

EVALUATION OF UNDERGRADUATE DENTAL CURRICULUM FOR IRANIAN STUDENTS STUDYING IN INDIA : A PILOT STUDY

Askari F¹, Sutradhar W², Chowdhary R³

1. Undergraduate student, Rajarajeswari dental college and hospital, Bengaluru, India

2. Post graduate student, Department of Prosthodontic, Rajarajeswari dental college and hospital, Bengaluru-India.

3. Professor and Guide, Department of Prosthodontic, Rajarajeswari dental college and hospital, Bengaluru, India.

ABSTRACT:

Purpose: Dental education in India was formally established in 1920s, when Dr. R Ahmed started the first dental college in Calcutta. Until the 1960s, all dental colleges in India were government-aided colleges. Dental education is a unique form of health professional education. This is because the clinical training component largely occurs within the dental school and involves students carrying out irreversible patient interventions early in their education.¹

Currently, the duration of undergraduate dental training in India is five years, including one year of compulsory internship. At the end of each year of the program, the clinical skills and theoretical knowledge of each student are evaluated through practical patient-based exams, oral exams, and written exams. The students rotate through various dental specialties after the completion of the formal coursework and examinations given during the first four years of the program.³ The aim of the study was to evaluate the undergraduate dental curriculum for Iranian students studying in India.

Materials and methods: This survey was done in 10 colleges in and around Bangalore amongst the Iranian dental students to evaluate the dental curriculum in India. A questionnaire was formulated which consisted of questions ranging from relationship of the students to the professors.

Conclusion: This current study aimed at focusing on the problems faced by the Iranian students studying in dental colleges in India. It showed the problems that needs to be looked upon and improved.

Keywords: Iranian students, dental education, dental curriculum



INTRODUCTION:

Dental education in India was formally established in 1920s, when Dr. R Ahmed started the first dental college in Calcutta. Until the 1960s, all dental colleges in India were government-aided colleges. Dental education is a unique form of health professional education. This is because the clinical training component largely occurs within the dental school and involves students carrying out irreversible patient interventions early in their

education.^[1] The number of dental schools grew significantly in the past two decades, with a recent report indicating that, of the 185 dental schools in India, a majority are private.^[2] Perhaps not surprisingly, previous research indicates that dental education (and particularly the clinical component) is stressful for many students.

Universities in India have a very high ranking and are capable to compete

with the very best all over the world. Foreign students prefer Education in India because the standard of education is equivalent for both the Indian as well as foreign students. Dental Education in India is relatively affordable, compared to other parts of the world and almost all Universities in India are open and available for International Students. Academic globalization and demographic changes in India have created a situation in which future professionals have begun to see themselves as part of international scientific exchange and communication.

Currently, the duration of undergraduate dental training in India is five years, including one year of compulsory internship. At the end of each year of the program, the clinical skills and theoretical knowledge of each student are evaluated through practical patient-based exams, oral exams, and written exams. The students rotate through various dental specialties after the completion of the formal coursework and examinations given during the first four years of the program.^[3]

Aim- the aim of the study was to evaluate the undergraduate dental curriculum for Iranian students studying in India.

MATERIALS AND METHODS:

This survey was done in 10 colleges in and around Bangalore amongst the Iranian dental students to evaluate the

dental curriculum in India. A questionnaire was formulated which consisted of questions ranging from relationship of the students to the professors

RESULTS:

The current questionnaire showed that most the Iranian students think that 44 Of the total of 80 students thought that the communication between the students and teachers was not satisfactory.

46 of the total 80 students thought that they gain little from the theory classes taught in the dental schools in Bangalore. 46% of the students think that their communication and verbal skills are a mandatory prerequisite for them to study in India. 37 of the total students believe that there aren't enough educational facilities present in the institutions. A total of 52 students believe that the practical classes for the basic sciences should be increased for better perception of the subjects.

77.5% of the students believe that multiple-choice questions are a better option for examination and evaluation purposes. 43 students believe that there are enough patients for the training of the Iranian students in the institutions. Of the total students 59 and 47 students respectively told that they would not prefer doing Post-graduation in India and that India was not a correct decision for doing BDS (question only for interns).

DISCUSSION:

The perception of dental curriculum is very important to gain interest of the graduating students.^[4] From the current study, the curriculum of dental schools in India seems to be difficult for the Iranian students studying in India as they feel its not beneficial and helpful for them. Almost all the foreign students have a language barrier, which adds to their problems. This can be solved by implementation of compulsory English courses before they join the Dental schools. This questionnaire tries to look into the problems and difficulties faced by the Iranian students studying in dental schools in India. Although this questionnaire alone cannot highlight the problems or the difficulties faced by these students, but it can give a clear idea as to what they might be facing.

Opinions of the learning experience showed an overall dissatisfaction amongst the students, concerning the basic science classes, the examination pattern, theory classes etc. many of the students were not satisfied with the student-teacher communication, and felt that there was a gap. The teachers should be more approachable and should be more supportive to these students as they already have a language barrier.

The students also supported the idea of MCQ based examinations and wanted more interactive methods and

demonstrations. This need for change in teaching-learning methods is consistent with the opinion of medical educators who support more interactive sessions to foster an active learning process.^[5] Bringing about a change in current teaching- learning methods is currently based on recommendations of a board of studies at the university level and is based on the prescribed curriculum by the Gazette notification by the government of India⁶ that is subsequently implemented by notifications of the Dental Council of India. There is a need to incorporate a need-based curriculum, in which the curriculum development process involves the needs of students, the community, dental clinicians, and dental researchers. Additionally, an overwhelming majority of the students agreed that an internship is a necessary part of the curriculum. This supports the recent decision by the Dental Council of India to go back to a curriculum in which an internship is a part of the program.^[6]

The lack of competence in performing important clinical procedures like root canal treatment of posterior teeth and placement of fixed prosthesis is of great concern as these are the most common treatment needs in our population. This emphasizes the fact that our dental school should earnestly revise the current curriculum and consider the competency- based education system that is the norm in many dental schools elsewhere in the

world. A study of West Australian dental graduates found that most perceived themselves to be prepared, competent, and confident to practice as dentists.^[7]

Most of the students do not prefer to do Post-graduation in India after their completion of their course and many of the interns feel that their decision was not correct in choosing India as the place to do their BDS. Although the perception of these students does not solely depend on their expectations and their levels of

self-perceived competence as they may not match the perceived competence standards. Although taking these into considerations the current curriculum needs to change and be made friendly to these students.

CONCLUSION:

This current study aimed at focusing on the problems faced by the Iranian students studying in dental colleges in India. It showed the problems that needs to be looked upon and improved.

REFERENCES:

1. Tandon S. Challenges to the oral health workforce in India. J Dent Educ 2004;68(7 Suppl):28–33.
2. Komabayashi T, Raghuraman K, Raghuraman R, Toda S, Kawamura M, Levine SM, Bird WF. Dental education in India and Japan: implications for U.S. dental programs for foreign-trained dentists. J Dent Educ 2005;69(4):461–9.
3. Elangovan, S., Allareddy, V., Singh, F., Taneja, P. and Karimbux, N., 2010. Indian dental education in the new millennium: challenges and opportunities. *Journal of dental education*, 74(9), pp.1011-1016.
4. Shetty, V.B., Shirahatti, R.V. and Pawar, P., 2012. Students' perceptions of their education on graduation from a dental school in India. *Journal of dental education*, 76(11), pp.1520-1526.
5. Ridley RT. Interactive teaching: a concept analysis. J Nurs Educ 2007;46(5):203–9.
6. Government of India. Revised B.D.S. course (3rd amend- ment) regulation. The Gazette of India, Part III, Section 4, No. 176, New Delhi, August 25, 2011.
7. Arena G, Kruger E, Holley D, Millar S, Tennant M. Western Australian dental graduates' perception of preparedness to practice: a five-year follow-up. J Dent Educ 2007;71(9):1217–22.

8. Tandon S. Challenges to the oral health workforce in India. *J Dent Educ* 2004;68(7 Suppl):28–33.
9. Komabayashi T, Raghuraman K, Raghuraman R, Toda S, Kawamura M, Levine SM, Bird WF. Dental education in India and Japan: implications for U.S. dental programs for foreign-trained dentists. *J Dent Educ* 2005;69(4):461–9.
10. Elangovan, S., Allareddy, V., Singh, F., Taneja, P. and Karimbux, N., 2010. Indian dental education in the new millennium: challenges and opportunities. *Journal of dental education*, 74(9), pp.1011-1016.
11. Shetty, V.B., Shirahatti, R.V. and Pawar, P., 2012. Students' perceptions of their education on graduation from a dental school in India. *Journal of dental education*, 76(11), pp.1520-1526.
12. Ridley RT. Interactive teaching: a concept analysis. *J Nurs Educ* 2007;46(5):203–9.
13. Government of India. Revised B.D.S. course (3rd amend- ment) regulation. The Gazette of India, Part III, Section 4, No. 176, New Delhi, August 25, 2011.
14. Arena G, Kruger E, Holley D, Millar S, Tennant M. Western Australian dental graduates' perception of preparedness to practice: a five-year follow-up. *J Dent Educ* 2007;71(9):1217–22.

ANNEXURE 1

The following questionnaire was made to evaluate the above-mentioned aim of the study:

1. Is the communication relationship between the students and professors satisfactory?
2. How much do the Iranian students learn in theoretical classes?
3. Are the communication and verbal skills of Iranian students a kind of prerequisite?
4. Are there suitable educational facilities in the college premises and classrooms?
5. Given basic science subjects, do we need to increase practical classes?
6. Is multiple choice exams better than explanation examinations?
7. Regarding practical training is there enough patient available for Iranian students?
8. How can the clinical experience be increased?
9. How many preferred to do Postgraduate in India?
10. After BDS, do you feel it was correct to choose India for BDS
11. (only for interns)?

TABLES :

	Question 1			Question 2			Question 3			Question 4			Question 5		
	Yes	No	Don't Know	Little	Average	No idea	Yes	No	Don't Know	Yes	No	Don't know	Yes	No	Don't know
College 1	18	28	5	24	24	2	30	6	13	24	23	3	26	22	2
College 2	2	4	-	6	-	-	1	2	3	1	3	2	6	-	-
College 3	4	-	-	3	1	-	1	-	3	1	1	2	4	-	-
College 4	2	-	-	-	2	-	1	-	1	2	-	-	2	-	-
College 5	2	1	-	1	2	-	2	-	1	-	2	1	2	-	1
College 6	2	5	-	7	-	-	-	1	6	2	4	2	4	3	-
College 7	-	3	-	1	-	2	-	-	3	-	1	2	3	-	-
College 8	1	1	-	1	1	-	1	1	-	1	1	-	2	-	-
College 9	1	2	-	3	-	-	1	2	-	1	2	-	3	-	-

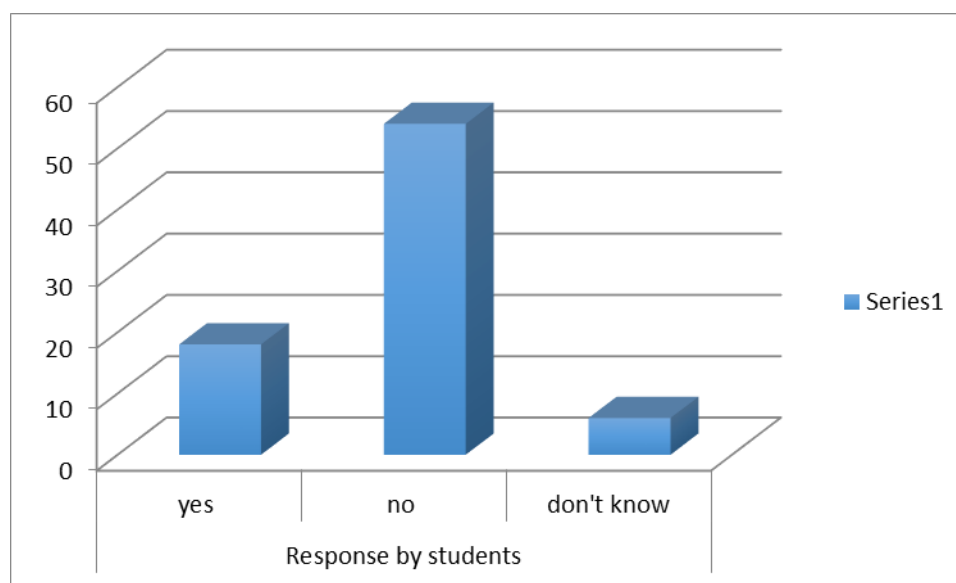
Table .1 . Response from students for Question number 1-5

	Question 6			Question 7			Question 9			Question 10		
	Yes	No	Don't know	Yes	No	Don't know	Yes	No	Don't know	Yes	No	Don't know
College 1	34	15	1	26	14	10	13	33	4	16	24	3
College 2	6	-	-	3	1	1	-	4	2	1	5	-
College 3	4	-	-	2	1	1	-	4	-	-	4	-
College 4	2	-	-	2	-	-	-	2	-	-	2	-
College 5	2	1	-	1	2	-	1	2	-	1	1	1
College 6	7	-	-	2	3	2	-	6	1	-	6	1
College 7	3	-	-	2	1	-	-	3	-	-	3	-
College 8	1	1	-	2	-	-	-	2	-	-	2	-
College 9	3	-	-	3	-	-	-	3	-	-	2	1

Table.2. Response from students for Question number 6-10

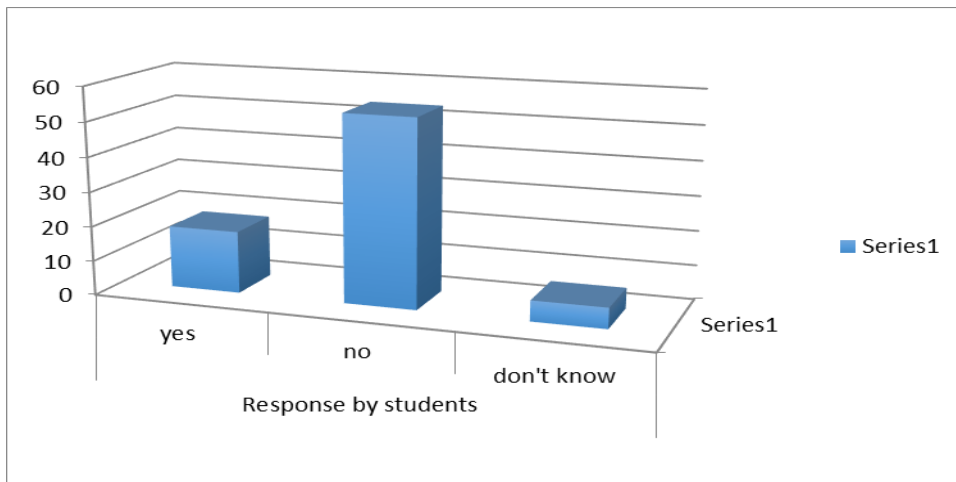
GRAPHS:

Question number 1

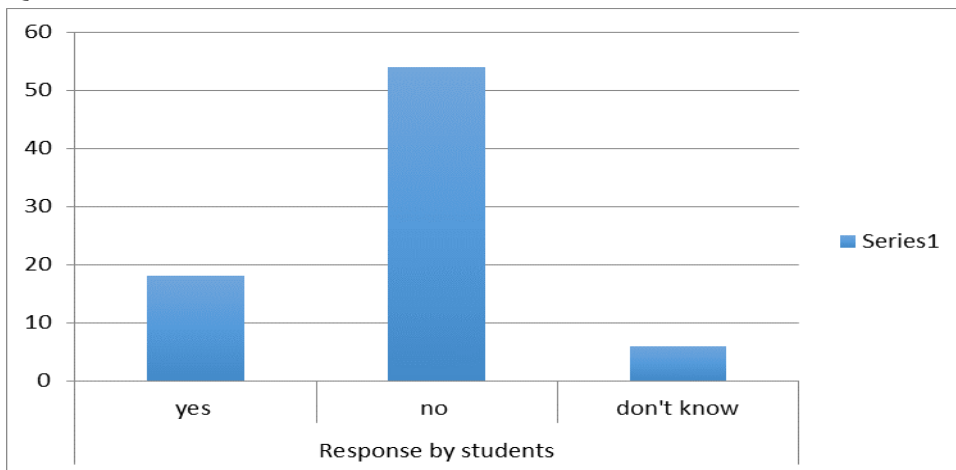


Graph 1. Is the communication relationship between the students and professors satisfactory?

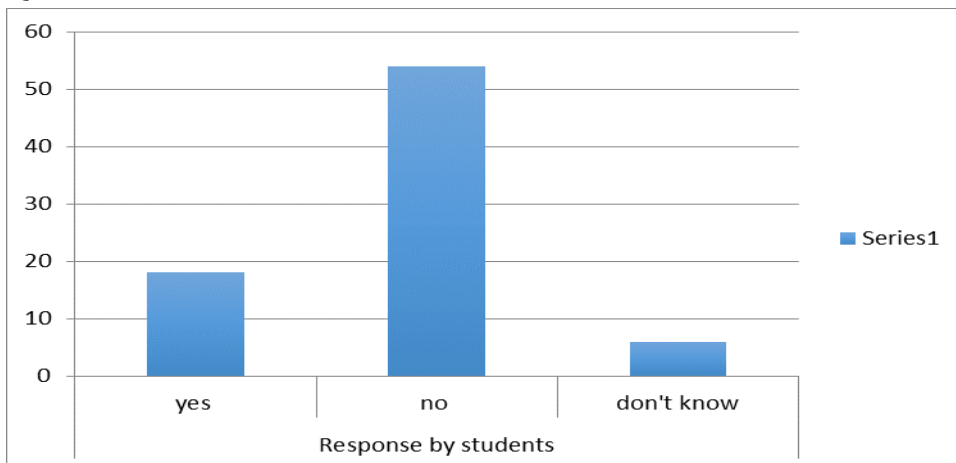
Question number 2



Graph 2 How much do the Iranian students learn in theoretical classes?
Question number 3

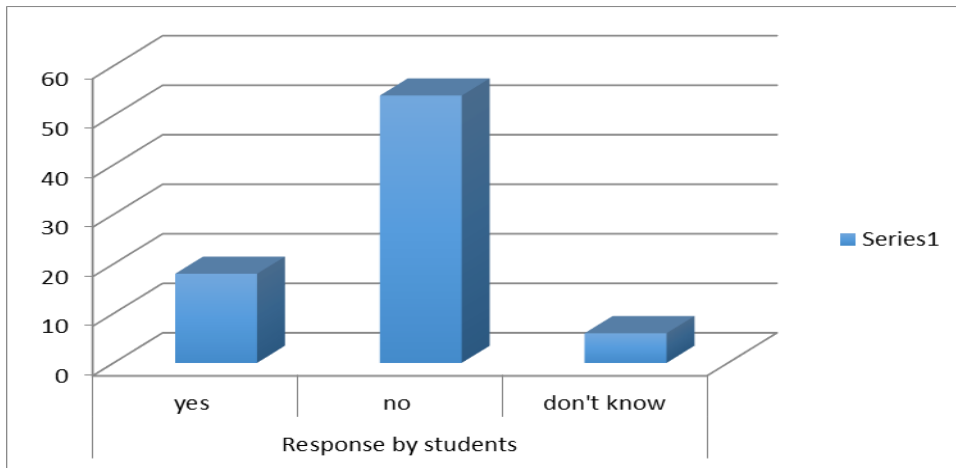


Graph 3 Are the communication and verbal skills of Iranian students a kind of prerequisite?
Question number 4



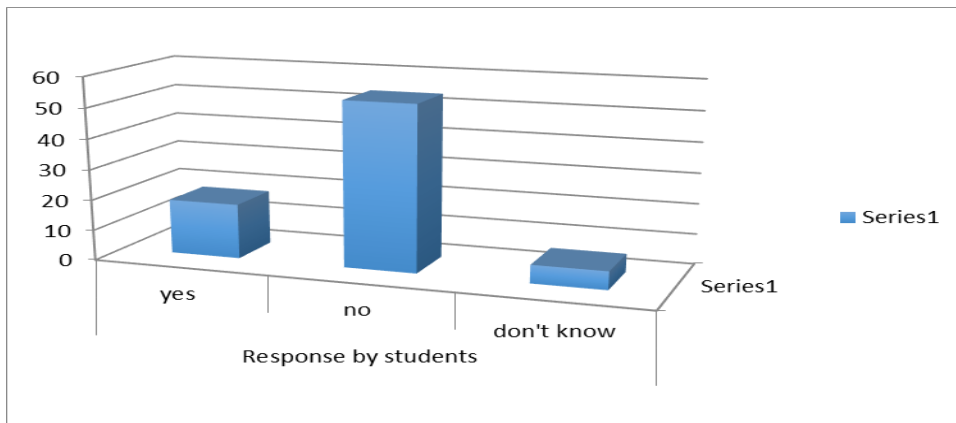
Graph 4 Are there suitable educational facilities in the college premises and classrooms?

Question number 5



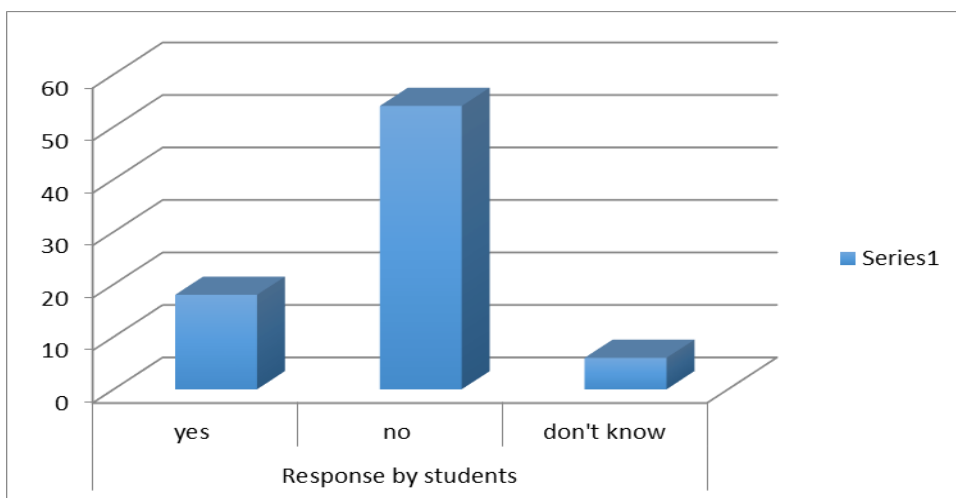
Graph 5 Given basic science subjects, do we need to increase practical classes?

Question number 6



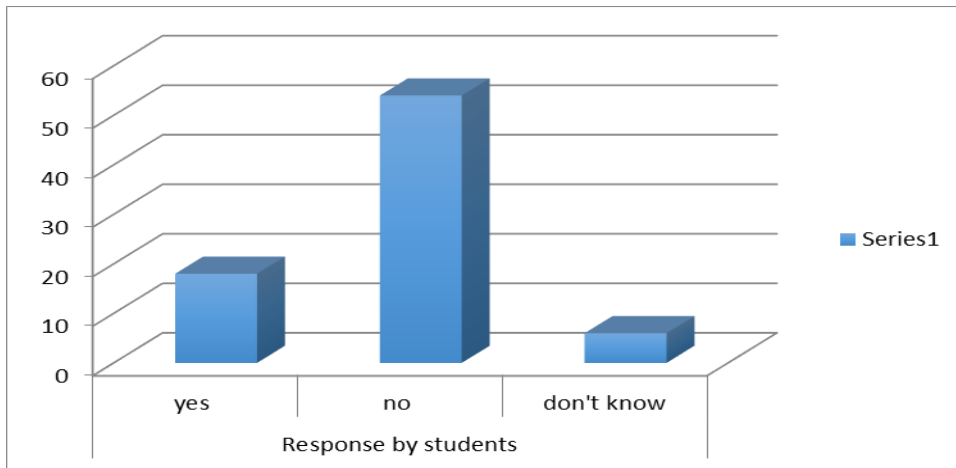
Graph 6 Is multiple choice exams better than explanation examinations?

Question number 7



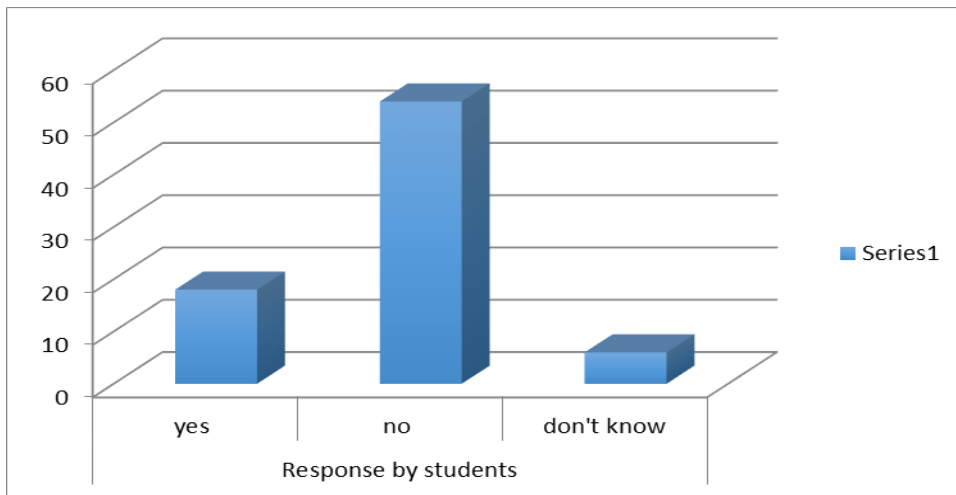
Graph 7 Regarding practical training is there enough patient available for Iranian students?

Question number 9



Graph 9 How many preferred to do Postgraduate in India?

Question number 10



Graph 10 After BDS, do you feel it was correct to choose India for BDS (only for interns)?