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Statement

Current status and expected future direction of the prosthodontic speciality in India

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ABSTRACT

A person with a basic bachelors degree, BDS, from a college/university recognized by the Dental Council of India (DCI) becomes eligible for a Master of Dental Surgery (MDS) in prosthodontics at a college/university recognized by DCI. For this three (3) years Programme of Master of Dental Surgery course with a dissertation, the student/resident has to go through a syllabus as set by the university and approved by the DCI. The continued official approval/certification thereafter is not present in India but all dentists have to get 20 Continued Education points every year for renewal of their DCI registration (though it's only on trial basis right now). Although prosthodontists are officially approved in India but still the common man does not recognize who a prosthodontist is because of lack of awareness. Most general dentists do their prosthetic work themselves, only a small number of them ask for a prosthodontist. Referral to another office is rare, usually the prosthodontist visits the GP's office for consultation and treatment. There is undoubtedly need of continuous certification/evaluation system of the prosthodontists and so is the need of making the masses aware of presence and role of such specialists in India. The Indian Prosthodontic Society is taking initiative to address this issue.

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India is a vast country with its population in 2012 at 1,220,200,000 (1.22 billion) [1].

The total male population in India is about 628,800,000 (628.8 million) as compared to the total female population of 591,400,000 (591.4 million). The sex ratio is 940 females per 1000 males.

Today 50% of India's current population is in age structure from 0 to 25 years. The prosthodontic needs are therefore diverse and different.

The prosthodontic specialist is officially approved in India by The Dental Council of India – a statutory body – constituted on 12th April 1949 under an Act of Parliament – the Dentists Act, 1948 (XVI of 1948) with a view to regulate the dental education, dental profession and dental ethics thereto [2].

Awareness: Unfortunately, the common man does not still recognize who a prosthodontist is. The common man still does not know the difference between a general dentist and a prosthodontist. Since the awareness is very less, there is a

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definite need to educate the population and make them aware of the specialized oral rehabilitation and treatment a prosthodontist can offer.

The requirements to be a prosthodontic specialist are a basic bachelors degree, BDS, from a Dental Council of India (DCI) (Statutory Professional Regulatory Body) recognized college or university and a Master of Dental Surgery (MDS) from a DCI recognized college or university.

During the Master of Dental Surgery programme, the student/resident has to go through a syllabus as set by the university and approved by the DCI, Govt. of India (Department of Health), Ministry of Health & Family Welfare.

Minimum of 40 patients per day are required, for recognition of MDS course [2], in the postgraduate department of prosthodontics and crown and bridge for a seat matrix up to 3 seats in the dental college. For such programme the department must cover *preclinical exercises* in:

- (1) Complete dentures,
- (2) Removable partial dentures,
- (3) Fixed prosthodontics
- (4) Implants.

The clinical work (minimum per month for Post Graduate (PG) student) must be:

- (1) Five cases in complete dentures,
- (2) Two cases in removable partial dentures,
- (3) One case in cast partial denture,
- (4) Three units of metal ceramic/ceramic,
- (5) One case of maxillofacial prosthesis
- (6) Relining, rebasing,
- (7) One case of implant prosthodontics.

Didactic/research activities during the programme include:

- Number of seminars presented (minimum one seminar per week)
- Journal clubs (minimum one seminar per week)
- Clinical case presentation (minimum one seminar per week)
- Technique demonstration (minimum one seminar per week)
- Speciality conferences/workshop attended (minimum one seminar)
- Thesis title undertaken and date of submission to the university marked
- Clinical postings in allied medical specialties (minimum one paper to be presented)
- Any other academic activity

The Dental Council of India monitors these through routine inspections.

In a nutshell the training system available for becoming a prosthodontic specialist is a three years MDS course with a dissertation or a two years diploma without a dissertation.

The first PG degree in prosthodontics (MDS) was started in 1959 at Government Dental College, Mumbai and Nair Hospital Dental College, Mumbai.

Eligibility: In order to be eligible to any postgraduate course in a particular academic year, it is necessary for a

candidate to obtain minimum of marks at 50 percentile in National Eligibility-Cum-Entrance Test for postgraduate courses. The percentile is determined on the basis of the highest marks secured in the All India Common Merit List in the National Eligibility-Cum-Entrance Test for Postgraduate courses.

Requirements for renewal of specialist status: Presently there is no system of renewal of status.

But all dentists have to get 20 Continuing Education (CE) points every year for renewal of DCI registration (its only on trial right now).

One of the pressing concerns repeatedly raised in all forums is the questionable quality of our institutions of higher education and learning. National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC) was established in 1994 in response to the findings of the national policy of education and University Grants Commission had mandated that all institutions of higher learning be brought under the accreditation and assessment process of NAAC to ensure best practices and qualitative standards in teaching institutions.

To address this issue, the 4000 member strong Indian Prosthodontic Society (IPS) has taken an initiative [3]. The IPS has formed the Indian College of Prosthodontics (ICP). The mission of the Indian College of Prosthodontics is to certify individuals who have demonstrated special extraordinary knowledge and skills in field of prosthodontics and allied sciences. The college also seeks to certify those who are committed to life-long learning and a lifetime of ethical practices, who value the doctor/patient relationship, who respect those with philosophical, cultural or physical differences and who are committed to the advancement of the Science of Prosthodontics.

The Indian College of Prosthodontics recognizes its responsibility to the profession and to the public and accepts this responsibility through the conduct of an examination designed to identify individuals with the knowledge, skills and attitudes deemed important to those who will be called diplomates of the Indian College of Prosthodontics.

The goals of the Indian College of Prosthodontics:

- (1) Ensure that diplomates meet a high degree of knowledge and skill criteria and issue certificates to these individuals indicating they have met the established criteria.
- (2) Ensure that diplomates maintain continued proficiency in Science of Prosthodontics and allied subjects
- (3) Provide the public and profession with information regarding individuals who are ICP certified.
- (4) Encourage the speciality to advance itself through ICP certification.

Qualification/eligibility:

- (1) The candidate must be a member of the Indian Prosthodontic Society in good standing.
- (2) The candidate must possess a MDS degree or equivalent in prosthodontics recognized by DCI.
- (3) The candidate becomes board eligible only when the application for certification has been submitted and approved by the college after following the above two criteria.

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