



ORIGINAL ARTICLE

Reasons for choosing medical profession as a career / other purposes – a perspective of Pakistani undergraduate medical students.

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Article Citation: Devi S, Siddiqui MS, Siddiqui MK, Sial A, Fatima SN, Siddiqui AM. Reasons for choosing medical profession as a career / other purposes – a perspective of Pakistani undergraduate medical students. Professional Med J 2025; 32(10):1367-1371.
<https://doi.org/10.29309/TPMJ/2025.32.10.9845>

ABSTRACT... Objective: To determine the primary reasons for choosing a medical career, with a particular focus on the role of a medical profession in facilitating marriage prospects. The other objectives were Career choice and decision of post-graduation. **Study Design:** Cross-sectional study. **Setting:** Medical Colleges across Pakistan. **Period:** October 1, 2023, and March 31, 2024. **Methods:** Data were collected randomly using a self-constructed Google form questionnaire based on a Likert scale. A total sample size of 270 participants was collected and was analyzed using SPSS version 26. **Results:** A total of 270 students were invited to participate in the study. Mean age of participants was 21.78 ± 2.42 . Majority of the students were female 70.7 % (191) including 70 from public medical colleges and 121 from private medical colleges. 73.85% female agreed that medical degree facilitate marriage ($P < 0.00$). 78 % study participant replied that career choice was done by themselves ($P < 0.05$). About 76 % were in favour of doing post-graduation. **Conclusion:** Medical education is a challenging yet highly sought-after career choice. This study highlights the evolving trends in selecting medical education, particularly for its dual benefits of professional and social advantages.

Key words: Career Choice, Medicine, Marriage Factor, Under Graduate Medical Students.

INTRODUCTION

Medical professionals are physicians or other health professionals who are authorized to examine, diagnose and treating the sick or ailing people by drugs, surgical operations or other related medical means. Medical professional designation also extends to medical students.¹ It is wish and desire of every parent that their child opt medicine as profession being a noblest profession. Perhaps that is why Medicine is still the most sought after profession. Doctors deal with suffering humanity, patients come with pain, agony and disability, after kind and humble efforts of them and the mercy of Allah they return healthy and comfortable. In response doctors achieve respect, prayers and blessings.²

A career in Medicine can be very rewarding owing to the reality that, doctors make a real difference to peoples life by helping to alleviate

pain and suffering, they face all kinds of practical and intellectual challenges, and the fact that they remain always in demand.³ Various factors do influence the choice of medicine among students worldwide which include self-interest, family pressure, friend's pressure, and socio economic status.^{4,5}

In Pakistan it is a fact that the girl students occupy the top merit seats of all public medical colleges, but this is a ground reality that most of them don't do practice and remained confined to their domestic responsibilities. This is the reason why only boys' specific Public medical colleges are opened in Pakistan. For girls, medical degree is a license to get surety of their marriage. Realizing this, many investors turned towards investing their money on opening new private medical colleges.

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Article received on:

16/05/2025

Date of revision:

02/07/2025

Accepted for publication:

23/07/2025

Pakistan Medical and Dental Council (PMDC) is the statutory body of the Government releases the number of medical graduate annually. In 2023 the number of medical graduates in Pakistan were 299,113 for 241,500,000 people of population (1/807 doctor population ratio).⁶ However the ground reality is quite different because no statistics are available for women doctors particularly the fresh graduates about their physical availability in the field.

The aim of this cross sectional study was to determine the different reasons which compel students selecting medical as career with specific emphasis on to analyze the factor that girls (and their parents) want to get the medical degree for to make surety of marriage.

METHODS

A cross sectional study was conducted for medical students from both private and public medical colleges across Pakistan. Duration of study was six months from 01 October 2023 to 31 March 2024. Included group comprised of students of 1st year, 2nd year, 3rd year, 4th year, and final year MBBS currently enrolled at Public & Private medical colleges in Pakistan. Excluded group was Non-medical undergraduate students, postgraduates, and employees. Random sampling (every 2nd respondent's data was chosen for further analysis) was done. The Sample size was 270. Likert Scale Questionnaire for the study was used for data collection. Data was analyzed and processed using SPSS-26 software. Significance level was set at $p < 0.05$. The research was conducted after approval from ethical departmental review board (DRB Project No: 3/2023-24 student 10-10-2024) on internet using a self-constructed Google form questionnaire. Informed consent was taken for data collection from subjects and their anonymity was strictly respected.

RESULTS

A total of 270 students were invited to participate in the study. Mean age of participants was 21.78 ± 2.42 . The response rate was 100 %. Majority of the students were female 70.7 % (191). 121 females were from private medical colleges while

70 were from public medical colleges. Male were only 28.39 % (79) including 39 of Public Medical colleges and 40 from Private Medical colleges.

Study variables included sociodemographic like gender, age, year of study, affiliated institute and choice of the respondent. Likert scale variables were choosing medical as career, passion for profession, social influences and income. On analysis, Cronbach's alpha was not significant. The highest value was of income (0.643) and lowest was social influence (0.231). Our main focus of analysis was to analyze the response on medical degree versus surety of marriage. The response is given in Figure-1.

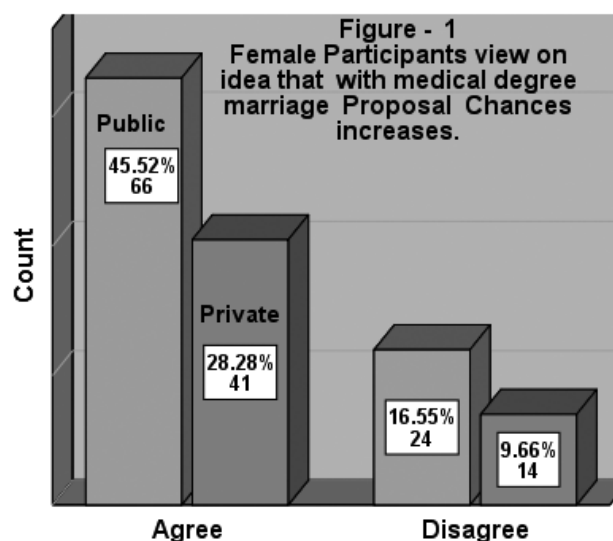


Figure-1

Maximum response was in favour of from first year MBBS female students as shown in Figure-2.

Career choice decision of the respondents was as per Table-I ($P < 0.05$).

Reply of Opting medical career helps in making prestige and respect in Society is given in Table-II ($P < 0.002$).

Response on Post-graduation is given in Table-III ($P < 0.05$).

		1st Year	2nd Year	3rd Year	4th Year	5th Year	
To become doctor was?	your choice	58	23	45	58	27	P<0.05 211
	your parents' choice	6	10	13	23	7	
		64	33	58	81	34	270

Table-I. Decision maker of your career.

				Total
		Male	Female	
Does medical gives you prestige and respect in society?	Agree	64	179	P < 0.002 243
	Neutral	9	10	
	disagree	6	2	
Total		79	191	270

Table-II. Does medical gives you prestige and respect in society?

		Institution You Belong?		Total
		Public	Private	
Will you continue to pursue residency after your MBBS graduation?	agree	79	126	P < 0.05 205
	neutral	22	28	
	disagree	8	7	
Total		109	161	270

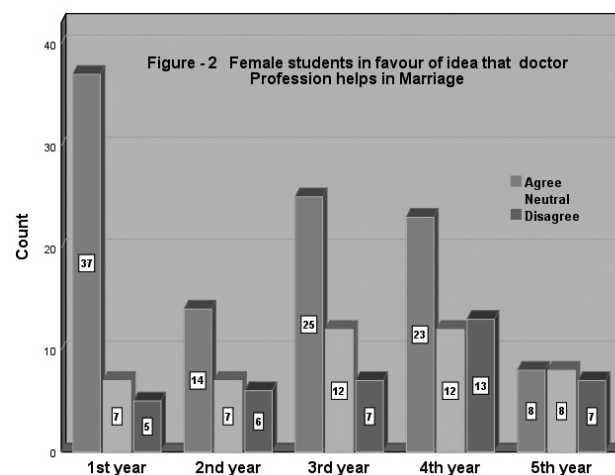
Table-III. Will you continue to pursue residency after your MBBS graduation?
Institution you belong? Cross tabulation

Figure-2

Patriotic spirits motivation towards medical selection reply was significant ($P < 0.003$).

Significant response was also noted on asking Medical profession is indeed a high income profession ($P < 0.023$).

DISCUSSION

The choice of medicine as a higher study depends upon various factors such as interest in the medical field, good job opportunities, and a desire to serve others, medical background of the parents and many more.⁷⁻¹⁰

Our study main focus was critically analyzing the inclination of girls towards getting admission in medical colleges at any cost. It is a general fact that in Pakistan to find marriage proposal for a girl is very difficult. A huge proportion of middle class population is struggling to find an appropriate match for their loved one. This trend encouraged many commercial entrepreneurs to come into the field of opening new medical colleges being a profitable business.

Medicine is extremely sought after professional education in Pakistan especially by the women. Our study confirmed that the girl's first choice of opting professional education was medicine. By opting this they in real sense confirmed

their marriage candidacy ($P < 0.000$). Trend of accepting this fact was observed in first year MBBS students. We observed this response was not from final year students probably as they replied keeping in view the ground reality. We found in our study that the decision for joining medical college was concerned person's own choice. Studies in Sudan, Saudi Arabia, India and Finland, found self-interest a motive for 70.6%, 86.4%, 82.6% and 77–82% of the study participants' respectively.¹¹⁻¹⁴ In our Study 60.7 % respondents replied positive for serving the community at low cost. In India few studies conducted among medical students have reported 'to serve the community' (58.5%)¹⁵ and 'to serve poor and needy' (93%)¹⁶ (25.3%)¹⁷ as the major motivational factor. In our study 75.9 % participants showed interest in post-graduation (Male 30.24%, Female 69.76%). Whereas a study in India¹⁷ found 96.03 %. (Male 63.6%, Female 36.4 %). The study respondents significantly replied in favour of acquiring prestige and respect in society after becoming a medical doctor (90% $P < 0.002$). The Sudanese study¹¹ observed a 62.4 % result. Significant results were found, on question of medical a high income profession ($P < 0.023$). On question of patriotic spirit in selection of medical profession, a significant response was noted ($P < 0.003$).

CONCLUSION

The medical profession is demanding yet popular among female students, often due to marriage prospects and income potential. Many decide early, driven by prestige, respect, and a desire to serve the community. Educational policies and career counseling should support and encourage them to pursue further studies in medicine.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We would like to thank medical students of different private and public medical colleges for their enthusiastic participation and valuable feedback in the research. We also thank the Faculty of Community Medicine, Indus Medical College University of Modern Sciences Tando Muhammad Khan for making this research possible.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

SOURCE OF FUNDING

This research received no specific grant from any funding agency in the public, commercial, or not-for-profit sectors.

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AUTHORSHIP AND CONTRIBUTION DECLARATION

1	Sanjana Devi: Data collection, analysis.
2	Muhammad Saeed Siddiqui: Review of manuscript, paper writing.
3	Muhammad Khalid Siddiqui: Data collection, paper writing.
4	Ashfaq Sial: Discussion writing, review of manuscript.
5	Syeda Nargis Fatima: Literature review, data entry.
6	Ashhad Mazhar Siddiqui: Data analysis, review of manuscript.