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Women in dentistry: A perspective on major universities in Saudi Arabia. Part 2: Analysis and statistical data

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KEYWORDS

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Abstract *Purpose and significance:* The purposes of this study were to: (1) report the number of female graduates from the two oldest dental schools in Saudi Arabia; (2) compare the number of male and female graduates per year from these two major schools; and (3) compare these numbers of female dental graduates to those in the United States for the most recent year available, 2007.

Methods: This study was conducted using a descriptive non-experimental design. The study sample was the number of dental school graduates from the two major dental schools in Saudi Arabia.

Results: There were 1621 graduates of the College of Dentistry of King Saud University (KSU) since its inception up to 2007 of which 853 graduates were males and 768 were females, respectively. The total number of graduates from the Faculty of Dentistry of King Abdulaziz University (KAU) since its inception up till 2007 was 628 of which 264 were males and 364 were females. There was no statistically significant difference between the total number of male and female dental school

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graduates, although there was a significant difference between KSU and KAU dental schools. The proportion of female graduates from the two major Saudi dental schools was just over 50 % in 2007, which is slightly higher than the 45% female graduates from dental schools in the United States and Puerto Rico.

Conclusions: Females currently comprise approximately half of the enrolled dental students at the KSU and KAU, a percentage slightly greater than that in the United States. The substantial enrollments suggested that women in Saudi Arabia consider dentistry to be an excellent career choice.

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1. Purpose of study

The purpose of this study was to: (1) obtain information about the number of female graduates from the two oldest dental schools in Saudi Arabia; (2) determine if there were differences between number of male and female graduates per year from these two dental schools; and (3) compare the current admission status of female graduates in Saudi Arabia with their female graduate counterparts in the United States.

2. Methods

2.1. Study design

A descriptive type of design was employed. The subjects were dental student who graduated from the two oldest dental schools in Saudi Arabia namely King Saud University (KSU) in Riyadh and King Abdulaziz University (KAU) in Jeddah, respectively including male and female graduates for all the years since the first class of students enrolled in each school from inception up till 2007.

The total number of graduates from KSU College of Dentistry was 1621 (26 classes) of which 853 were males and 768 were females. The total number of graduates from KAU Faculty of Dentistry was 628 (15 classes) comprising 264 males and 364 females.

2.2. Data collection and procedure

The Dean's office in each of the two dental schools was contacted and the requested information and data were provided regarding the purpose of the study.

2.3. Ethical issues

Ethical issues were taken into consideration. The study was descriptive and the information gathered was available to the public. No consent form was needed from individuals, since there was no direct contact with the graduates. The information about graduates was given in aggregate for each class of dental students, and no identifying information about individual students was sought. Therefore, confidentiality and anonymity considerations did not arise.

2.4. Data analysis

The data collected from the two major universities about the dental students were screened and entered (with the use of codes) into a statistical program (SPSS version 16) for data

analysis. There were descriptive analyses and graphical plots of data, along with independent-sample *t*-tests.

3. Results

3.1. Overall results

The two dental schools in Saudi Arabia were established in different years. The KSU College of Dentistry was established in 1975 and started enrollment of male dental students in 1976, followed by the enrollment of females two years later. As at 2007, 26 classes had graduated from KSU College of Dentistry. Two classes were males only and the remaining 24 classes were males and females. KAU has graduated 15 classes of males and females since its inception in 1985.

Table 1 shows the profile of graduation from KSU from 1981/1982 to 2006/2007 sessions. Table 2 similarly shows the

Table 1 Number of yearly graduates from King Saud University College of Dentistry, Riyadh.

Graduation year	Male graduates	Female graduates	Total graduates
1981–1982	7	–	7
1982–1983	11	–	11
1983–1984	14	15	29
1984–1985	14	24	38
1985–1986	14	11	25
1986–1987	7	35	42
1987–1988	39	30	69
1988–1989	30	34	64
1989–1990	39	40	79
1990–1991	41	40	81
1991–1992	54	53	107
1992–1993	31	37	68
1993–1994	23	17	40
1994–1995	55	28	83
1995–1996	52	23	75
1996–1997	51	42	93
1997–1998	30	28	58
1998–1999	29	21	50
1999–2000	27	30	57
2000–2001	34	22	56
2001–2002	25	29	54
2002–2003	39	41	80
2003–2004	32	32	64
2004–2005	51	45	96
2005–2006	50	48	98
2006–2007	54	43	97
Total	853	768	1621

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