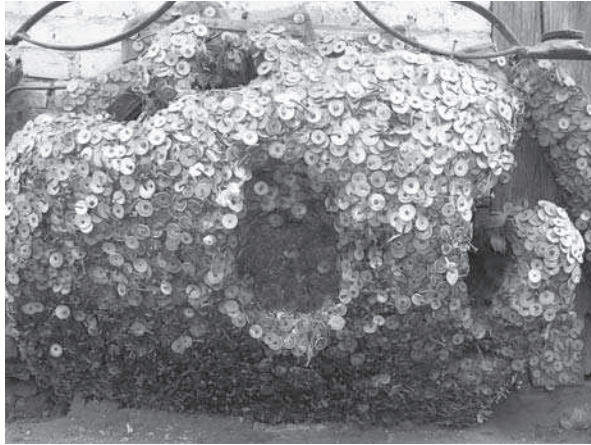


Fig. 1: Nails driven at Wa Sya Dyo

In the olden days it was usual to drive a nail through an aluminium coin at Wa Sya Dyo at Bangemuda (Fig. 1) to get rid of the pain associated with a toothache. Was

this pain relieved by the strenuous muscular action of driving a nail into the wooden structure there? Later it was the skilled technicians of Thainti who practised the art of tooth pulling to relieve the Nepalis of their pains. Now we have the fully trained dental personnel doing this task. The only trouble is that there are not enough of us to do this and provide such services to our fellow citizens all over Nepal.

References

1. Dixit H, Marahatta SB, Medical Education & Training in Nepal. SWOT Analysis. 2008. KUMJ, 6 (3), 412-420.