

EDITORIAL

MEDICAL STUDENTS UNCERTAINTIES TOWARDS THEIR FUTURE CAREER

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The Medical profession is thought to be one of the most fulfilling since it provides respect, financial stability, and service to humanity. These advantages have made medicine a top choice among students for the past two decades. However, career planning in medical field is often marked by significant uncertainties that impact decision-making, motivation, and even mental health, as individuals may struggle with indecision and anxiety. Recently, a large and poorly evaluated influx of students into the medical field has created a problem regarding job opportunities for those who are currently enrolled. This situation is further complicated by market saturation and insufficient support from both the public and private sectors. Furthermore, a lack of psychological assessment both before admission and throughout the academic journey has left students without the necessary guidance for optimal performance and good attitude.¹ Uncertainty about future career is common among medical students, due to a combination of personal, educational, and societal factors. Many students enter this field due to family expectations, which impacts both their job satisfaction and future career choices. For instance, a study revealed that only 25% of students chose medicine by their genuine interest, while 75% entered this field due to parental pressure. These findings are concerning and demand urgent attention, as pressuring children into a challenging

field like medicine may not be a wise decision.² A significant number of students express a desire to work abroad, for a reasons such as higher quality training and better economic opportunities. 70.97% respondents at the Services Institute of Medical Sciences preferred foreign training for enhanced career prospects.³ Medical student's show limited interest in rural practice, instead gravitating towards specialized fields in urban settings, only 7.8% of students in a survey planned to pursue primary care, even though rural areas face critical shortages in healthcare providers. Many hold negative perceptions of primary healthcare and rural services. This trend poses a risk to healthcare access for much of the population, and a more balanced, community-focused curriculum could help to foster positive attitudes toward the country's primary healthcare system.⁴ A cross sectional study involving 1,126 medical and dental students across public and private sectors, from March 1 to March 15, 2023 found that 21.8% students would consider switching careers primarily due to high academic pressure and limited psychological support.⁵ Burnout among medical students is also a major contributor to career uncertainty. Burnout is significantly influenced by factors such as age, gender, having doctor parents, lack of peer support and limited time off, lack of belief in one's work, fear of failure, family responsibilities, and an uncertain future. Recognizing these everyday

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factors should encourage the adoption of effective coping strategies to help students manage burnout.⁶ Another study showed that while 66% of students entered the medical field by choice, some later regretted their decision. Although 93% expressed an interest in specializing, 56% had yet to choose a specific field, indicating a clear need for career guidance. Many students chose medicine voluntarily but later felt uncertain. Career counseling seminars could help raise awareness about specialization

options, encouraging students to explore sub-specialties and public health.⁷ A subsequent study revealed that 74% of male students and 94% of female students were uncertain about their career choices. This uncertainty was especially common among early-year students, influenced by factors like academic stress and a desire to switch fields. Most students (64.7%) felt that their university was not doing enough to raise career awareness, and 80.3% reported a lack of effective career planning courses. These issues likely contribute to students' ongoing career uncertainties.⁸ Career uncertainty among medical students arises from external pressures, insufficient support for diverse career options, burn out and limited encouragement and incentives for local practice. This highlights the need for improved career counseling and structural reforms in medical education to better align students' goals with national healthcare needs. As young doctors becoming increasingly disconnected from the national health system, understanding their career preferences is become essential. Policy-makers should critically assess and promote fields that are less favored, motivating students to pursue them.

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CONFLICT OF INTEREST
Authors declare no conflict of interest.
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