

Factors that motivated medical students at abia state university uturu to choose medicine as a career

Abstract

Background: People have various reasons for choosing medicine as a career. We decided to carry out a questioner survey among students in Abia State University Uturu to find out the factors that influenced them to choose medicine as a career.

Materials and methods: A questionnaire– based study was carried out among clinical students of 400.500 and 600 levels. The information obtained was analyzed by simple impositions.

Results: There were 188 respondents. 106(56.4%).were males, while 82(43.6%) were females. The desire to save life was the strongest motivating factor in 150(79.8%), while peer pressure was the least motivating factor in 9(4.8%) of the study population. 49(26.1%) of the respondents strongly agree that economic reasons was their motivating factor. 122(64.9%) respondents strongly agree that interest in medicine was their motivating factor.

Conclusion: The desire to save life is the strongest motivating factor to choose medicine as a career, while peer pressure was the least motivating factor.

Keywords: motivation, study, medicine

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Introduction

Medicine is a noble profession which many people want to pursue for many reasons ranging from economic social and desire to help mankind. So many factors motivate people to choose medicine as a career.

Motivation is an internal state that arouses, directs and maintains and sustains goal–oriented behaviour.¹ In this questionnaire–based study we want to find what motivated a group of medical students to choose medicine as a career.

Methodology

This was a questionnaire based population study. Questionnaires were distributed to three levels of clinical students in Abia State University, Uturu.

The data in the questionnaire included the following

- The love of science
- To save life
- Sickness in childhood
- Interest in medicine
- Grew up in the midst of medical personnel
- Social status
- Economic reasons
- Curiosity about human life
- It permits learning

- It is challenging
- Job security
- Close relative has an illness or died from an illness
- Pressure from family members
- Pressure from friends
- Pressure from community
- To be practical in life
- Because there is no physician in my family community
- Any other

Respondents were encouraged to choose any number of the above options that influenced their decision to study medicine. The possible responses to each of the questions above were:

- Strongly agree.
- Weakly agree.
- Strongly disagree.
- Weakly disagree.
- I do not know.

The data was collated and analysed by manual calculations.

Results

The data collected was represented in the table below (Table 1)

Table 1 Responses to factors that motivated the choice of medicine as a carrier

Questions	A	B	C	D	E
The Love of Sciences	100	61	11	9	7
To Save Life	150	31	3	3	1
Sickness in Childhood	27	45	84	16	16
Interest in Medicine	122	43	12	5	6
Grew Up in the Midst of Medical Personnel	30	33	83	26	16
Social Status	32	56	62	29	9
Economic Reasons	49	53	56	22	8
Curiosity about Life	63	53	34	25	13
It Permits Learning	80	61	20	17	10
It is Challenging	81	54	31	13	9
Job Security	73	62	30	17	6
Close Relative had an Illness or Died of an Illness	30	21	86	27	24
Pressure from Family	14	29	105	24	16
Pressure from Friends	9	20	120	25	14
Pressure from Community	13	29	105	25	16
To be Practical in Life	72	56	31	14	15
There is no Physician in My Family	23	25	100	30	10

Key:

- a) Strongly agree
- b) Weakly agree
- c) Strongly disagree
- d) Weakly disagree
- e) I do not know

A total of 188 students replied to the questionnaire (Table 2).

Table 2 Distribution of response by sex

Sex distribution	Against response
Sex	No
Male	106(56.4%)
Female	82(43.6%)

Majority of the respondents 150(79.8%). Strongly agree that the desire to save life was the motivating factor to choose medicine as a career. In 49(26.1%) of the respondents strongly agree that economic reasons was their motivating factor to choose medicine as a career. 122(64.9%) responders strongly agree that interest in medicine was their motivating factor. Community pressure in 3(6.92%) and peer pressure in 9(4.79%) were the least motivating factors.

Discussion

Many factors motivate people in their choice of career. The factors

range from economic, peer pressure, family pressure or sheer interest. According to Paul R kleingenna et al.¹ motivation is an internal state that arouses, directs and sustains goal oriented behaviour.

Educational psychologists² are interested in motivation because of the crucial role it plays in student learning. Motivation has several effects on how students learn and towards subject matter how they behave. It can:

- I. Direct behavior towards a particular goal
- II. Lead to increased effort and energy
- III. Increase initiation of and persistence of activities
- IV. Enhance cognitive processing
- V. Determine what consequences are reinforcing
- VI. Lead to improved performance

Students are not always motivated therefore they sometimes need situated motivation which is found in the environmental condition that the teacher creates. If teachers decide to extrinsically reward productive students' behaviour they may find it difficult to extricate from that path. Consequently, student's dependency on extrinsic rewards represents one of the greatest distractors from their rise in the class room.³

We have looked at the factors that motivated our students at Abia State University to choose medicine as a career. We found that most of our students 150(79.8%) had the desire to save life as the strongest motivating factor while peer pressure 9(4.8%) was the least motivating factor.

Similar work done by Thakur et al.³ among medical students in Nepal, India found out that what motivated 73% of these medical students to choose medicine as a career is to provide service to the sick and to use the medical facilities available in the country and lessen the number of sick people seeking help from faith healers.

Dr Ubah J of Ladoke University Oshogbo found almost all the students picked the option of life saving and sympathy for the sick, (98.8%) and 81 (97.6%) respectively.⁴ Various authors found out that the factors that influence the decisions to choose medicine as career are multiple ranging from individuals characteristics, perceived benefits and attractiveness of particular medicine speciality and factors associated with medical school curricula, such as experience of chosen speciality.⁵⁻¹⁴

In comparison with dental students, medical students manifested a more professional attitude in which altruism and intellectual challenge constituted central motivating factors. By contrast, dental students demonstrated more of a commitment to personal and financial gain.¹⁵ Sharon et al.¹⁶ noted that research and publication by medical student in medical school are associated with a career in academic medicine. The desire to teach, conduct research, and the intellectual stimulation and challenge provided in academia may also persuade people to choose this career path. The influence of a role model or a mentor was reported by physicians to impact their decision making. Choosing medicine as a career Saadah Sulong et al.¹⁷ found that Ireland medical student were overwhelmingly motivated by desire to work with, and help, people, along with a desire to cure and prevent disease. Motivations to study medicine include family influence altruistic reasons and a variety of personal/social factors such as intellectual satisfaction, prestige and financial security and parental expectations

from the study done by Professor Thong¹⁸ suggests that motivations to study medicine include family influence, altruistic reasons and a variety of personal/social factors such as intellectual satisfaction, prestige and financial security and parental expectations.

Conclusion

In this study the desire to save life is the strongest motivating factor to choose medicine as a career, while peer pressure was the least motivating factor. Most people that choose medicine as a carrier in life have a sincere desire to help mankind to alleviate suffering and to prolong life. Therefore they should be provided with an enabling environment to enhance as well as motivate their primary intrinsic factors.

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Conflicts of interest

The author declares no conflict of interest.

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