

Ten-year trend of knowledge, attitude, practice, and self-reported competency of Iranian senior dental students towards preventive dentistry

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Aims & Objectives: With regard to the importance of preventive dentistry in dental curriculum and considerable role of dentists in this area, the present study investigated knowledge, attitude, practice, and self-reported competency of Iranian senior dental students towards preventive dentistry.

Materials and Methods: Of all Iranian state dental schools, six were selected by stratified random sampling to serve as clusters. All the senior dental students (n=252) in the selected schools were asked to voluntarily complete a standard anonymous questionnaire containing background information, knowledge, attitude, practice, and self-reported competency towards preventive dentistry in spring term 2015. The data was also compared with that gathered in 2005, 2008, and 2011 through the same method. Chi-square test and logistic regression models were used for statistical analyses.

Results: A total of 207 students (response rate of 82.1%) completed the questionnaire of whom 57% were women. In logistic regression models, students whose mothers had an academic education, had the highest practice scores towards preventive dentistry (P= 0.009, OR=2.26, 95% CI=1.28-3.97). Moreover, a higher score on preventive practice among the students was associated with their positive attitudes (P=0.005, OR=2.91, 95% CI=1.51-5.62) towards prevention. Investigation of the ten-year trend showed that the students in 2011 and 2014 were more likely to acquire a practice score in the highest quartile compared to those in 2005 and 2008, which was a difference near to significant (P=0.06)

Conclusions: Despite some favorable changes in dental curricula, preventive dentistry has not found its real position among dental students. Appropriate planning is necessary to promote present situation among dental students.

Key words: knowledge, attitude, professional practice, dental students, preventive dentistry