

Determining Whether or Not Dental Students Will Immediately Enter Private Practice Upon Graduation

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- Information about career decision-making is outdated, particularly in light of
 - Increase in number of women in dentistry
 - Educational debt
 - Relative income of dentists

Purpose

To determine potential predictor variables for ascertaining whether dental students will immediately enter private practice upon graduation.

Methods

- Questionnaire developed for D1-D4 students at University of Iowa
 - Personal information
 - Influences on decision to pursue dentistry
 - Career desires upon entering dental school
 - Anticipated educational debt
 - Interactions with external dentists
- Tested for face validity

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- Private practice
- Dental school faculty
- Military
- Specialty or other training
- Other dental occupation
- Other non-dental occupation
- Unknown

- Administered August 2006
- D1 through D4 students at University of Iowa
- Participation was voluntary and anonymous
 - Coded cover sheet
- UI IRB approval

Analysis

- Bivariate analysis
 - Categorical items
 - Chi-square and Cochran-Mantel-Haenszel statistics
 - Ordinal (10-point Likert-like scale) items
 - Wilcoxon rank-sum test

Likert-like 10 point scale – Examples

- Upon entering dental school, how strongly did you want to be a general dentist?
- How willing are you to explore different career options within dentistry? (e.g., teaching, private practice, military)
- How strongly does _____ influence your post-graduation plans?

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 - Wilcoxon rank-sum test
- Collinearity testing
- Multivariable logistic regression analysis
 - Bivariate analysis – $p \leq 0.05$
 - Forward and backward stepwise logistic regression

Results

- 280 of 300 (93.3%) completed survey
- 160 of 280 (57.1%) indicated that they will enter private practice immediately after dental school

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- 280 of 300 (93.3%) completed survey
- 160 of 280 (57.1%) indicated that they will enter private practice immediately after dental school
 - Of the other 120
 - 58 – Dental specialty or other training
 - 38 - Unknown

■ Male 56.4%

■ Married 34.6%

■ Have children 15.0%

■ No bachelor's degree 23.6%

■ Immediate family member 26.4%

■ Dentistry – first career choice 75.7%

■ When did you decide

■ High school or earlier 32.1%

■ First 2 years of college 29.3%

■ Latter years of college 28.6%

■ After college 10.0%

Anticipated Educational Debt

No Debt	4.6%
< \$25,000	3.2%
\$25,000-49,999	5.0%
\$50,000-74,999	4.3%
\$75,000-99,999	5.7%
\$100,000-124,999	19.3%
\$125,000-149,999	21.1%
≥ \$150,000	36.8%

Categorical Bivariate Analysis

Variable	P value	More Likely Private Practice
Sex	0.0436	Female
Any children?	0.0424	No
Iowa high school?	0.0127	Yes
Additional time in dentist office?	0.0304	No
Community service in past year?	0.0108	None

Categorical Bivariate Analysis

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No Statistical Difference

- Dental school year
- Marital status
- Size of town where you grew up
- Planning to return to this town
- Highest degree earned
- Did you work as a dental assistant?
- When did you decide to become a dentist?
- Was dentistry your first career choice?

Bivariate 10-point Likert-like Scale

Variable	Yes P.P. – Mean	No – Mean	P value
Certain of career plans	7.0 (2.1)	6.2 (2.9)	.0455
Strongly to become general dentist	7.5 (2.0)	6.0 (2.4)	<.0001
Strongly to become dental specialist	4.6 (2.5)	6.2 (2.9)	<.0001
Willing to explore other options	6.2 (2.4)	7.3 (2.1)	<.0001
Influenced by family other than spouse	5.5 (2.9)	4.4 (3.0)	.0062
Influenced by family dentist	4.3 (3.2)	3.0 (2.8)	.0014
Influenced by hometown network	4.8 (3.1)	3.2 (2.7)	<.0001
Influenced by educational debt	6.6 (2.9)	5.9 (2.9)	.0242
Influenced by size of community in which you plan to practice	7.2 (2.4)	6.2 (2.8)	.0070

Multivariable Logistic Regression

Variable	Odds Ratio	P value
Certainty of career plans	1.17 (1.02-1.35)	.0244
Strongly want to be a general dentist	1.40 (1.20-1.64)	<.0001
Willing to explore other career options	0.71 (0.61-0.84)	<.0001
Influenced by family dentist	1.18 (1.05-1.32)	.0057
Influenced by educational debt	1.14 (1.01-1.28)	.0303
Influenced by community size in which you plan to practice	1.14 (1.00-1.30)	.0465

Discussion

- ADEA Senior survey
- Influence on alternative career paths, such as dental education or Dental Public Health
- Limitations
 - Cross-sectional study
 - Absence of personality types

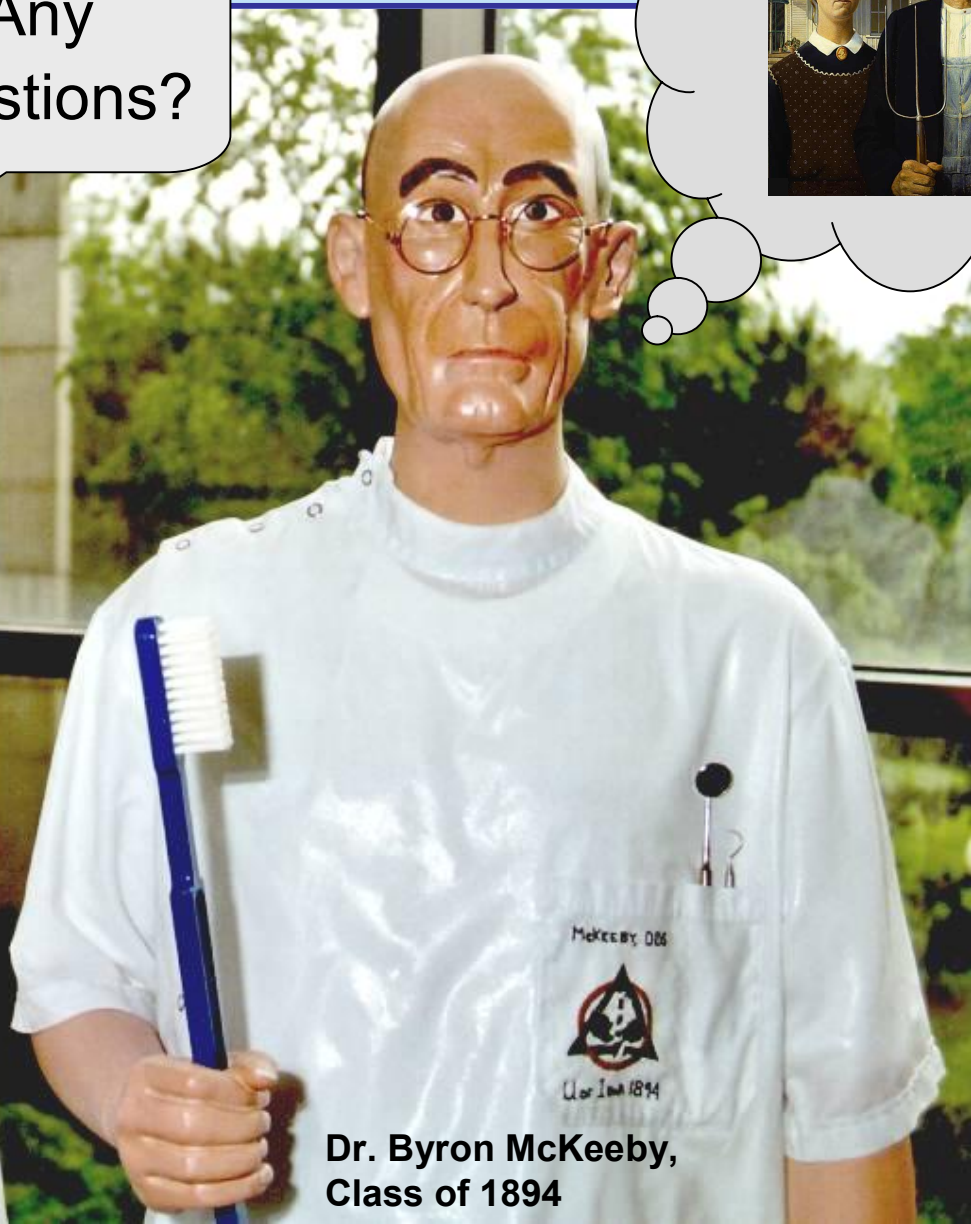
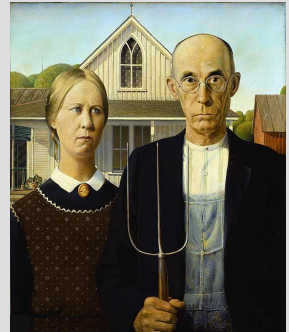
Summary

- Intent to immediately enter into private practice is influenced by:
 - Certainty of career plans
 - Strong desire to be a general dentist upon entry into dental school
 - Not as willing to explore other career options within dentistry
 - Family dentist
 - Educational debt
 - Size of the community where s/he plans to practice

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Any questions?



**Dr. Byron McKeeby,
Class of 1894**