

# Views of Final Phase Undergraduate Medical Students' of Bangladesh about the Socio-Economic and Institutional Factors that Influence Their Future Career

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## Abstract

**Background:** Medical education is one of the most stressful field of education because of its highly demanding professional and academic requirements. There is a significant amount of factors as predictors of medical career decision-making: perceptions of specialty characteristics gained from curricular, extracurricular and personal experiences in health care, personal career needs (e.g. Expected income, career options, status, work-life balance, labor content, lifestyle and working hours) and gender. An understanding of the factors which influence doctors' career choices and how attitudes vary among doctors who choose different specialties, is important for all those involved in the teaching and training of doctors. This study was done to explore views of final phase undergraduate medical students of Bangladesh about the Socio-Economic & Institutional Factors that influence their future career selection.

**Materials and methods:** This descriptive cross sectional study was conducted among 784 students randomly selected from eight medical colleges of Bangladesh, in the period of January 2019 to December 2019 with a pre tested self-administered questionnaire.

**Results:** Study revealed that a total of 784 students responded, out of which 318(40.6%) males and 466(59.4%) female. Among them 726(92.6%) students wanted to do postgraduation. The leading reasons for selecting future career were future workload 255(38.2%), future workplace 272(39.8%) social status 242(35.6%) and scope of job 244(36.1%). Career choice also influenced by teachers as a role model 244(34.3%)

**Conclusion:** Study recommended that career counseling during and after completion of graduation in the medical college, this stimulate students to gain experiences in different specialties.

**Key words:** Career choices; Final phase students; Undergraduate medical education.

## INTRODUCTION

Medical education is one of the most stressful field of education because of its highly demanding professional and academic requirements. Medical profession has been the choice of best minds from various family backgrounds as it offers an acclaimed and financially secure career. An undergraduate medical student has to pass through 5 years of rigorous teaching and training followed by a year of internship before he/she is awarded the Bachelor of Medicine and Bachelor of Surgery (MBBS) degree. After MBBS, it becomes a tough decision to decide the future course of the career. Changing economic and social panorama in India has opened new gates and made this decision a mammoth task.<sup>1</sup>

Preferences of present day students may reflect ultimate career choices of future medical practitioners, which in turn play an important part in the healthcare sector of a country. Information about students' preferred choice of specialist training may be useful in planning national health manpower programs and in identifying the specialties with low preference in order to undertake measures to make these specialties more attractive. Such information may also help medical educators to plan training facilities and define selection criteria. The challenge for medical educationists is to understand how these choices are made and design curricula to influence these choices. Thus, identifying career preferences and factors which influence these will facilitate workforce planning of healthcare services and appropriate changes in undergraduate medical education in Bangladesh.<sup>2</sup>

Careers differ in their demands, requiring different amounts of intellectual ability, manual skill, long-term commitment, or willingness to work in particular environments, and can be better suited to particular personalities, aptitudes, and physical dispositions. Individuals also differ, having different aptitudes, interests and abilities. Career choices among medical professionals involve considering the entire range of careers and then selecting those which they regard as broadly acceptable, making their eventual choices within that subset.<sup>3</sup>

Why is it important to know about how career preferences in medical students change across the duration of undergraduate degree programs, or about the relationship between career preferences, and changes in these preferences, and medical school? Health services need a supply of medical graduates willing to train in all specialties, in the right proportions and, crucially, in the right places, to meet healthcare needs. This may be more amenable to modification at the stage of selection to and progression through medical school than after graduation given that the landscape of medical careers.

Factors that influence career decisions have been reported from medical colleges around the globe, however, there is no information on the career preferences of medical students. We sought to identify the careers preferred by students at our institution, and the factors that influenced these choices. Our findings can help determine the future direction of the curriculum at our institution.<sup>4</sup>

**MATERIALS AND METHODS**

This descriptive cross sectional study was conducted among 784 undergraduate final phase medical students of eight medical colleges of Bangladesh. The study period was from January 2019 to December 2019. A pre tested self-administered semistructured questionnaire were distributed among the participants. Students' participation was voluntary. Confidentiality and anonymity were strictly maintained. All ethical issues were considered and necessary permission was taken from ethical committee of the Centre for Medical Education (CME) and respected medical colleges before the data collection. Collected data were verified, compiled, tabulated and analyzed.

**RESULTS**

Out of the 784 students of the survey, 59.4% students were female, 40.6% were male (Figure 1). Figure 2 shows that 51.9% of the students were from government medical colleges and 48.1% of the students from non-government medical colleges (Figure 2). Out of the 784 students 92.6% of the students wanted to do post-graduation after graduation (Figure 3).

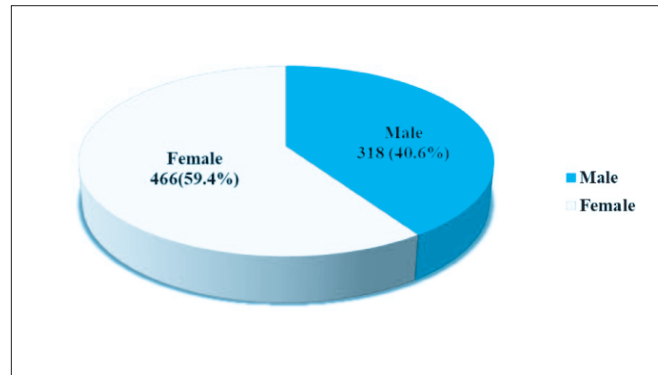


Figure 1 Distribution of the medical students by their gender (n=784)

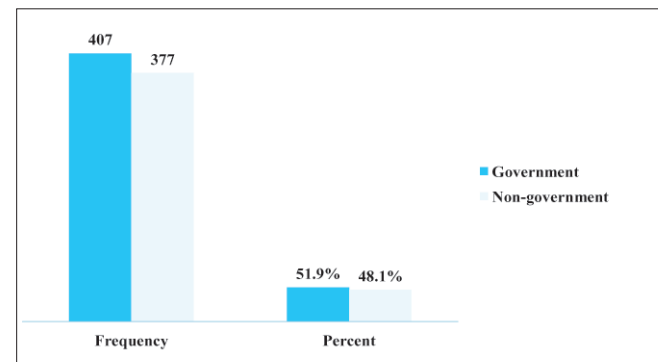


Figure 2 Distribution of the medical students by medical colleges (n=784)

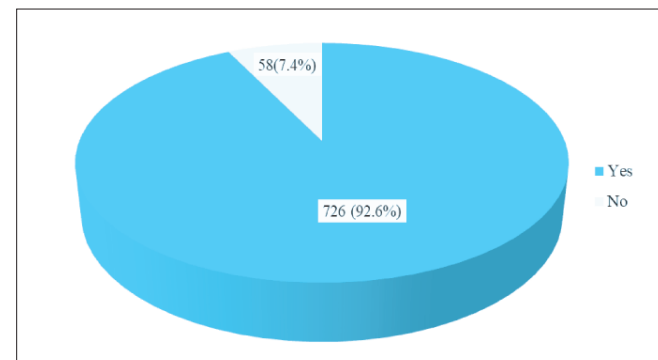


Figure 3 Distribution of the medical students as per their choice of medical discipline for future career (n=784)

Table I shows general views of students about the social factors affecting their career choice. Out of 784 students, 31.7%, 35.6%, 39.8% and 38.2% students were moderately agreed that “community health problem”, “social status”, “future work place” and “future workload” can influence career choice. Maximum (39.9%) students were highly agreed that security of life influence career choice.

**Table I** Distribution of the medical students regarding general views about the social factors affecting their career choice

Social factors affecting students career choice	Level of agreement				Total
	Not at all (%)	Mild (%)	Moderate (%)	High f (%)	
Community health problem	111 (16.3)	163 (24)	215 (31.7)	190 (28)	679
Social status	140 (20.6)	167 (24.6)	242 (35.6)	131 (19.3)	680
Future work place	66 (9.7)	106 (15.5)	272 (39.8)	239 (35)	683
Security of life	81 (11.8)	91 (13.3)	239 (34.9)	273 (39.9)	684
Future workload	106 (15.9)	108 (16.2)	255 (38.2)	198 (29.7)	667

**NB.** Not at all = Not at all agree, Mild = Mildly agree, Moderate = Moderately agree, High = highly agree.

Table II shows general views of students about “scope of Job opportunity/ availability of job”, the economical factors affecting their career “scope of private practice”, “number of persons choice. out of 784 students , 39.6%, 41.3%, economically dependent on the students 39.7% & 33.5% students were moderately respectively” can influence their career choice agreed that “amount of earning”.

**Table II** Distribution of the medical students regarding general views about the economical factors affecting their career choice

Economical factors affecting students career choice.	Level of agreement				Total
	Not at all (%)	Mild f (%)	Moderate (%)	High (%)	
Amount of earning	118 (17.6)	111 (16.5)	266 (39.6)	176 (26.2)	671
Scope of Job opportunity/ availability job	653 (7.8)	100 (14.8)	279 (41.3)	244 (36.1)	676
Scope of private practice	73 (10.8)	118 (17.4)	269 (39.7)	218 (32.2)	678
Number of persons economically dependent on the students	171 (25.8)	155 (23.4)	222 (33.5)	114 (17.2)	662

**NB.** Not at all = Not at all agree, Mild = Mildly agree, Moderate = Moderately agree, High = Highly agree.

Table III shows general views of students about Institutional factors affecting their career choice. Out of 784 students, 28.4%, 32.5% and 29.8% students were moderately agreed that “advice from the teachers”, “encouragement by senior doctors” and “experiences from the patients” can influence their career. 34.3% and 41.7% students were highly agreed that “inspiration from teachers as role model” and “developed interest during enrolling in the subject” can influence their career choice.

**Table III** Distribution of the medical students regarding general views about the Institutional factors affecting their career choice

Institutional factors affecting students career choice	Level of agreement				Total
	Not at all (%)	Mild (%)	Moderate (%)	High (%)	
Advice from the teachers	159 (22.7)	196 (28)	199 (28.4)	147 (21)	701
Inspiration from teachers as role model	98 (13.8)	137 (19.3)	232 (32.6)	244 (34.3)	711
Encouragement by senior doctors	126 (17.8)	156 (22)	230 (32.5)	196 (27.7)	708
Encouragement by other medical students	203 (29)	221 (31.5)	182 (26)	95 (13.6)	701
Experiences from the patients	128 (18.2)	166 (23.6)	210 (29.8)	200 (28.4)	704
Developed interest during enrolling in the subject	65 (9.3)	116 (16.7)	225 (32.3)	290 (41.7)	696

**NB.** Not at all = Not at all agree, Mild = Mildly agree, Moderate = Moderately agree, High = Highly agree.

## DISCUSSION

Career choice were explored using a semistructured questionnaire among 784 students of final phases undergraduate medical students in both government and non-government medical college in Bangladesh.

In this study shows that majority (92.6%) of the students wanted to do post-graduation after graduation and only 7.4% could not select a specialty (Figure 3). Similar findings have been reported by which showed that 80% and 97% students had decided their specialty choices during their undergraduate studies.<sup>5,6</sup> Similar findings shows that 95.4% of the students wanted to do postgraduation.<sup>1</sup>

In this study shows future work place(39.8%) and workload (38.2%), social status(35.6%) these are the common social factors influencing students future career choice (Table 1). This 46 is similar to the findings of and indicates that the vast majority of medical students regard job position and future opportunity for promotion as second in importance when choosing a specialty.<sup>7,8</sup> Quality of life is also an important consideration for medical students selecting a specialty.

In this study shows that amount of future earning (39.6%) and scope of job opportunity and availability of job (41.3%) influence future career choice (Table II). Similiar studies have found that economic factors and amount of future income were uniformly important considerations for medical students selecting a specialty. In contrast, this study found that “future income” and “establishing one s own practice” - two criteria that are highly linked with economic incentives.<sup>9</sup> The findings of a study in Turkey revealed that the most important reasons for the choice of specialty were “better financial opportunities” and prestige, followed by personal development, more benefits for the patient.<sup>10</sup>

In this study shows that inspiration from teachers as role model (34.3%) influence future career choice (Table III). Several studies have cited clinical role models as being important influences on students' residency preferences. This included negative role models, who drove students away from some specialties.<sup>11</sup>

## CONCLUSION

Career choice is an ever-evolving process. Career choice is a process that includes experimentation, trial and error, decisionmaking and eventually judgment. Students must be made aware of this process; it has yet to be perfected.

There is need for career counselling in the medical school, career counseling should stimulate students to gain experiences in different specialties, to discover their personal career needs, and the matching of career needs to specialty perceptions.

## DISCLOSURE

All the authors declared no competing interest.

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