

Dental Public Health Award
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ETHICAL DILEMMAS AMONGST DENTAL STUDENTS: AN INSTITUTIONAL SURVEY

ABSTRACT

Dental surgeons have well-recognized professional and ethical responsibilities. However, as their role and the corresponding responsibilities expand further as the profession evolves, the demands of the profession increase and the context of professional approach may vary. The present study was carried out to assess ethical dilemmas experienced by dental students using a close-ended questionnaire. The questionnaire was distributed amongst 62 dental students attending the clinical program in a dental institution. It explored different clinical scenarios, the doctor-patient relationship, communication, autonomy, and consent. The most common ethical dilemmas encountered by the respondents were patient-related issues followed by treatment-related issues. The respondents, mainly post graduates, felt that the present curriculum on ethics and its practical implications had to be improved. Seventy six per cent believed that dental surgeon-patient relationship is based on beneficence, autonomy, veracity, and confidentiality. Students' perceptions of ethical dilemmas in practice offer a foundation for designing a dental ethics curriculum that is realistic and appropriate to the practice of a dental student.