

## **Editorial**

### **Future of dental graduates in India**

India has 310 dental colleges out of which maximum are in the private sector and very few are in the government sector.<sup>1</sup> India's dentist to population ratio is 1:10,000 in urban areas and one dentist per 1.5 lakh people in the rural areas which suggests an insufficient ratio.<sup>1,2</sup> Around 30,000 dental graduates are added every year.<sup>3,4</sup> It is estimated that there will be more than one lakh dentists in India by 2020.<sup>1,2</sup>

A dental graduate devotes five years of his life to gain knowledge and acquire skills related to dentistry. The current scenario of a fresh graduate is discouraging in our country. The question which haunts the most is: What next? The options available to a recent graduate are opening up a dental clinic which requires a huge investment. The government sector has very few posts available for dentists. Only 5% graduated dentists are employed in the government sector.<sup>1</sup> The entry of corporate dentistry has made things worse for a recent graduate. A new dental graduate seems to be the most exploited personnel who may work for a meagre salary which is less than that of an unskilled worker.<sup>2</sup> The other option of pursuing postgraduation is difficult with only 3,000 seats available.<sup>4</sup> We await to see if NEET (National Eligibility cum Entrance Test) brings about any change in the scenario.

The future of dentistry in India is at stake. If things do not change the day is not far when students will stop opting for dentistry as a career.

The Dental Council and the Government of India needs to think of a solution to the problem of unemployment of graduates. Dentists could be employed in every government healthcare facility. Government and Dental Council should be serious about National oral health policy formulation and allotment of funds to implement these policies. National oral healthcare programmes could be started to improve employment opportunities. Also government funded oral health research agency could employ dentists. Only well established postgraduate dental institutes with adequate infrastructure, sufficient patient inflow, research facility and dedicated full-time faculty should survive.

#### **References**

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