

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

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Letter to the Editor regarding medical students' perception toward neurosurgery as a career: a cross-sectional study

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Kaleem et al. [1] in this engrossing article presented an overview of perception of medical students toward the field of neurosurgery and enrolling in neurosurgical training programs. This article provides an insight into the mindset of undergraduates and may guide the institutions to meet the demands of aspirants. The study also attempts to fill the knowledge gap and motivate the young minds to pursue an influential career in neurosurgery.

In a similar context, the study conducted by Mokhtari et al. [2] described the perspective of medical students in Iran to opt for residency in neurosurgery and indicated that female decisions were particularly influenced by duration of residency, number of on-calls and stress levels. Chan et al. [3] in his research in the Philippines concluded that merely 18.7% students were interested in pursuing neurosurgery as a career. Balogun et al. [4] in his study appreciated the willingness of final year medical students of Nigeria to enroll in neurosurgery and concluded that the number of interested candidates is low and sex disparity profoundly exists.

These studies recognize the extensive efforts by the world neurosurgery community to comprehend the outlook and inclination of medical students toward opting neurosurgery as a career branch and imply that

paramount changes are required to draw more students and increase workforce in neurosurgery.

The fundamental objective of this article is to assess the status of perception and apprehension of contemporary medical undergraduates regarding neurosurgery as a branch and to highlight the necessity of exposure to neurosurgery before graduation.

However, we do not completely agree with the results of the study as it majorly involves some of students leaving out more than half of the total medical student's population and thus deviating the study from yielding effective conclusions. Further, even if the database was collected after face and content validation, being an online questionnaire survey, renders the source passive for reliable results.

One of the similar study done by Shah et al. [5] concluded that almost 60% of the respondents are willing to consider neurosurgery as a career option, but in our opinion this cannot be held entirely true. It can be understood from an analogy that when students are questioned about opting a stream after high school, a vast majority of students prefers to select the branch which seems alluring among their peers, but eventually they may end up choosing another branch after achieving proper exposure and assessing their personal requirements. Thus, compatibility of a branch can only be concluded after its adequate exposure.

We completely agree with the author that exposure to neurosurgery is negligible in the medical curriculum of undergraduates. Zukerman et al. [6] in his study also elucidated the cruciality of neurosurgery electives for pre-clinical medical students.

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Further, it is adequately highlighted that less number of participants see themselves involved in research in future in India. This indicates it is high time to warrant mandatory exposure to research experience and neurosurgery during medical school. It can be executed in the form of research symposiums, clinical electives, hands-on workshops, didactic lectures or seminars and panel discussion during undergraduate period [7–12].

Indeed, it is a matter of honor and gratification that neurosurgeons from multiple corners of the world are coming together to analyze and understand the frame of mind of students concerning neurosurgery to attract the attention of stakeholders to take obligatory actions and establish better balance of patient doctor ratio by increasing human resource in neurosurgery.

We embrace such gestures by the neurosurgical community and its commitment toward the development of the field to provide outstanding patient care.

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