

# Knowledge, Attitude and Practices Towards Professionalism Among Dental Undergraduates

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**Abstract:** Professionalism is a board competency needed by dentists to act effectively and efficiently. It is seen as a central part of both undergraduate and postgraduate curricula. The aim of the article is to evaluate the knowledge, attitudes and practices towards professionalism among dental undergraduates. A semi-structural questionnaire was used to collect the data from 201 students of Mamata Dental College, Khammam in 2019. Among which 160 are females and 41 are males. The results indicated that despite of age, gender and year of study all the participants possessed at least some elements of professionalism; recognizing these concerns and integrating them into professional educational programs can result in a better and more supportive health-care service for the public.

**Keywords:** Behavior, Ethics, Dental undergraduates, Professionalism.

## 1. Introduction

The word professionalism is derived from the root word 'Profess' which means to proclaim something publicly. It can be defined as a collection of attitudes, values, behaviors and relationships that acts as the foundation of the health professional's contract with the society. The professional status cannot be simply claimed by profession, it must be gained and decided by the society. Day by day the expectations of society and the profession are apparently diverging, leading to a gap between the dental profession and society. The standards for dental professionals include:

- 1) Putting patient's interests first and acting to protect them.
- 2) Respecting patient's dignity and choices.
- 3) Being thrust worthy.
- 4) Maintaining your professional knowledge and competence.
- 5) Protecting the confidentiality of patient's information.

American Dental Education Association outlines six values defining professionalism in dental education including competence, fairness, integrity, responsibility, respect and service-mindedness

Historically, dentistry has followed the path of barber-surgeons beginning as mainly a business enterprise in the late

19th and 20th centuries, and later moving to a model more analogous to that of the medical profession. Dentistry eventually came to be recognized as a true profession that had a "social contract" with the public. The elements of frame work include clinical knowledge and skills, communication skills, ethics, accountability, altruism, excellence and humanism should be intentionally taught.

## 2. Materials and Methodology

### A. Study design

The present study is cross sectional in design. A convenience sampling method was followed where a pretested, self-administered questionnaire was distributed to the dental students of Mamata Dental College, Khammam. Prior to the start of the study, ethical clearance was taken from the institutional ethical committee. Informed consent was taken from the study participants, who were willing to participate in the study and who were present on the day of the study.

The present study was scheduled in the month of October 2019.

### B. Inclusion criteria

All the 3rd year, 4th year and interns who were present during the study on the day of survey were included.

### C. Exclusion criteria

Students who were absent during the day of the survey and not willing to participate are excluded.

Questionnaire was distributed to all the 3rd year, 4th year and interns during working hours 9am to 4pm.

Questionnaire consists of demographic data and 17 questions were given. Each question is given with different options. Data was collected by designated questionnaire about professionalism and their knowledge, attitudes and practices among dental undergraduates.

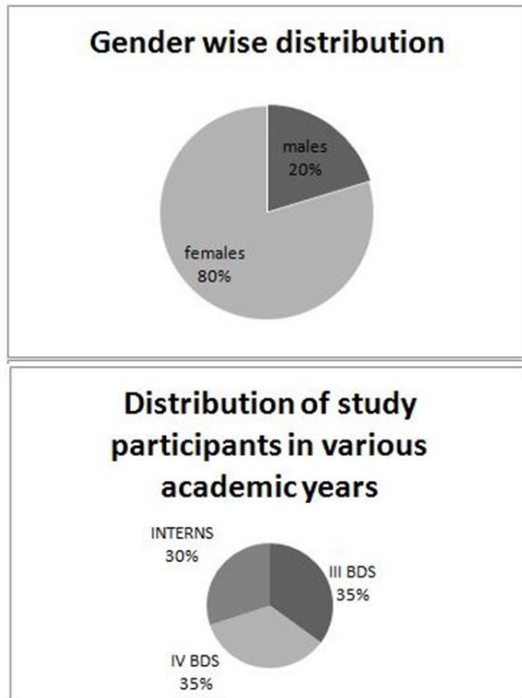
### D. Statistical analysis:

The data collected through the questionnaire is tabulated into

an excel sheet and sent for analysis.

### 3. Results

The total of 201 students were included in the study, of which 41 were males (20.4%) and 160 were females (79.6%) undergraduate dental students.



From the table given below majority of the students have an idea about professionalism 169 members (84.1%) and a minority student do not have any idea about this 32 members (15.9%).

Table 1  
Idea about professionalism

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Valid	Yes	169	84.1	84.1
	No	32	15.9	15.9
	Total	201	100	100.0

Majority of the students of about 106 (52.7%) just agree that physical attire is important in our profession, whereas minority of students which is 17(8.5%) disagree.

Table 2  
Importance of physical attire

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Valid	Strongly agree	51	25.4	25.4
	Agree	106	52.7	52.7
	Disagree	17	8.5	8.5
	Strongly Disagree	27	13.4	13.4
	Total	201	100.0	100.0

When punctuality is taken into consideration most of the students 97(48.3%) strongly agree that it is important and least

number of students 11(5.5%) disagree.

Table 3  
Importance of physical attire

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Disagree	17	8.5	8.5
Neutral	76	7.6	38.0
Agree	106	52.7	52.7
Strongly Agree	51	25.4	25.4
Total	201	100.0	100.0

Maximum number of students 190 (94.5%) say yes that they follow ethical principles in their profession whereas few students 11(5.5%) say no.

Table 4  
Students who follow ethical principles

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Valid	Yes	190	94.5	94.5
	No	11	5.5	5.5
	Total	201	100.0	100.0

Majority of students 189 (94.0%) say yes that patient satisfaction is very important in our profession and a few students 12 (6.0%) say no.

Table 5  
Importance of patient satisfaction

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Valid	Yes	189	94.0	94.0
	No	12	6.0	6.0
	Total	201	100.0	100.0

### 4. Discussions

- A cross-sectional descriptive study was conducted to assess the knowledge, attitude and practices towards professionalism among dental undergraduates of mamata dental college khammam. It is an essential requirement to practice dentistry in the current environment. It is a construct that covers both abilities and personal qualities.
- Majority of students think that professionalism is the characteristic that indicate quality, skill, experience and behavior at work 162 (80.6%).
- Most of the students strongly agree 87(43.3%) with wearing an apron and few people strongly disagree 15 (7.5%).
- Maximum number of people say that informed consent 182 (90.5%), hospitality 186 (92.5%) of patient is important.
- 77.1% people deal with anxious patients and 89.1% people communicate with the patient about their problem.
- Equal number of people say that both health education of patient and following sterilization protocol are important 192 (95.5%).
- 76.1% people have knowledge how to handle an emergency situation during dental procedure whereas

23.9% do not have knowledge.

- Majority of people are under stress while handling multiple works 75.6%. In spite of, this majority of people suggest their profession to others 94.5%.

### 5. Conclusion

Lack of effective professionalism curriculum has been highlighted and despite the presence of the subjects to address this need, justifying the need for formal education on professionalism. Formal planning and implementation of professionalism curriculum, selection of students with appropriate attributes, along with educational environment and congenial working will foster professionalism among dental students to the maximum.

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