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Research Article

**A COMPREHENSIVE STUDY ON PROSTHODONTICS AS A
DENTAL SPECIALTY IN PAKISTAN**Dr Shoaib Alvi¹, Dr Mahrukh Arshad², Neelam Fayyaz²¹Assistant Professor, Prosthodontics Department, Nishtar Institute of Dentistry, Multan²Demontmorency College of Dentistry, Lahore**Abstract:**

Introduction: Over the past two decades, provision of dental services has massively evolved in Pakistan. **Aims and objectives:** The basic aim of the study is to analyse the prosthodontics as a Dental Specialty in Pakistan and its future implementations. **Material and methods:** This cross sectional study was conducted in Prosthodontics Department, Nishtar Institute of Dentistry, Multan during January 2019 to August 2019. Along with practitioner of various specialties, GDPs included in the study were graduate dentists and were currently employed, owning or working in private practice, must have two years of experience after basic dental qualification and also have a valid dental council (PMDC) practicing license. The data was collected through a questionnaire. **Results:** Out of the 500 surveys distributed, 150 questionnaires from practicing dentist were considered eligible for study. The response rate was 30 percent. Table 1 displays the distribution of the various specialties in dentistry represented by the respondents. Among the total respondents, 15.5% (n = 23) of participants belonged to teaching hospitals only and 84.6% (n = 127) practiced at both places. **Conclusion:** It is concluded that the provision of Implant supported restorations is showing a gradual increase. The practice patterns and trends which were revealed in the current survey surely has potential implications for private dental practitioners, the patients seeking prosthodontic treatment, curriculum of dental schools and dental continuing education programs.

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INTRODUCTION:

Over the past two decades, provision of dental services has massively evolved in Pakistan. Dental practitioners predominantly treat the majority of patients with the need for tooth replacement, to the extent that very few patients are referred to specialist prosthodontists. These changes have partly occurred due to a lack of an established referral system among general dental practitioners (GDPs) and partly due to advancements in material sciences, dental equipment, clinical techniques and treatment planning [1]. Treatment planning is one of the critical aspects of undergraduate and postgraduate dental education and thus, has played its major role. During the last 60 years, the field of medicine including dentistry has not only seen many new developments but also an ever rising financial stability of the people seeking healthcare services [2]. Concurrent with these changes have been an increase in the awareness of people towards the importance of maintaining oral health and of the understanding of the relationship between oral health and general health. This has resulted in an increase in the demands and needs for utilization of both the preventive and dental-care service [3]. To cope with these ever-changing trends, the importance of specialization in the various clinical disciplines and of the advance education and training in general dentistry can never be overemphasized [4]. In UK, an estimated 75% of the total dental treatment workload going to prosthodontics prompted the authorities for introducing the specialty of restorative dentistry long ago in 1973 and that in the USA more than 90% dental treatments performed by dentists involves esthetic dental procedures [5].

Edentulism in Pakistan occupies an estimated 4.1% of the total population aged 65 years and above, with a projected increase to 9.3% by 2030. Since there has been an increase in the life expectancy of elderly individuals, prosthodontic treatment needs and thus, the number of adults over the age of 65 years seeking dental treatment has increased [6]. Statistics related to dental practice among European countries has shown private dental practitioners providing higher fixed prosthodontic treatments as compared to

dentists in the public sector. By contrast, dentists in public health care report provision of higher number of removable prosthesis fabricated. A similar trend of decrease in the provision of removable prosthesis as compared to fixed prosthesis among developing countries has been observed [7]. Furthermore, it has been estimated that the requirement for removable partial and complete denture prosthesis may surpass the provision of these prosthesis by oral health care professionals during the upcoming 20 years.

Aims and objectives

The basic aim of the study is to analyse the prosthodontics as a Dental Specialty in Pakistan and its future implementations.

MATERIAL AND METHODS:

This cross sectional study was conducted in Prosthodontics Department, Nishtar Institute of Dentistry, Multan during January 2019 to August 2019. Along with practitioner of various specialties, GDPs included in the study were graduate dentists and were currently employed, owning or working in private practice, must have two years of experience after basic dental qualification and also have a valid dental council (PMDC) practicing license. The data was collected through a questionnaire. Five hundred questionnaires along with a letter stating about the instructions, rationale and intention of the survey, were randomly distributed. Students of the research group collected data through personal visits to six dental institutions of Multan and Lahore.

Statistical analysis

The data was collected and analysed using SPSS version 19.0. All the values were expressed in mean and standard deviation.

RESULTS:

Out of the 500 surveys distributed, 150 questionnaires from practicing dentist were considered eligible for study. The response rate was 30 percent. Table 1 displays the distribution of the various specialties in dentistry represented by the respondents. Among the total respondents, 15.5% (n = 23) of participants belonged to teaching hospitals only and 84.6% (n = 127) practiced at both places.

Table 01: Analysis of distribution of specialities among the respondents

		Freque nc y	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Private practice only	0	0	0	0
	Teaching hospital only	23	15.3	15.3	15.3
	Both	127	84.6	84.6	84.6
	Total	150	100.0	100.0	

Major Milestones

During the past period of 2001 – 2011, in which the FCPS-II examinations are regularly held by the college, 61 trainees have passed their FCPS in the specialty of Prosthodontics with more than this figure of trainees, either ready or to be soon ready for appearing in the forthcoming examinations. So far, from my department and under my supervision, 8 FCPS and 2 MCPS in Prosthodontics have passed. An additional 31 trainees already inducted under my supervision are in the various phases / years of their training leading to eligibility for appearing in the FCPS-II & MCPS Examination. The passed 61 FCPS in prosthodontics are in addition to the 27 MCPS level Prosthodontics Specialists already qualified from the CPSP. As for the data available on 10 January, 12 Centers / prosthodontics departments at the various public and private sector dental colleges in the country with one abroad have been accredited for imparting clinical training for MCPS and FCPS-II in the specialty of prosthodontics [8].

Existing and Future Plans

We at the Faculty of Prosthodontics have planned for bringing several improvements and strengthening of our existing activities. The faculty has already established the specialty association with the name Pakistan Prosthodontics Association (PPA) with myself as its President Elect for the Year 2013. The PPA is holding the first International Conference in October 2012 in Lahore with all lectures and workshops / seminars by world renowned teachers of prosthodontics from Europe and USA including the President of the European Prosthodontics Association [9].

DISCUSSION:

The results of the current study showed that only 10% of the responding dentists belonged to the speciality of prosthodontics. Rest of the practitioners belonged to other specialties and were providing prosthodontic services on their own. Many studies have shown that the practitioners usually spend most of their time treating adults themselves and refer a very small number of patients to specialist prosthodontists and confirms that many treatments involve fixed restorations [6]. A study was conducted by Ellis et al which focused on referrals to the restorative department of a general hospital in Europe. Their results indicated that referrals for prosthodontic treatment were low as compared to the referrals requests for endodontic and periodontal treatments. One possible explanation for the low referrals could be that the present study was conducted in Karachi city where the number of practicing specialist prosthodontists is low in comparison to specialists of other dental specialties [11].

CONCLUSION:

It is concluded that the provision of Implant supported restorations is showing a gradual increase. The practice patterns and trends which were revealed in the current survey surely has potential implications for private dental practitioners, the patients seeking prosthodontic treatment, curriculum of dental schools and dental continuing education programs.

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