

## ATTITUDE OF DENTAL STUDENTS TOWARDS TOBACCO CESSATION SERVICES IN INDIA- A CROSS-SECTIONAL STUDY

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### ABSTRACT

**Background:** Dentists have a duty to promote oral health and healthy lifestyles among their patients, by raising their awareness about the harmful effects of tobacco on health and guiding them in conquering tobacco addiction. Students demonstrate competence in tobacco cessation counseling as part of the clinical practical examination in comprehensive risk assessment. The aim of the study was to examine the attitudes of these dental students toward tobacco cessation counseling.

**Materials and methods:** The study area was the Dental colleges in Chhattisgarh, India. The study population for the study was comprised of third year, final year, and interns of two different Dental colleges chosen randomly to collect the data. The questionnaire includes socio demographic information (gender and study level), and questions on attitudes, awareness of smoking cessation, willingness to provide cessation services, and barriers to smoking cessation advice in the Dental setting. Additionally, questions were asked about attitude and opinions regarding current level of interest in receiving training and introduction of Tobacco cessation course in Dental curriculum.

**Results:** The distribution of academic years of the Dental students was 32 % Third year students, 31 % Final year students and 37 % Internship year students. Students were asked about their dental professional's responsibility. Almost 400 (80%) respondents felt they were responsible as a Dentist to provide Tobacco cessation counseling. 470 (94%) agreed that Dentist should counsel the patient to stop using Tobacco. 481(96.2%) respondents feel that Tobacco cessation counseling offered in the dental clinic can have an impact on patients' quitting.

**Conclusion:** The dental students in our study were in general agreement that tobacco cessation counseling is within the scope and responsibility of the dental profession and that such counseling can be effective. The results of this study suggest that, over the course of their education, dental students are developing an acceptance of tobacco cessation counseling as an integral part of oral health delivery.

**KEYWORDS:** Awareness, Tobacco, Oral Cancer, Tobacco Cessation, Dentists, Dental Students

## INTRODUCTION

The effects of tobacco use on oral and systemic health have been well known for decades. In recognition of the health consequences of smoking, the American Dental Association has issued recommendations regarding tobacco since 1964,<sup>1</sup> and guidelines for dental office-based smoking cessation programs were published as early as 1970.<sup>2</sup> Evidence suggests that interventions for tobacco cessation by non-physicians, including oral health professionals, may increase tobacco abstinence rates.<sup>3,4</sup> However it's been observed that incorporation of tobacco cessation counseling into dental practice has been slow.<sup>5</sup> Tobacco cessation counseling in a dental setting is consistent with this move toward integrated health promotion. The effectiveness of training Oral health professionals to deliver smoking cessation interventions to their patients has been reviewed recently and reported. The educational system's movement towards prevention and holism is a trend that deals with the relevant themes in our changing society and that can contribute to the development of students' attitudes. Didactic instruction in treating tobacco dependence is provided to the final year dental students. However it's practical implication becomes vital.

### AIM & OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

To examine the attitudes of these dental students toward tobacco cessation counseling.

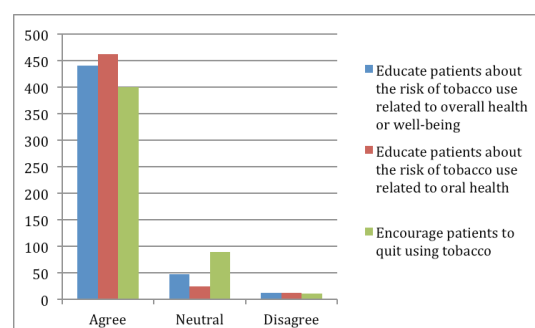
### METHODOLOGY

The study area was the Dental colleges in Chhattisgarh, India. The study population for the study was comprised of third year, final year, and interns of two different Dental colleges chosen randomly to collect the data. The study was approved by the Institutional Review Board of Rungta College of Dental Sciences and Research ,Bhilai, Chhattisgarh. The permission to conduct the survey was obtained from Rungta College of Dental Sciences and Research ,Bhilai, Chhattisgarh. The calculated sample size was 500 at 95% confidence level and 5% confidence interval. A well-structured, pretested, self-administered questionnaire was adapted from Victoroff et al.'s survey<sup>6</sup> and Salman K al.'s survey.<sup>7</sup> Additional items were developed to

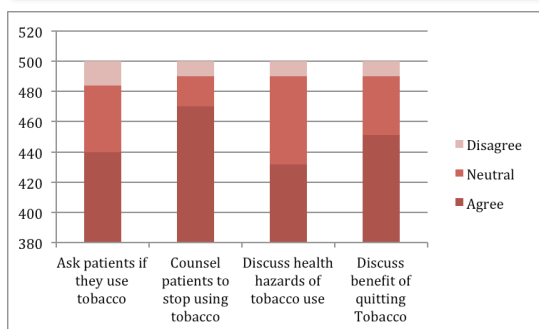
determine the practices, barriers, training, needs and willingness to provide smoking cessation services. The questionnaire includes socio demographic information (gender and study level), and questions on attitudes, awareness of smoking cessation, willingness to provide cessation services, and barriers to smoking cessation advice in the Dental setting. Additionally, questions were asked about attitude and opinions regarding current level of interest in receiving training and introduction of Tobacco cessation course in Dental curriculum. The questionnaires were distributed to students during lecture periods and retrieved immediately. All the Dental students who were present in college over a period of first week of June 2016 completed the questionnaire. Data were manually entered into the computer, tabulated, and analyzed. The collected data was entered on a MS excel sheet. Data analysis was performed using the software IBM SPSS Inc., Chicago, USA version no.18. The level of significance was set to be  $P < 0.05$ .

## RESULTS

Totally 500 Dental students has participated in the study. Out of 500 respondents 327 were males and 173 females. The age group participated in the study were 18-30 years. The distribution of academic years of the Dental students was 32 % Third year students, 31 % Final year students and 37 % Internship year students. Students were asked about their dental professional's responsibility. Almost 400 (80%) respondents felt they were responsible as a Dentist to provide Tobacco cessation counseling significantly as seen in Figure 1.

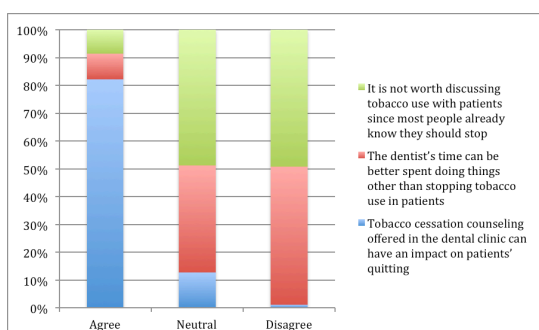


**Figure 1: Scope Of Dental Professional's Responsibility.**



**Figure 2: Scope Of Dentists Regarding Tobacco Counseling.**

470 (94%) agreed that Dentist should counsel the patient to stop using Tobacco as seen in Figure 2.



**Figure 3: Attitude of patients regarding effectiveness of Tobacco Counseling.**

481(96.2%) respondents feel that Tobacco cessation counseling offered in the dental clinic can have an impact on patients' quitting as seen in Figure 3

## DISCUSSION

Overall, our study found strong (80-90 percent) agreement among respondents that the dental profession has a responsibility to educate patients about the risks of tobacco use and to encourage patients to quit smoking. Regarding the impact of counseling, three-fourths of the respondents in our study agreed that counseling offered in a dental office can have an impact on quitting. Other studies have found similar attitudes toward the effectiveness of counseling. These findings are consistent with previous studies<sup>6, 8</sup> that indicate a willingness on the part of dental students to consider incorporating tobacco cessation counseling into their future practices. It should also be noted that even when a majority of dental practitioners acknowledge that cessation

counseling is the responsibility of the profession, only a minority actually perform the counseling.<sup>9</sup> This disconnect underscores the fact that changes in attitude are necessary but not sufficient for changes in behavior. Additional research is needed to determine the effect of the training among dental students over a longer period of time, at different years of the dental curriculum, and at other dental colleges. Future research could reveal how dental students' increase in perceived skills, self-efficacy, and intentions during their formal training and eventual practice

## CONCLUSION

The dental students in our study were in general agreement that tobacco cessation counseling is within the scope and responsibility of the dental profession and that such counseling can be effective. Dentists should overcome all barriers, which prevent them from providing Tobacco cessation counseling to their patients. Dental care settings provide an exceptional opportunity to reach Tobacco users and provide brief cessation counseling and treatment to reduce oral and other tobacco-related health conditions. The results of this study suggest that, over the course of their education, dental students are developing an acceptance of tobacco cessation counseling as an integral part of oral health delivery.

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