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## A STUDY TO EVALUATE THE PERCEPTION OF PHARMACY STUDENT'S TOWARDS THE PHARMACY PROFESSION

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### ABSTRACT

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The quality of education offered by Pharmacy institutions in the country varies widely. There are only a few institutions which maintain internationally recognized standard. A survey was conducted on the one hundred and twenty four (124) undergraduate Pharmacy students to determine their awareness and inclination towards Pharmacy as a career choice. Students were evaluated for the perception on their education and to share ideas for its improvement. A questionnaire survey that explored their attitudes and views towards the Pharmacy profession was chosen for this study. Based on the evaluated data from questionnaire, the student's perception towards Pharmacy education was seems to be very poor and survey also revealed poor inclination towards pharmacy as a profession. Student's perception on scope and contribution was found to be unsatisfactory. Student's learning tools, teaching methods and evaluation system were found unexpressive to the pharmacy students. Therefore, there is a need to change such a wrong perception and poor inclination from the minds of pharmacy students by providing professionalism through some educative seminars or programmes, or by including some education promotive, scope oriented and professional communicating subjects in course curriculum of Pharmacy education.

**INTRODUCTION:** Pharmacists play a crucial role in any health system as they are responsible for providing solution related to medication. The rapid growth and diversification of pharmaceutical industry coupled with growth of health sector has thrown open a sea of opportunities for pharmacists<sup>1</sup>.

In the past, Pharmacy Education consisted of subject-orientated and knowledge-based teaching. Significant changes in education and training have taken place in recent years reflecting the evolution of Pharmacy from a drug-centered to a patient-centered profession<sup>2,3</sup>.

Pharmacy Education, Profession and Practice in India are regulated by the Pharmacy Act 1948. Pharmacy education is regulated by the Pharmacy Council of

India (PCI) as well as the All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE) established under the AICTE Act 1987. Besides, Pharmacy practice is also governed by Drugs and Cosmetics Act 1940 together with Drugs and Cosmetics Rules 1945 (framed under the act). The act regulates the import, manufacture, distribution and sale of drugs<sup>1</sup>.

The spectrum of pharmacy profession in India is very wide. It covers opportunities in Pharmaceutical Industry- Research & Development, Manufacturing & Retail, Healthcare Sector, Pharmacy Education, and Regulatory Bodies. Pharmacy education especially bachelor and higher studies have industrial leaning<sup>1</sup>. Pharmacy seems to be lagging behind regarding any explicit emphasis on curriculum guidelines and

research issues involving multicultural education and pharmacy practice<sup>4,5</sup>. Further, most of the institutions are away from practice environment resulting into graduates lacking in skills needed for industry, hospitals or in community setting. In spite of having uniform provisions for curriculum and teaching infrastructure, the quality of education offered by Pharmacy institutions in the country varies widely. However, it should be ensured that all teachers in the pharmacy sector should undergo training and skill enhancement on a regular basis<sup>1, 5</sup>. The course assessment instruments like feedback may help to know about the pros and cons of teaching and assessment methods<sup>6,7</sup>.

The main objective of the study is to express the opinion of undergraduate Pharmacy students about Pharmacy education. The study was conducted to

determine their awareness and inclination towards Pharmacy as a career choice. In this study, all the data taken from the students were evaluated to analyse the student's perception towards the profession of Pharmacy.

**METHODOLOGY:** The study was conducted in Department of Pharmacy, Himalayan Institute of Pharmacy & Research, Dehradun. One hundred and twenty four (124) undergraduate Pharmacy students had participated in this study. All participated students had completed a questionnaire survey (**Figure 1**) that explored their attitudes and views towards the pharmacy profession. All students were informed neither to discuss regarding questions nor to influence others on their views. Students were evaluated for the perception on their education and to share ideas for its improvement.

Name: ..... Age with D.O.B.: ..... Sex:  M  F  
 Institute Name: ..... Course Name: ..... Section: .....

1. Whom decision makes you to undertake the B.Pharmacy program?  
 Self  Family members  Friends  others

2. Do you ever heard about B.Pharmacy program before joining it?  Yes  No

3. Are you satisfy with your decision to choose B.Pharmacy as a professional course?  Yes  No  
 If No, mention the one alternative course you wish to join .....

4. Do you prefer any professional course other than pharmacy in terms of professionalism?  Yes  No  
 If Yes, name the course .....

5. Are you well aware of the scope after the completion of B.Pharmacy course?  Yes  No

6. Which way you would like to go after the pharmacy course completion? (Select any 1)  
 Higher studies in Pharmacy field  Academics  Production industry  
 Higher studies in other field  Research & Development  others

7. Do you have a desire to make a contribution to healthcare as being a part of this profession?  Yes  No  
 If Yes, then how? Select any 2 options:  
 Hospital / Clinical Pharmacist  Social Service for poor patients  
 Community Pharmacist  Research Scientist

8. Which type of learning tools you always used to follow for covering syllabus during session period?  
 (Select any 2)  
 Class room lectures/notes  Self Preparatory notes  
 Colleague's notes  Other sources

9. Are you totally in support of the semester system of evaluation through affiliated university?  Yes  No

10. What kind of teaching method you would like to be preferred or adopted by teachers? (Select any 2)  
 Oral lectures  Notes delivery  Board writing  Slides presentation

FIG. 1: QUESTIONNAIRE SURVEY

Questions that were asked to the students contains information regarding status of their decision to chose pharmacy as a professional course, preference given by them to any course in terms of professionalism other than pharmacy, awareness about the scope of pharmacy education, and contribution made towards the healthcare sector as being a part of this profession. Questions based on the teaching method preferred by teachers, learning tools adopted by students and support towards semester system of evaluation through affiliated university was also asked to the students.

**RESULTS AND DISCUSSION:** The student’s perception towards Pharmacy education was seems to be very poor and survey also revealed poor inclination towards pharmacy as a profession. Among the eight professional courses, pharmacy was on the third position as a career choice after the engineering and medicine (Figure 2).

Besides medicine, engineering and pharmacy, other career chosen courses were physiotherapy, dentistry, nursing, computer applications and business administration. Majority of the students, from among the total participants, were found to be unsatisfied with their decision of choosing Pharmacy course and medical course like MBBS, Engineering was among the best alternative courses they wish to join in lieu of pharmacy.

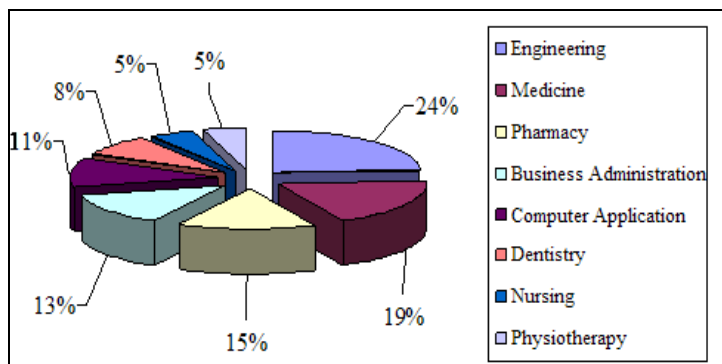


FIG. 2: CAREER CHOICE FROM AMONG THE PROFESSIONAL COURSES

Student’s perceptions on scope showed that majority of students (65%) were well aware of the scope of Pharmacy education (Figure 3). The study also showed that the desire to make contribution towards the Healthcare Sector, by major students prospective, can

be best possible through being a hospital/clinical pharmacist or as research scientist.

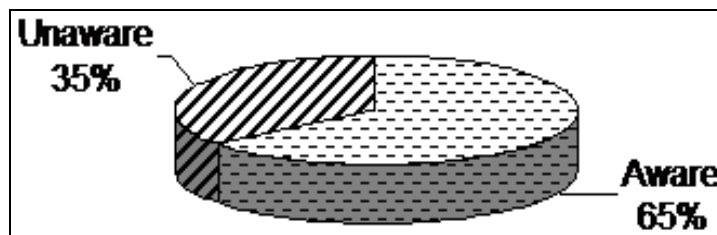


FIG. 3: AWARENESS ABOUT THE SCOPE OF PHARMACY EDUCATION

Student’s learning tools such as class room lectures/notes and self preparatory notes were found to be as the best among the many. From student’s point of view, slides presentation and oral lectures were considered to be the best teaching methods to be preferred or adopted by teachers (Figure 4). Semester evaluation system through affiliated university was found unexpressive to the pharmacy students.

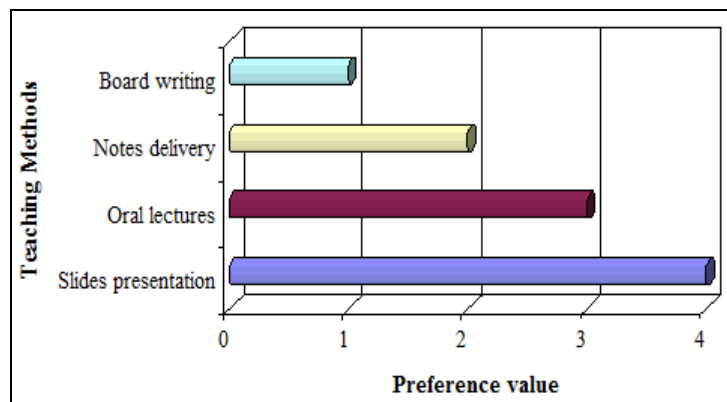


FIG. 4: PREFERENCE OF TEACHING METHODS

**CONCLUSION:** There is a need to improve the wrong perception and poor inclination, about Pharmacy education and profession, from the minds of pharmacy students by providing professionalism through some educative seminars or programmes, or by including some education promotive, scope oriented and professional communicating subjects in course curriculum of Pharmacy education.

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