

Are you a pathologist by choice or by chance?

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Abstract:

Introduction: Pathology is a unique medical speciality in that pathologists serve as consultants to other physicians by diagnosing the disease process through examination of organs & bodily fluids through microscope without seeing patient directly.

Aim: The study was undertaken to know the reason for doctors choosing pathology as their carrier.

Methodology: Pathologists who were attending a continuing medical education (CME) program in pathology in Bangalore were given set of preformed questionnaires to know the reason behind choosing pathology as a carrier.

Results: Out of 75 delegates who attended CME 42 pathologists returned duly filled questionnaire. Among 42 pathologists half of pathologists (50%) chose pathology so that they can concentrate on both carrier and family, majority about 90% (38) regret for choosing pathology.

Conclusion: Pathology is a vital speciality for continued practice of medicine. In our study we received mixed reviews from pathologists for choosing pathology as their carrier options.

Need for the study :

Speciality choice is becoming a real challenge for medical student after completing MBBS. Medical students and interns have no idea of contribution of pathologist in treating patients. Pathology and laboratory medicine are like a bridge between basic sciences and clinical discipline, comparable to the stem of a tree that connects the root and the branches which bear leaves, flowers and fruits of the tree.

The importance of pathology and the role of pathologist in intraoperative diagnosis , diagnostic procedures like bone marrow aspiration / biopsy ,needle aspiration , transfusion services etc., qualifies the subject to be included under clinical speciality.

What is the impulse to become a pathologist? Is it by choice or chance? In an attempt to find an answer to the same, the present study was undertaken.

Methodology:

This is a cross sectional study on pathologists who were attending a continuing medical education(CME) program in pathology in Bangalore. To know why they chose pathology and what were the advantages and disadvantages related to their pathology career, a prevalidated questioner was distributed to 75 delegates, who were present in one session of CME in lecture hall. These delegates were faculty from different medical colleges, belonging to various categories viz Assistant

Professor, Professor and Head of the department and postgraduate students.

They were requested to answer the questionnaire and return the same to the reception counter by the end of the day.

Results :

At the end of the day's session 42 pathologists (56%) had returned the duly filled questionnaire. Of which 8(19%) were faculty and 34(80%) postgraduate students. 33(78%) were females and 9(21%) were males. 22(52%) were married and the rest 20(48%) were unmarried.

Various colleges and hospitals to which they belonged were, ESI Bangalore, Kidwai memorial hospital Bangalore, JJM medical college Davangere, SSIMS & RC Davangere, JSS medical college Mysore, KIMS Hubli , RRMCH Bangalore, SDM Davangere, MVJ Medical college Hoskete.

Fifty percent(21) of the pathologists chose pathology so that they can concentrate on both carrier and family. Nineteen (45%) were genuinely interested in subject, for 15(35%) people intellectual challenge and logical reasoning 14(33%) underlying pathological diagnosis was the reason for choosing pathology. People who took pathology because they found it to be a comfortable branch 12 (28%) without night duties 9(21%). 11 people (26%) had chosen pathology because

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there was no other option. Least common reason for choosing pathology was that there were no surgical procedures involved in the subject 3 (7%). Thirty eight people (90%) had regrets for choosing pathology. The reason for regretting to have chosen pathology were low level of patients recognition(39%), sticking to microscope (29%), formalin hazards(18%) and less earning(13%).

Discussion :

In our study, we found two category of pathologist, those who chose pathology by choice & those who chose by chance.

An attraction to intellectual challenge and logical reasoning was the prominent motivation for entering into pathology, reasonable work hours and good life style, time spent with family and colleagues was central characteristics for choosing pathology as a carrier.^{2,4}

Most pathologists regret (35%) because of less

patient recognition, lose of gratification of saving a patient's life. Patients aren't going to thank pathologists because they diagnose difficult cases, patients gratitude is primarily towards physician. Thus, pathologists are not recognized as experts – only “facilitators of learning” rather than “teachers of knowledge”.³

Conclusion:

In modern era, pathology is no longer considered as Paraclinical branch it's going to be considered as a clinical branch.

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