

Undergraduate Dental Students' Perceptions of Periodontics Training: A Cross-Sectional Questionnaire Survey

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ABSTRACT:

Background: Periodontal diseases are highly prevalent and require every dental graduate to be competent in their prevention and management. Understanding students' perceptions of undergraduate periodontics training is essential to align curricula with competency-based education.

Aim: To evaluate undergraduate dental students' perceptions of the adequacy of periodontics training in the Bachelor of Dental Surgery (BDS) programme.

Materials & Methods: A cross-sectional, questionnaire-based survey was conducted among 300 BDS students (third year, final year and interns). A structured, content-validated questionnaire assessed perceptions of theoretical teaching, clinical exposure, confidence in managing periodontal conditions and teaching methods. Data were analysed using descriptive statistics and Chi-square tests to explore associations between academic year and key perception variables.

Results: Approximately half of the respondents perceived the theoretical content in periodontics as sufficient and felt that the curriculum emphasized its importance in oral health. Fewer than half reported sufficient hands-on experience with non-surgical periodontal therapy, and only about one-third had assisted or observed periodontal surgeries. Confidence in diagnosing and managing basic periodontal conditions was moderate, with many students reporting a need to improve their knowledge and clinical skills. Most respondents expressed a desire for more workshops, additional clinical hours, and use of technology-enhanced teaching. Intention to specialize in periodontics, perceived need for technology, and viewing periodontics as essential for general practice showed significant associations with academic year ($p < 0.05$).

Conclusion: Despite positive views of undergraduate periodontics teaching, notable gaps in clinical exposure and self-reported confidence persist, highlighting the need to strengthen competency-based, hands-on, and technology-supported training in periodontology.

KEY WORDS: Periodontics education, Dental students, Curriculum, Clinical competence