



## **Perception and Attitude Towards Oral Pathology and Histology as A Subject and Profession Among Dental Undergraduates in Tamil Nadu**

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### **ABSTRACT**

*Oral and Maxillofacial Pathology is a specialty of dentistry that had its glorious advent with the foundation of the American Academy of Oral Pathology in 1946. Oral and Maxillofacial Pathologists worldwide have been engaged in the microscopic diagnosis of cancer and other oral, head and neck diseases, and in medical and dental education, clinical practice, and research. Oral and Maxillofacial Pathology, as a subject is taught to 1st, 2nd, and 3rd year students of Bachelor of Dental Surgery (BDS). Since imparting a successful treatment is solely dependent on a thorough diagnosis and understanding of the pathogenesis of a disease, this subject lays down the foundation for all dental students. The aim of this study is to analyze the perception and attitude of dental undergraduate students towards Oral Pathology and Histology as a subject and profession and to assess whether the students apply the learned knowledge at a later stage, during their clinical exposure and practice or whether they perceive it as a subject just to clear the examinations. This is a descriptive, cross-sectional study conducted among dental undergraduate students in a Dental college in Madhurantakam, Tamil Nadu. Students studying 3rd year, 4th year and internship participated in the study. A self-administered, 14-item questionnaire consisting of three sections was used in the study. The first section included demographic details like name, age, gender, and year of study; the second section was directed towards the perception of dental students towards Oral Pathology and Histology as a subject and the third section assessed the willingness of students considering Oral Pathology and Histology as their future career. This study was completed online using google forms. The collected data was entered into Microsoft Excel 365 and subject to statistical analysis using SPSS 20. Descriptive and inferential statistics were computed. Chi-square test was done and the level of statistical significance was set at  $P \leq 0.05$ . Among 175 participants, 144 (82.3 %) students felt that it was a research-oriented subject. 127 (72.6 %) students found Oral Pathology and histology subject as interesting when compared to other subjects. 70 (40 %) students wanted to pursue postgraduation. The willingness of pursuing postgraduation was more among females (44%) than that of males (23.5 %). When enquired whether they would opt Oral Pathology and Histology as a profession, 45 (25.7 %) agreed. 4th years (35.1 %) were most likely to opt for Oral Pathology and histology as a profession followed by 3rd years (26.6 %) and interns (14.8 %). 113 (64.6 %) students answered that they are interested in the subject and 24 (13.7 %) of them answered that they were unable to get admission in other specialties and 38 (21.7 %) felt that they needed a PG degree for private practice and also 4th year students (75.4 %) were the most interested in the subject followed by 3rd years (75 %) and interns (40.7 %). 17 (9.7 %) students felt that oral pathologists do not deal with patients. 31 (17.7 %) of students answered that they are always made to think that Oral*

*Pathology is a non-clinical branch by seniors and fellow practitioners whereas 50 (28.6 %) students felt that they are sometimes made to think that Oral Pathology is a non-clinical branch by seniors and fellow practitioners. There is a significant correlation based on the perception of students related to treating patients as well as the way they are made to think about Oral Pathology by seniors and fellow practitioners. Pursuing post-graduation has become a necessity in today's competitive field of dentistry. Though majority of the students in this study were unsure about the choice of their post-graduation specialty, 40 % of them wanted to pursue postgraduation in Oral Pathology and histology. The willingness of pursuing postgraduation was more among females than that of males. The result was statistically significant ( $p < 0.05$ ). There is a significant correlation between the perception of students related to treating patients as well as the way they are made to think about Oral Pathology by seniors and fellow practitioners ( $p < 0.05$ ). During their formative academic years, the undergraduate students should be given a chance to get involved in histopathological diagnosis of simple lesions and virtual microscopy should be more popularised in dental institutions. Research programmes must be conducted periodically and students must be sensitised in the same. The scope of Oral Pathology must be broadened and laser biopsy/treatment should be considered for super specialty disciplines.*

**Keywords:** Attitude, oral Pathology, oral histology, dental students, research

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## INTRODUCTION

Oral and Maxillofacial Pathology is a specialty of dentistry that had its glorious advent with the foundation of the American Academy of Oral Pathology in 1946. Oral and Maxillofacial Pathologists worldwide have been engaged in the microscopic diagnosis of cancer and other oral, head and neck diseases, and in medical and dental education, clinical practice, and research. Oral Pathologists can skillfully observe and identify gross clinical manifestations of diseases and interpret their microscopic features. Remarkable advancement in cancer, molecular biology, diagnostic aids, immunology, and genetics in the past years, have broadened the scope of this specialty to a great extent [1].

Oral and Maxillofacial Pathology, as a subject is taught to 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, and 3<sup>rd</sup> year students of Bachelor of Dental Surgery (BDS). Since imparting a successful treatment is solely dependent on a thorough diagnosis and understanding of the pathogenesis of a disease, this subject lays down the foundation for all dental students. This necessitates the fostering of a positive attitude towards the subject among students [1]. The aim of this study is to analyze the perception and attitude of dental undergraduate students towards Oral Pathology and Histology as a subject and profession and to assess whether the students apply the learned knowledge at a later stage, during their clinical exposure and practice or whether they perceive it as a subject just to clear the examinations.

## MATERIAL AND METHODS

This is a descriptive, cross-sectional study conducted among dental undergraduate students in a Dental college in Madhuranthakam, Tamil Nadu. Students studying 3<sup>rd</sup> year, 4<sup>th</sup> year and internship participated in the study. Ethical clearance for the study was obtained from the Institutional Ethics committee. All the participants were informed about the nature of the study, and confidentiality was assured. Informed consent was obtained from all the participants. The study was carried out for 1 month in Feb 2022.

A self-administered, 14-item questionnaire adapted from a study done by Saluja P et al was used to collect data in the present study. The questionnaire consisted of three sections; the first section included demographic details like name, age, gender, and year of study; the second section was directed towards the perception of dental students towards Oral Pathology and Histology as a subject and the third section assessed the willingness of students considering Oral Pathology and Histology as their future career. This study was completed online using google forms.

The collected data was entered into Microsoft Excel 365 and subject to statistical analysis using SPSS 20. Descriptive and inferential statistics were computed. Chi-square test was done and the level of statistical significance was set at  $P \leq 0.05$ .

## RESULTS

A total of 175 students aged 19 - 25 years, selected using convenience sampling, participated in the study. The students were divided into 3 groups based on their year of the study, where 3<sup>rd</sup> year students 64 represented 36.6% of the study population followed by 4<sup>th</sup> year students 57 (32.6 %) and BDS interns 54 (30.9 %) respectively. [Table 1]

The perception towards Oral pathology and histology as subject among the students was assessed and when answering about how they felt about Oral Pathology subject, 144 (82.3 %) students felt that it was a research oriented subject, 28 (16 %) felt that it was a clinical subject and 3 (1.7 %) felt that it was a subject to clear 3<sup>rd</sup> year BDS. Highest amount of interest in the subject was shown by 4<sup>th</sup> year students ( 89.5 %) followed by 3<sup>rd</sup> years ( 70.3 %) and interns ( 57.4 % ). The result was statistically significant. ( $p < 0.05$ )

[ Table 3 ]. 149 (21 %) students agreed that the subject of Oral Pathology and histology forms base of all clinical subjects. 12 (6.9 %) students felt that attending this subject class is not very important. 127 (72.6 %) students found Oral Pathology and histology subject as interesting when compared to other subjects. [Tables 2 and 3] The willingness to choose Oral pathology and histology as a profession among the students was assessed and 70 (40 %) students wanted to pursue postgraduation whereas 27 (15.4 %) students did not want to pursue postgraduation and 78 (44.6 %) students were unsure of the same. The willingness of pursuing postgraduation was more among females (44%) than that of males (23.5 %) . The result was statistically significant. ( $p < 0.05$ ) [ Table 4 ].

When enquired whether they would opt Oral Pathology and Histology as a profession, 45 (25.7 %) agreed whereas 28 (16 %) disagreed and 102 (58.3 %) were unsure of the same. Among the students, 4<sup>th</sup> years (35.1 %) were most likely to opt for Oral Pathology and histology as a profession followed by 3<sup>rd</sup> years (26.6 %) and interns (14.8 %). When asked what would be the reason to choose this subject as their profession, 113 (64.6 %) students answered that they are interested in the subject and 24 (13.7 %) of them answered that they were unable to get admission in other specialties and 38 (21.7 %) felt that they needed a PG degree for private practice and also 4<sup>th</sup> year students ( 75.4 %) were the most interested in the subject followed by 3<sup>rd</sup> years (75 %) and interns (40.7 %) The results were statistically significant. ( $p < 0.05$ ) [ Table 5].

Answering the question about what could be done to modify postgraduation (PG) curriculum of this subject to make students choose it as a profession, majority of the students recommended inclusion of forensic odontology and 28 (16 %) students recommended making PG in this subject recognized by foreign universities whereas 18 (10.3 %) recommended separation of Dental Anatomy and Dental Histology (DADH) from Oral Pathology subject to create more jobs. [Tables 4 and 5]

17 (9.7 %) students felt that oral pathologists do not deal with patients. 31 (17.7 %) of students answered that they are always made to think that Oral Pathology is a non-clinical branch by seniors and fellow practitioners whereas 50 (28.6 %) students felt that they are sometimes made to think that Oral Pathology is a non-clinical branch by seniors and fellow practitioners. There is a significant correlation based on the perception of students related to treating patients as well as the way they are made to think about Oral Pathology by seniors and fellow practitioners. [Table 6].

## DISCUSSION

Oral Histology, a division of histology is an essential component of oral biology and is an integral part of basic sciences taught early in the dental curriculum. A thorough knowledge of anatomy and histology forms the basis for a better understanding of the orofacial region [2]. Oral Pathology is an integral part of dental subjects that serves a unique link between basic medical sciences and clinical dental practice. Since the practice of medicine depends on a thorough and robust understanding of pathological basis of diseases, Oral Pathology and Oral Histology play an essential role in laying down the foundation for dental students [1].

In the present study, the perception towards Oral pathology and histology as subject among the students was assessed and 127 (72.6 %) of students found Oral Pathology and histology subject as interesting when compared to other subjects. In a study conducted by Chevuru Sai Shreya Reddy et al in 2021, among 147 dental students in a private institution, it was reported that 74.3 % of students were interested in learning oral histology while 25.7% are not interested in learning the subject. The lack of interest in some of the students was attributed to a lack of understanding and remembering the subject [3]. 7 (4%) students in the current study, found Oral Pathology and histology subject as boring. Kohinoor Acharya et al in his study conducted in 2021 among undergraduate students and interns reported that the degree of dental students' understanding of Oral Histology and Oral Pathology was satisfactory, but there were still some gaps in the students' understanding and interest in these subjects that need to be addressed [4].

Nabeela Naeem et in her study conducted among medical and dental students in Islamabad, reported that a moderately high satisfaction was found among students regarding teaching and learning methods and that pathology teaching system could be improved by having frequent group discussions, case based studies and integrated teaching approaches in the curriculum [5]. The interest of dental students towards oral pathology should be instilled during the formative years of BDS. Modern technology can be harnessed to its full potential and applications like tooth carving demonstration videos can be projected in practical classes so that students can improve their learning. Students' interest and understanding of microscopic features can best be enhanced using virtual microscopy. This requires the transition from optical to digital microscopy. 3D animated technology can be used to portray detailed magnified images of pathological slides and in turn can make the classes more interesting [4].

Bijayata Shrestha et al in her study among 3<sup>rd</sup> year dental undergraduate students, concluded that online case based learning achieved better learning outcomes when compared with online lecture based learning

during the pandemic [6]. It is important to address the shift of modern day medical education from 'teacher centered' to 'student centered' and extensive application of Problem Based Learning, Case Based Learning and remote learning can better cater to students' learning preferences and outcomes [7].

Pulin Saluja et al in his study, reported that 63.5 % of undergraduate students felt that the subject of Oral Pathology and histology forms the base for all the clinical subjects. <sup>1</sup>In the present study, 149 (85.1 %) students agreed that the subject of Oral Pathology and histology forms base of all clinical subjects, while 5 (2.9 %) disagreed and 21 (12 %) were unsure of the same. While it is assuring to know that most students perceive that Oral Pathology and histology form base of all clinical subjects, there are indeed a few students who should be made to understand that the knowledge of Oral Pathology and histology can be applied in their clinical practice. In the current study, 12 (6.9 %) students felt that attending this subject class is not very important. This perspective of the students must be addressed and the importance of Oral pathology and histology in direct patient care and clinical practice must be emphasized during the formative years of dental students. The students should be sensitized about the role of Oral pathology and histology in honing their diagnosing and patient treatment skills [8].

In the present study, when answering about how they felt about Oral Pathology subject, 144 (82.3 %) of students felt that it was a research-oriented subject, 28 (16 %) felt that it was a clinical subject and 3 (1.7 %) felt that it was a subject to clear 3<sup>rd</sup> year BDS. Research is an integral component of dental curriculum. Scientific research forms the basis of health care curriculum, and it is instrumental in producing competitive dental graduates capable of serving the general public. Gopika. G.G et al in her study reported that 80.2 % of undergraduate students participated in research and 65.35 % students preferred original study as their research projects. This positive attitude of the students is commendable. Yet, undergraduate students must be sensitized to scientific research at an early stage, through more workshops and programs on research. This can further be facilitated by establishing a research-oriented environment within dental institutions [9].

Dentistry provides a wide spectrum of career and healthcare opportunities as a general practitioner as well as a dental specialist. Students tend to choose a specific dental specialty based on advice from family, friends, genuine interest in a specific specialty, inspiration from a mentor, an interest in specific diseases, interest in research, academics or to gain a lucrative income [10].

In the present study, 70 (40 %) students wanted to pursue postgraduation whereas 27 (15.4 %) of students did not want to pursue postgraduation and 78 (44.6 %) of students were unsure of the same. Vatsulsharma et al in his study conducted among 644 students from 6 dental colleges in Haryana, reported that 76.4 % of students were willing to pursue postgraduation. Personal interest in the respective subjects was the most common reason associated with the choice of specialty. The least favored reason associated with the choice of specialty was easiness of the subject [11]. Hassan Suliman Halawany et al in his study, concluded that the influence of family members in the dental profession, interest in patient population and preference for private practice were the primary reasons why dental undergraduate students chose a particular specialty as their career choice [12]. Faisha Moin Kaza et al in her study conducted among 200 final year BDS students in four dental colleges across Karachi, concluded that 60 % of students felt that they had received sufficient specialty exposure and encouragement from their institutions to be able to decide on their postgraduate options and that 36 % of the students cited their aptitude for a specific specialty as the most influential factor on choosing their postgraduate specialty whereas 28 % perceived job status/ prospects and financial reasons as the most likely factor to influence their choice of specialty.

Noha S. Kabil et al in his study among final year dental undergraduate students, reported that 67 % of students felt that they were given sufficient inspiration and guidance to decide on their future career, and 39 % of students were guided by faculty staff members which constituted the highest influencing factor to motivate the students to pursue postgraduation [10]. In the current study, when enquired whether they would opt Oral Pathology and Histology as a profession, 45 (25.7 %) students agreed whereas 28 (16 %) disagreed and 102 (58.3 %) were unsure of the same. When asked what the reason would be to choose this subject as their profession, 113 (64.6 %) of students answered that they are interested in the subject and 24 (13.7 %) of them answered that they were unable to get admission in other specialties and 38 (21.7 %) felt that they needed a PG degree for private practice. It is appreciable that a majority of students chose to opt for Oral Pathology as a profession because of their interest in the subject.

Julia Yu - Fong Chang et al in her study among young dentists in Taiwan, concluded that 94.3% of them perceived that they would not choose oral pathology as their lifelong career, the primary reasons being learning characteristics, inadequate comprehension of the work that an oral pathologist must do, heavy workload, fewer job opportunities and a relatively lesser salary [13]. Swati Chaturvedi et al in her study among final year students and interns of 3 dental colleges in Maharashtra, concluded that maximum undergraduate students were interested in pursuing post-graduation and that they were more interested

in clinical branches. Lack of job opportunities and interest in the subject of Oral Pathology were the most cited answers for non-preference of Oral Pathology as a Postgraduate specialization. However, the students commented that they would choose this specialty under the circumstances that Oral Pathology is recognized by foreign universities [14]. This is in accordance with the present study, whereby, while answering the question about what could be done to modify postgraduation (PG) curriculum of this subject to make students choose it as a profession, majority of the students recommended inclusion of forensic odontology and 28 (16 %) students recommended making PG in this subject recognized by foreign universities whereas 18 (10.3 %) recommended separation of Dental Anatomy and Dental Histology (DADH) from Oral Pathology subject to create more jobs.

In the present study, 17 (9.7 %) students felt that oral pathologists do not deal with patients. 31 (17.7 %) of students answered that they are always made to think that Oral Pathology is a non-clinical branch by seniors and fellow practitioners whereas 50 (28.6 %) students felt that they are sometimes made to think that Oral Pathology is a non-clinical branch by seniors and fellow practitioners. There is a significant correlation based on the perception of students related to treating patients as well as the way they are made to think about Oral Pathology by seniors and fellow practitioners. In a similar study by Pulin Saluja et al, it was reported that most of the students felt that oral pathologists do not treat patients and a majority of them reported it as a non-clinical specialty and that they were made to perceive so by their batchmates, seniors and fellow practitioners [1].

This trend needs to drastically change and there is a definitive need of the hour for intuitive discussions with colleagues in other specialties to make them understand the importance of oral pathology in clinical practice which in turn could result in the message being passed on to undergraduate students. Most importantly, it is necessary to comprehend that oral pathology is a rare specialty where research meets practice. There is an imperative need to increase awareness regarding Oral Pathology as a specialty branch and to encourage and facilitate referral and/or hiring of Oral pathologists at tertiary care centers with central pathology laboratories, both in the government as well as in the private sector. General practitioners should be more aware of the specialization and clinical skills of Oral pathologists and when the image of Oral Pathologists get reinforced as specialists among fellow colleagues, students would become more motivated and interested in the subject and this in turn could open up new vistas on the choice of this subject as a career option, by undergraduate students [15].

**Table 1 : Demographic details of dental students ( n=175)**

Variable		n	%
Gender	Male	34	19.4
	Female	141	80.6
Age	19-20	54	30.9
	21-22	63	35.1
	>23	58	34
Year of Study	3 <sup>rd</sup> year BDS	64	36.6
	4 <sup>th</sup> year BDS	57	32.6
	Interns	54	30.9

**Table 2 : Perception towards Oral Pathology and Histology as a subject among the students based on gender (n=175)**

Question	Options	Gender				Total		p value
		Males		Females		n	%	
		n	%	n	%			
5. What do you feel about Oral Pathology subject?	A clinical subject	7	20.6	21	14.9	28	16	0.517
	A research oriented subject	27	79.4	117	83	144	82.3	
	A Subject to clear 3 <sup>rd</sup> year BDS	0	0	3	2.1	3	1.7	
6. Do you feel the Subject of Oral Pathology and histology forms base of all clinical subjects?	Maybe	4	11.8	17	12.1	21	12	0.499
	No	2	5.9	3	2.1	5	2.9	
	Yes	28	82.4	121	85.8	149	85.1	
7. Do you think attending this subject classes is not very important?	Maybe	1	2.9	3	2.1	4	2.3	0.207
	No	33	97.1	126	89.4	159	90.9	
	Yes	0	0	12	8.5	12	6.9	

8. How do you find Oral Pathology and histology subject comparatively to other subjects?	Any other	10	29.4	31	22	41	23.4	0.308
	Boring	0	0	7	5	7	4	
	Interesting	24	70.6	103	73	127	72.6	

Chi-square test, \*P≤ 0.05 (significant)

**Table 3 : Perception towards Oral Pathology and Histology as a subject among the students based on year of study (n=175)**

Question	Options	Year of Study								p value
		3 <sup>rd</sup> year		4 <sup>th</sup> year		Interns		Total		
		n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	
5. What do you feel about Oral Pathology subject?	A clinical subject	9	14.1	7	12.3	12	22.2	28	16	0.112
	A research oriented subject	52	81.3	50	87.7	42	77.8	144	82.3	
	A Subject to clear 3 <sup>rd</sup> year BDS	3	4.7	0	0	0	0	3	1.7	
6. Do you feel the Subject of Oral Pathology and histology forms base of all clinical subjects?	Maybe	10	15.6	3	5.3	8	14.8	21	12	0.155
	No	3	4.7	0	0	2	3.7	5	2.9	
	Yes	51	79.7	54	94.7	44	81.5	149	85.1	
7. Do you think attending this subject classes is not very important?	Maybe	3	4.7	0	0	1	1.9	4	2.3	0.3
	No	55	85.9	55	96.5	49	90.7	159	90.9	
	Yes	6	9.4	2	3.5	4	7.4	12	6.9	
8. How do you find Oral Pathology and histology subject comparatively to other subjects?	Any other	18	28.1	6	10.5	17	31.5	41	23.4	0.001*
	Boring	1	1.6	0	0	6	11.1	7	4	
	Interesting	45	70.3	51	89.5	31	57.4	127	72.6	

Chi-square test, \*P≤ 0.05 (significant)

**Table 4 : Responses regarding willingness to choose Oral Pathology and Histology as a profession among the students based on gender (n=175)**

Question	Options	Gender				Total		p value
		Males		Female		n	%	
		n	%	n	%			
9. Do you want to pursue Post graduation?	Maybe	16	47.1	62	44	78	44.6	0.016*
	No	10	29.4	17	12.1	27	15.4	
	Yes	8	23.5	62	44	70	40	
10. Would you like to opt Oral Pathology and Histology as a profession?	Maybe	22	64.7	80	56.7	102	58.3	0.083
	No	8	23.5	20	14.2	28	16	
	Yes	4	11.8	41	29.1	45	25.7	
11. What would be the reason if you choose this subject as your profession?	Interested in the subject	18	52.9	95	67.4	113	64.6	0.101
	Need a PG degree for private practice	12	35.3	26	18.4	38	21.7	
	Unable to get admission in others	4	11.8	20	14.2	24	13.7	
12. What could be done to modify post graduation (PG) curriculum of this subject to make you choose it as a profession?	Inclusion of Forensic Odontology	28	82.4	101	71.6	129	73.7	0.089
	Making PG in this subject recognised by foreign universities	6	17.6	22	15.6	28	16	
	Separation of Dental Anatomy and Dental Histology (DADH) from Oral Pathology subject to create more jobs	0	0	18	12.8	18	10.3	

Chi-square test, \*P≤ 0.05 (significant)

**Table 5 : Responses regarding willingness to choose Oral Pathology and Histology as a profession among the students based on year of study (n=175)**

Question	Options	Year of Study								p value
		3 <sup>rd</sup> year		4 <sup>th</sup> year		Interns		Total		
		f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	
<b>9. Do you want to pursue Postgraduation?</b>	Maybe	28	43.8	29	50.9	21	38.9	78	44.6	0.121
	No	8	12.5	5	8.8	14	25.9	27	15.4	
	Yes	28	43.8	23	40.4	19	35.2	70	40	
<b>10. Would you like to opt Oral Pathology and Histology as a profession?</b>	Maybe	40	62.5	30	52.6	32	59.3	102	58.3	0.044*
	No	7	10.9	7	12.3	14	25.9	28	16	
	Yes	17	26.6	20	35.1	8	14.8	45	25.7	
<b>11. What would be the reason if you choose this subject as your profession?</b>	Interested in the subject	48	75	43	75.4	22	40.7	113	64.6	0.001*
	Need a PG degree for private practice	8	12.5	12	21.1	18	33.3	38	21.7	
	Unable to get admission in others	8	12.5	2	3.5	14	25.9	24	13.7	
<b>12. What could be done to modify postgraduation (PG) curriculum of this subject to make you choose it as a profession?</b>	Inclusion of Forensic Odontology	43	67.2	44	77.2	42	77.8	129	73.7	0.185
	Making PG in this subject recognised by foreign universities	11	17.2	11	19.3	6	11.1	28	16	
	Separation of Dental Anatomy and Dental Histology (DADH) from Oral Pathology subject to create more Jobs	10	15.6	2	3.5	6	11.1	18	10.3	

Chi-square test, \*P≤ 0.05 (significant)

**Table 6 : Correlation between different responses towards Oral Pathology and Histology as a non-clinical subject (n=175)**

Question	Pearson Correlation	13. Do you feel Oral Pathologist do not deal with patients?	14. Are you made to think that Oral Pathology is just a nonclinical branch by seniors and fellow Practitioners?
<b>13. Do you feel Oral Pathologist do not deal with patients?</b>	R value	1	0.422**
	p value		0.001
	N	175	175
<b>14. Are you made to think that Oral Pathology is just a non-clinical branch by seniors and fellow Practitioners?</b>	R value	0.422**	1
	p value	0.001	
	N	175	175

\*\*Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2 - tailed)

## CONCLUSION

Pursuing post-graduation has become a necessity in today's competitive field of dentistry. Though majority of the students in this study were unsure about the choice of their post-graduation specialty, 40 % of them wanted to pursue postgraduation in Oral Pathology and histology. The willingness of pursuing postgraduation was more among females than that of males. The result was statistically significant (p < 0.05). There is a significant correlation between the perception of students related to treating patients as well

as the way they are made to think about Oral Pathology by seniors and fellow practitioners ( $p < 0.05$ ). During their formative academic years, the undergraduate students should be given a chance to get involved in histopathological diagnosis of simple lesions and virtual microscopy can be more popularised in dental institutions. Research programmes must be conducted periodically and students must be sensitised in the same. The scope of Oral Pathology must be broadened and laser biopsy/treatment should be considered for super specialty disciplines.

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**ANNEXURE 1**

Demographic details

**1. Name**

**2. Age**

**3. Gender: Male/female**

**4. Year of Study: Third year BDS/4th year BDS/Intern.**

Perception towards oral pathology and histology as subject among the students

**5. What do you feel about Oral Pathology subject?**

a. A research-oriented subject

b. A clinical subject

c. A Subject to clear 3rd year BDS

**6. Do you feel the Subject of Oral Pathology and histology forms base of all clinical subjects?**

a. Yes

b. No

c. Maybe

**7. Do you think attending this subject class is not very important**

a. Yes

b. No

c. Maybe<sup>79</sup>

**8. How do you find Oral Pathology and histology subject comparatively to other subjects?**

a. Interesting

b. Boring

c. Any other.

Willingness to choose oral pathology and histology as a profession among the students

**9. Do you want to pursue Postgraduation?**

a. Yes

b. No

**10. Would you like to Opt Oral Pathology and Histology as a profession**

a. Yes

b. No

c. May be

**11. What would be the reason if you choose this subject as your profession?**

a. Interested in the subject

b. Unable to get admission in others

c. Need a PG degree for private practice

**12. What could be done to modify postgraduation (PG) curriculum of this subject to make you choose it as a profession**

a. Inclusion of forensic odontology

b. Separation of Dental Anatomy and Dental Histology (DADH) from Oral Pathology subject to create more Jobs

c. Making PG in this subject recognized by foreign universities

**13. Do you feel oral pathologist do not deal with patients?**

a. Yes

b. No

c. Sometimes

**14. Are you made to think that Oral Pathology is just a nonclinical branch by seniors and fellow Practitioners?**

a. Yes

b. No

c. Sometimes