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### Original Research

#### Impact of dental student's family relationship index on their sense of coherence

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#### ABSTRACT:

**Introduction:** The family relationships or environment plays an important role in one's physical and psychological health. Dentistry is complex and stressful. The ability to manage the stress of dental students can be influenced by their relationship with their family. **Aim and objective:** To assess the influence of family and environment of dental students on their ability to manage stress. **Materials and methods:** The participants in this questionnaire-based survey were undergraduate dentistry students from various academic years. The study employed an open-ended questionnaire that had been pretested. 150 individuals provided the data, which was gathered. To determine the relationship between the year of study and gender with the questionnaire evaluated, inferential statistics were conducted using the chi square test. SPSS (IBM SPSS Statistics for Windows, Version 27.0, Armonk, NY: IBM Corp. Released 2019) is employed to analyse the data. **Results:** The association between academic years and the questionnaire shows interns have the good family environment where the members get along well together,  $P=0.031$ . Association between the gender and the questionnaire reveals that females have more stable family environment as compared to males,  $p=0.048$ . **Conclusion:** The stress among dental students can be academic or familial. The ability of managing them can be greatly influenced by one's family environment. The relationship between family members have an impact on student's perspective and personality and hence on how they perceive the stress.

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#### INTRODUCTION

The concept of sense of coherence was introduced by "Antonovsky" Sense of Coherence is indicating coping with stress and anxiety [1]. The sense of coherence can be described as global assimilation that indicates ability of an individual to realize his/ her potential for coping with the stress [2]. Three elements make up the sense of coherence: manageability, meaning, and comprehension.. The sense of coherence can be viewed as stress coping skills that helps us to maintain physical and mental health balance. People with high sense of coherence are good at coping with stressful situations and are more capable of managing them which leads to good health.

According to Antonovsky, maintaining coherence is a key factor in maintaining health.. He Postulated that people having a strong SOC are able to (a) see the life

experiences as less stressful (comprehensibility), (b) have the resource to challenge the Stress that come across (manageability), and

© have the inspiration, inclination, and dedication for coping with stress. (Meaningfulness).[3] The life can be analyzed as an incessant array of challenges with tessellated pliable reaction . A salutogenic strategy is proposed to concentrate on the effectiveness of coping mechanisms, which speed up the movement towards the vigorous state of psychological well-being at the end of the mental health continuum [4].

Mental health is an important topic of discussion for an individual, communities and health care services throughout the world because of the cost linked with mental Ill- health and the loss of quality of life for those who are affected and their loved ones [5]. A broad spectrum of studies shows that dental students often have a notable decline in their psychological

health status. Although in the start of dental school with the values equivalent to the population average, after a few semesters later, dental students shows an increase rates of mental risk states and some evident psychological disorders, such as burnout and depression[6] Stress in dental students may have multiple causing factor , arising from the academic or the familial environment [7]. The Global Congress in Dental Education (2008) published a paper that stated, "Dentistry is recognized as a tough, demanding, and frequently stressful didactic exposure. During an education, it entails obtaining the essential knowledge, abilities, and interpersonal skills.." Practicing dentistry needs clinical and patient management skills, which attributes to the stress anticipated by the students.

The word STRESS delineates the pressure (physical or psychological) on one's physical and mental health that can affect their academic attainment. Stress factors that are related to dentistry is comprised of tight schedule, less or no time for relaxation, lack of sleep and intense working environment and dealing with the uncooperative patient. This can cause depression, anxiety, substance abuse, poor academic performance, and burnout Since dental students undergo intense stress during training, it is possible that occupational stress has its roots in the educational process. According to Lovallo, "occupational stress" is a condition of bodily and mental tension brought on by increased demands or a lack of a resource [8].

In the present scenario of intense competition in educational field, student's academic attainment is greatly Influenced by various factors, such as social media Platforms, quality of an education, family relationships or environment, etc. Aafreen et al. expressed that the students are constantly experiencing pressure from various Cause throughout their academic years, which instantaneously cause the stress among dental students. Stress is considered as a frequent factor that shrinks one's self esteem. When someone can't control their feelings or emotions, it develops.. When the stress is persistent, it can affect one's Psychological health and can cause various mental health related disorders, such as depression. Depression is considered as a universal illness expressed by various emotions like sorrow or unable to feel happy or content [9].

Stress is a result of certain outside mental or physical conditions that harm someone's physical and psychological health. Alzahem and colleagues4 divided stresses into five categories in their systematic review, including housing arrangements, the learning environment, personal, academic, and clinical variables. Exams and grades are typically cited as the most stressful aspects, combined with a lack of free time [10].

The Family Relationship Evaluation (FRI) is a self-report tool that offers an overall index of the family environment's quality as well as sub scores that represent family cohesion, expressiveness, and conflict [11].

## METHODOLOGY

Undergraduate dentistry students participated in this cross-sectional study.. There are 150 participants Out of which 75 are from preclinical dentistry ( first and second year dental students)and 75 are from clinical dentistry( third and fourth year dental students). Ethical clearance was obtained from department of PHD, SRM dental college, Ramapuram. Convenient Sample techniques were used and sample size was determined using G power values. Study tool is pretested and open ended questionnaire. The Participants Were provided with instructions and questionnaire in a Google form. Data was obtained regarding their socioeconomic demographic Profile (the information regarding name, age, gender). The questionnaire consist of 20 sets of questions out of which the first ten questions regarding the family environment and other ten questions regarding the state of mind at the work place were asked.

### **The following are the inclusion criteria for the participants**

- Undergraduate dental students

### **The following are the exclusion criteria for the participants**

- General public

## STATISTICAL ANALYSIS

Descriptive statistics was done to assess the frequency and percentage among the study variables Using inferential statistics, the chi square test was used to determine whether the questionnaire's assessment of the relationship between the year of study and gender was accurate SPSS (IBM SPSS Statistics for Windows, Version 27.0, Armonk, NY: IBM Corp. Released 2019) is employed to analyse the data. The level of significance is set at 5% (or 0.05). Statistics are considered significant when the P-value is less than 0.05..

## RESULTS

A total of 150 dental students of different academic years participated in this survey out of which 104 participants are female and other 46 participants are male. 50 participants (33.3%)are from internship, 27 participants (18%)are from final year, 21(14%) participants are from third year, 31(20.6participants are from second year and 21(14%) participants are from first year

**Table 1: Descriptive Statistics Of The Questionnaire Recorded**

S.NO	QUESTIONNAIRRE	OPTIONS	FREQUENCY (N)	PERCENTAGE (%)
1.	My family members genuinely care for one another.	Agree	38	26.0
		Disagree	7	4.8
		Neutral	44	30.1
		Strongly agree	51	34.9
		Strongly disagree	6	4.1
2.	My family does not understand me	Agree	5	3.4
		Disagree	46	31.5
		Neutral	63	43.2
		Strongly agree	7	4.8
3.	My family members get along nicely with one another.	All the time	33	22.6
		for the most part	75	51.4
		Never a single time	6	4.1
		Very rarely	32	21.9
4.	I feel left out with my family	All the time	20	13.7
		Most of the time	41	28.1
		None of the time	40	27.4
		Very rarely	45	30.8
5.	Members of my family argue too much	Agree	32	21.9
		Disagree	37	25.3
		Neutral	53	36.3
		Strongly agree	13	8.9
		Strongly disagree	11	7.5
S.NO	QUESTIONNAIR RE	OPTIONS	FREQUENCY (N)	PERCENTAGE (%)
6.	I can rely on my family	All the time	48	32.9
		Most of the time	60	41.1
		None of the time	7	4.8
		Very rarely	30	20.5
7.	My family is violent	All the time	17	11.6
		Most of the time	29	19.9
		None of the time	66	45.2
		Very rarely	34	23.3
8.	We can talk openly in our family members	Agree	39	26.7
		Disagree	30	20.5
		Neutral	49	33.6
		Strongly agree	20	13.7
		Strongly disagree	7	4.8
9	In our family we begin discussion easily	All the time	27	18.5
		Most of the time	80	54.8
		None of the time	7	4.8
		Very rarely	32	21.9
10	My family members really support each other	Agree	44	30.1
		Disagree	13	8.9
		Neutral	37	25.3
		Strongly agree	44	30.1
		Strongly disagree	8	5.5
11	Do you ever have the impression that you don't Truly care what happens to you or around you?	All the time	18	12.3
		Most of the time	43	29.5
		None of the time	22	15.1
		Very rarely	63	43.2
S.NO	QUESTIONNAIR RE	OPTIONS	FREQUENCY (N)	PERCENTAGE (%)
12.	Do you have the feeling that you are being treated unfairly	All the time	11	7.5
		Most of the time	55	37.7

		None of the time	34	23.3
		Very rarely	46	31.5
13.	Do you feel as though you are in an unusual scenario and are unsure of what to do?	All the time	17	11.6
		Most of the time	49	33.6
		None of the time	15	10.3
		Very rarely	65	44.5
14.	Doing the things you do everyday is fun or interesting	Agree	37	25.3
		Disagree	16	11.0
		Neutral	67	45.9
		Strongly agree	12	8.2
		Strongly disagree	13	8.9
		Maybe	53	36.3
15.	Do you have a lot of conflicting emotions and ideas?	No	37	25.3
		Yes	56	38.4
		All the time	31	21.2
16.	Do you ever sense something inside that you would rather not feel?	Most of the time	57	39.0
		None of the time	9	6.2
		Very rarely	49	33.6
		Always	16	11.0
17.	How often have felt like a sad or looser in the past	Never	12	8.2
		Rarely	41	28.1
		Sometimes	77	52.7
S.NO	QUESTIONAIRRE	OPTIONS	FREQUENCY (N)	PERCENTAGE (%)
18.	How often do you have the feeling that there is little meaning in what you do	Always	16	11.0
		Never	23	15.8
		Rarely	33	22.6
		Sometimes	74	50.7
19.	How often do you have feeling that you are not sure of what you are doing.	Always	13	8.9
		Never	18	12.3
		Rarely	40	27.4
		Sometimes	73	50.0
		Always	15	10.3
		Never	19	13.0
20.	How often do you feel that you are not capable enough to do the work?	Rarely	46	31.5
		Sometimes	66	45.2

Table 1 shows the descriptive statistics of the questionnaire to assess the Frequency and percentage among the study variables.

**Table 2: Association Between The Year Of Study and Questionnaire Recorded**

S.NO	QUESTIONNAIRE	OPTIONS	FIRST YEAR	SECOND YEAR	THIRD YEAR	FOURTH YEAR	INTERN	P-VALUE
1.	My familymembers genuinely carefor one another.	Agree	9	7	6	2	14	0.091
		Disagree	1	0	3	0	3	
		Neutral	7	11	9	5	12	
		Strongly agree	5	13	3	7	23	
		Strongly disagree	3	0	0	0	3	
2.	My familydoesn't comprehend who I am.	Agree	0	0	3	0	2	0.042*
		Disagree	11	5	8	3	19	
		Neutral	10	21	8	6	18	
		Strongly agree	1	1	1	1	3	
		Strongly disagree	3	4	1	4	13	
3.	My familymembers get along nicely with one another.	All the time	7	10	2	2	12	0.031*
		Most of the time	9	17	11	9	29	
		None of the time	1	1	1	1	2	
		Very rarely	8	3	7	2	12	
4.	I feel left out with my family	All the time	5	3	1	4	7	0.082
		Most of the time	7	9	10	4	11	
		None of the time	7	13	3	1	16	
		Very rarely	6	6	7	5	21	
5.	My familymembers arguefar too frequently.	Agree	6	8	4	2	12	0.132
		Disagree	3	11	5	2	16	
		Neutral	12	9	9	6	17	
		Strongly agree	2	1	3	3	4	
		Strongly disagree	2	2	0	1	6	
6.	I can rely on my family	All the time	7	12	5	4	20	0.091
		Most of the time	13	13	10	4	20	
		None of the time	1	0	1	2	3	
		Very rarely	4	6	5	3	12	
7.	My family is violent	All the time	1	5	1	6	4	0.045*
		Most of the time	6	4	8	1	10	
		None of the time	9	17	5	4	31	
		Very rarely	9	5	7	3	10	
8.	We can talkopenly in ourfamily members	Agree	8	4	6	5	16	0.16
		Disagree	5	7	3	5	10	
		Neutral	9	14	9	2	15	
		Strongly agree	3	4	0	2	11	
		Strongly disagree	0	2	2	0	3	
9.	In our familywe begindiscussion easily	All the time	4	5	6	2	10	0.82
		Most of the time	14	14	12	10	30	
		None of the time	0	4	0	1	2	
		Very rarely	7	8	3	1	13	
10.	My familymembers really supporteach other	Agree	8	14	5	4	13	0.35
		Disagree	4	1	3	0	5	
		Neutral	8	5	7	3	14	
		Strongly agree	4	9	6	6	19	
		Strongly disagree	1	2	0	1	4	
11.	Do you ever have theimpression that you don't trulycare whathappens to you or around you?	Every time	4	6	2	3	3	0.83
		Most of the time	7	8	10	3	15	
		None of the time	2	4	1	4	11	
		Very rarely	12	13	8	4	26	
12.	Do you feelthat you are receiving unjusttreatment?	Everytime	1	3	1	1	5	0.28
		Most of the time	8	8	13	8	18	
		None of the time	8	7	3	2	14	
		Very rarely	8	13	4	3	18	
13.	Do you have the feeling that you are	All the time	1	3	5	3	5	0.059
		Most of the time	9	8	12	4	16	

	in unfamiliar situation and don't know what to do	None of the time	3	2	2	3	5	
		Very rarely	12	18	2	4	29	
14.	Doing the things you do everyday is fun or interesting	Agree	6	10	3	4	14	0.092
		Disagree	3	3	6	1	3	
		Neutral	11	15	11	5	25	
		Strongly agree	3	1	0	2	6	
		Strongly disagree	2	2	1	2	6	
15.	Do you have very mixed upfeeling and ideas	Maybe	11	12	4	4	22	
		No	4	7	10	4	12	
		Yes	10	12	7	6	21	
16.	Do you ever sense something inside that you would rather not feel?	All the time	5	7	6	4	9	0.079
		Most of the time	13	10	11	5	18	
		None of the time	1	1	1	2	4	
		Very rarely	6	13	3	3	24	
17.	How often have felt like a sad or looser in the past	At all times	2	1	5	3	5	0.054
		Never	0	3	1	3	5	
		Rarely	5	14	6	2	14	
		Sometimes	18	13	9	6	31	
18.	How frequently do you feel that what you do has little purpose?	At all times	4	4	3	2	3	0.081
		Never	5	7	2	2	7	
		Rarely	5	7	5	4	12	
		Sometimes	11	13	11	6	33	
19.	How frequently do you feel uncertain about what you are doing?	At all times	2	4	2	0	5	0.19
		Never	5	4	3	2	4	
		Rarely	4	6	5	6	19	
		Sometimes	13	17	10	6	27	
20.	How frequently do you feel that you are unable to complete the task?	Always	2	3	2	1	7	0.52
		Never	4	5	2	1	7	
		Rarely	6	10	6	7	17	
		Sometimes	13	13	11	5	24	

Table 2 shows that the interns (19) disagreed with the question (my family does not understand me) p=0.042, Second year (17) and interns (29) chose most of the time for the question (Members of my family get along well together) p=0.031, while interns (31) chose none of the time for the Question (my family is violent) p=0.045.

**Table 3: Association Between The Gender And Questionnaire Recorded**

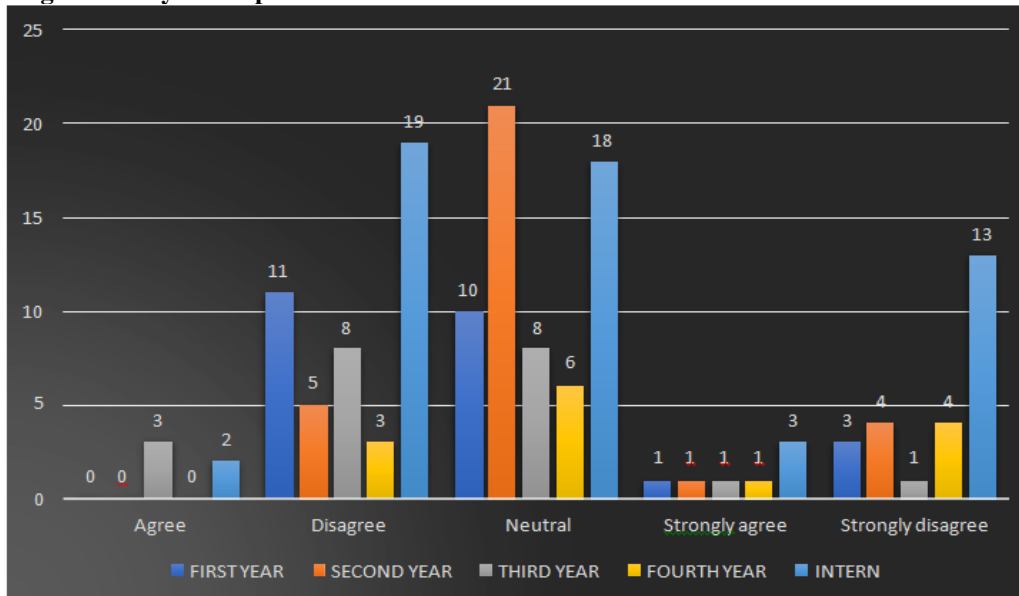
S.NO	QUESTIONNAIRE	OPTIONS	MALE	FEMALE	P-VALUE
1.	My family members genuinely care for one another.	Agree	9	29	0.048*
		Disagree	1	6	
		Neutral	13	31	
		Strongly agree	17	34	
		Strongly disagree	2	4	
2.	My family doesn't Comprehend who I am.	Agree	1	4	0.032*
		Disagree	11	35	
		Neutral	17	46	
		Strongly agree	1	6	
		Strongly disagree	12	13	
3.	My family members get along nicely with one another.	Everytime	9	24	0.72
		Most of the time	22	53	
		None of the time	3	3	
		Very rarely	8	24	
4.	I feel left out with my family	All the time	5	15	0.17
		Most of the time	12	29	
		None of the time	15	25	
		Very rarely	10	35	
5.	My family members argue far too frequently.	Agree	9	23	0.28
		Disagree	10	27	
		Neutral	18	35	

		Strongly agree	2	11	
		Strongly disagree	3	8	
6.	I can rely on my family	All the time	11	37	0.91
		Most of the time	20	40	
		None of the time	2	5	
		Very rarely	9	21	
<b>S.NO</b>	<b>QUESTIONAIRE</b>	<b>OPTIONS</b>	<b>MALE</b>	<b>FEMALE</b>	<b>P-VALUE</b>
7.	My family is violent	All the time	2	15	0.52
		Most of the time	8	21	
		None of the time	21	45	
		Very rarely	11	23	
8.	We can talk openly in our family members	Agree	12	27	0.14
		Disagree	5	25	
		Neutral	13	36	
		Strongly agree	9	11	
		Strongly disagree	3	4	
9.	In our family we begin discussion easily	All the time	5	22	0.42
		Most of the time	27	53	
		None of the time	1	6	
		Very rarely	9	23	
10.	My family members really support each other	Agree	7	37	0.018*
		Disagree	5	8	
		Neutral	12	25	
		Strongly agree	16	28	
		Strongly disagree	2	6	
11.	Do you ever have the Impression that you don't truly care what Happens to you or around you?	Everytime	4	14	0.18
		Most of the time	11	32	
		None of the time	8	14	
		Very rarely	19	44	
12.	Do you feel that you are receiving unjust treatment?	Everytime	2	9	0.29
		Most of the time	12	43	
		None of the time	12	22	
		Very rarely	16	30	
13.	Do you feel as though you are in an unusual scenario and are unsure of what to do?	Everytime	2	15	0.12
		Most of the time	14	35	
		None of the time	4	11	
		Very rarely	22	43	
14.	It's entertaining or fun to do the activities you do every day.	Agree	11	26	0.098
		Disagree	3	13	
		Neutral	23	44	
		Strongly agree	1	11	
		Strongly disagree	3	10	
15.	Do you have a lot of Conflicting emotions and ideas?	Maybe	22	31	0.26
		No	6	31	
		Yes	14	42	
<b>S.NO</b>	<b>QUESTIONAIRE</b>	<b>OPTIONS</b>	<b>MALE</b>	<b>FEMALE</b>	<b>P-VALUE</b>
16.	Do you ever sense something inside that you would rather not feel?	Everytime	5	26	0.31
		Most of the time	19	38	
		None of the time	2	7	
		Very rarely	16	33	
17.	How often have you felt like a sad or loser in the past	Always	3	13	0.097
		Never	2	10	
		Rarely	13	28	
		Sometimes	24	53	
18.	How often do you have the feeling that there is little meaning in what you do	Always	4	12	0.073
		Never	7	16	
		Rarely	10	23	
		Sometimes	21	53	

19.	How often do you have feeling that you are not sure of what you are doing.	Always	4	9	0.24
		Never	4	14	
		Rarely	11	29	
		Sometimes	23	50	
20.	How frequently do you feel that you are unable to complete the task?	Always	5	10	0.044*
		Never	5	14	
		Rarely	13	33	
		Sometimes	19	47	

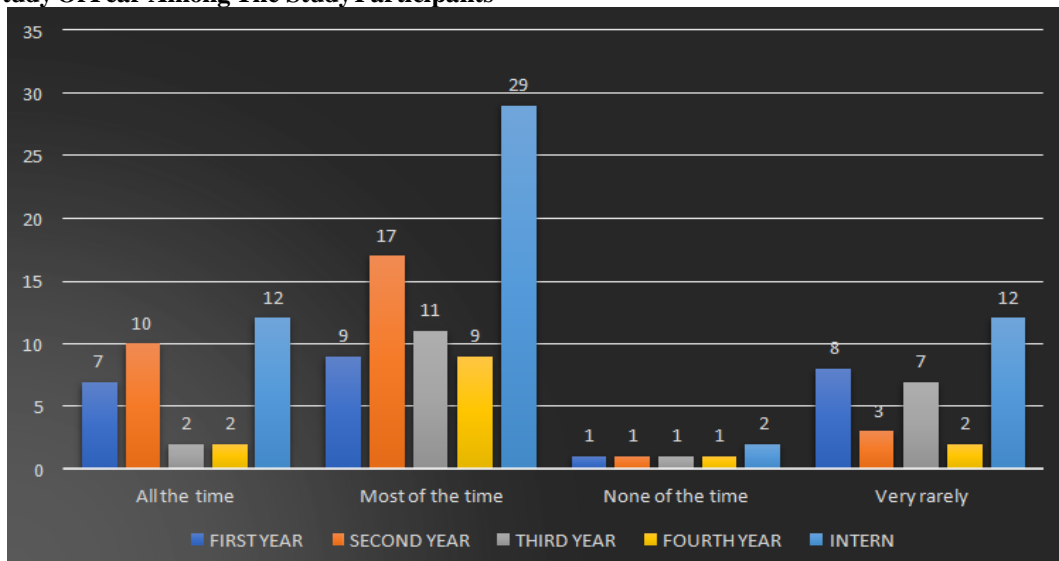
Table 3 shows that females (34) and males (17) strongly agreed with the question (The members of my family really care about each other)  $p=0.048$ , females (46) and males (17) are neutral With the question (my family does not understand me)  $p=0.032$ , females (37) agreed with the question (My family members really support each other)  $p=0.018$ , while females (47) and males (19) chose Sometimes for the question (how often do you feel that you are not capable enough to do the work)  $p=0.044$ .

**Graph 1: The Questionnaire (My Family Does Not Understand Me) Was Compared With The Study Of Year Among The Study Participants**



Graph 1 shows the comparison between different academic years with the questionnaire (My family does not understand me) and it depicts that the second year undergraduates (29) are neutral, Interns (19) disagreed and the first year undergraduates (11) agreed.

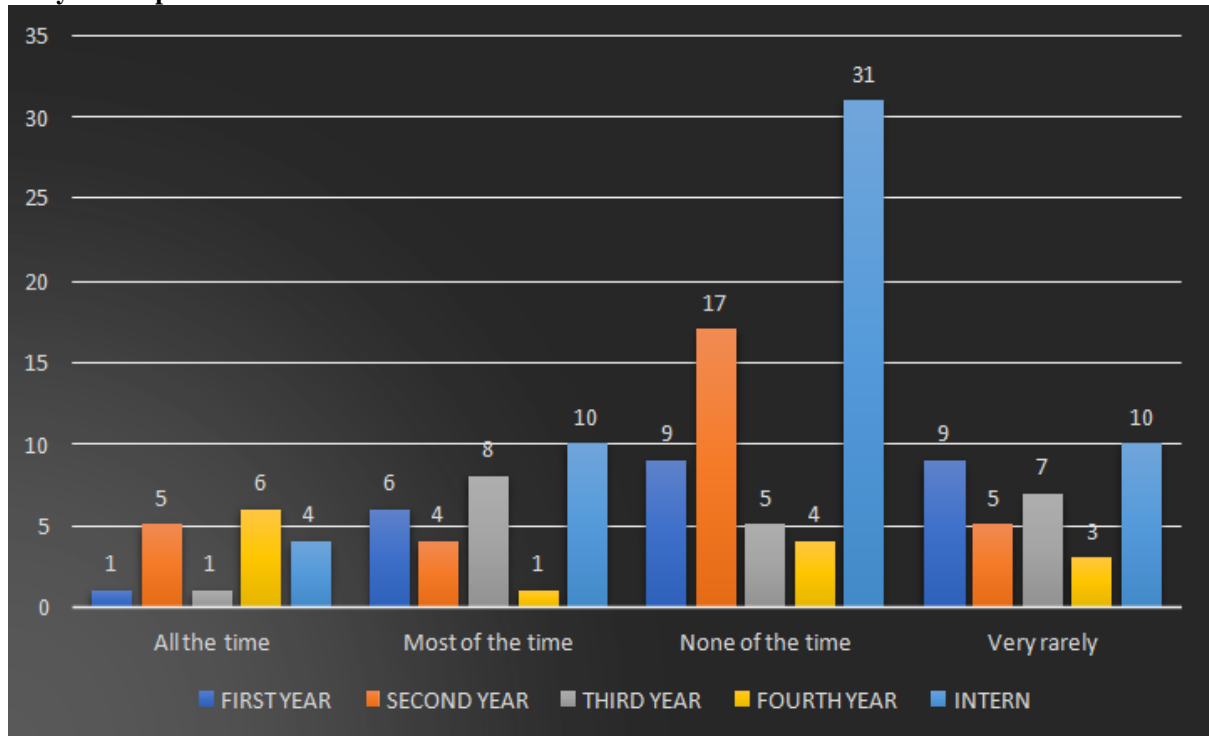
**Graph 2: The Questionnaire (Members Of My Family Get Along Well Together) Was Compared With The Study Of Year Among The Study Participants**





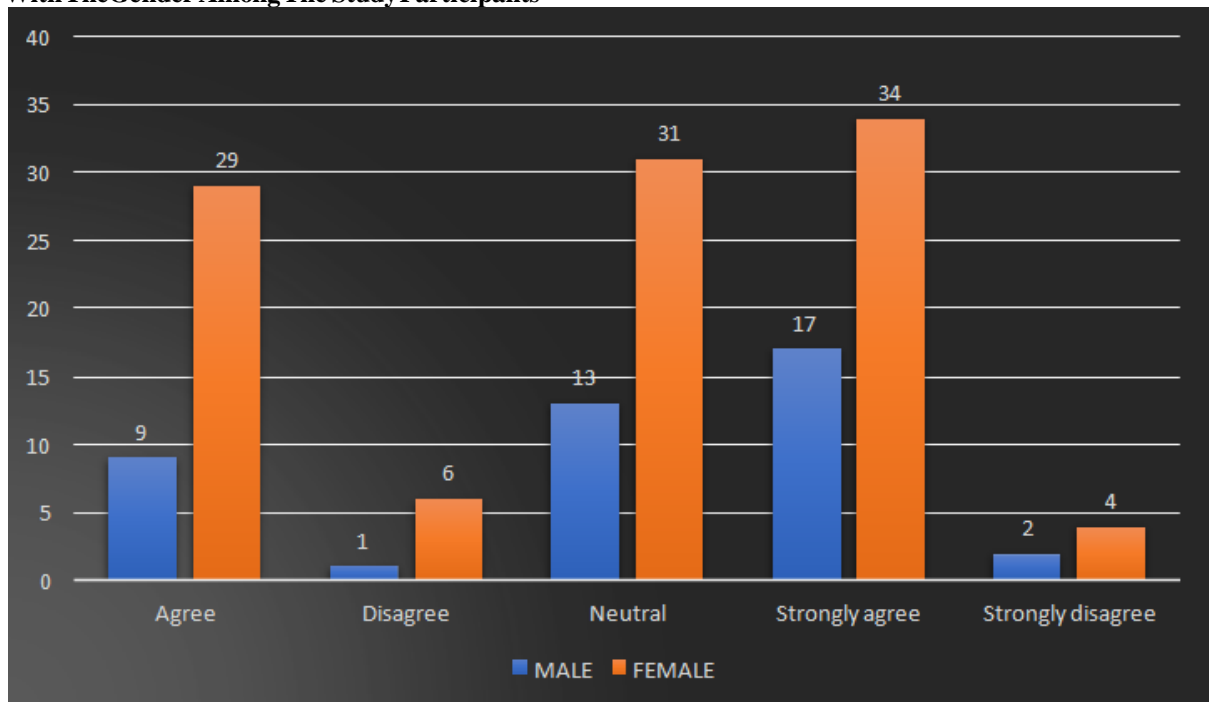
Graph 2 shows the comparison between different academic years and the questionnaire (members of my family get along well together) and it depicts that the interns (29) chose most of the time, their family members get along well together.

**Graph 3: The Questionnaire (My Family Is Violent) Was Compared With The Study Of Year Among The Study Participants**



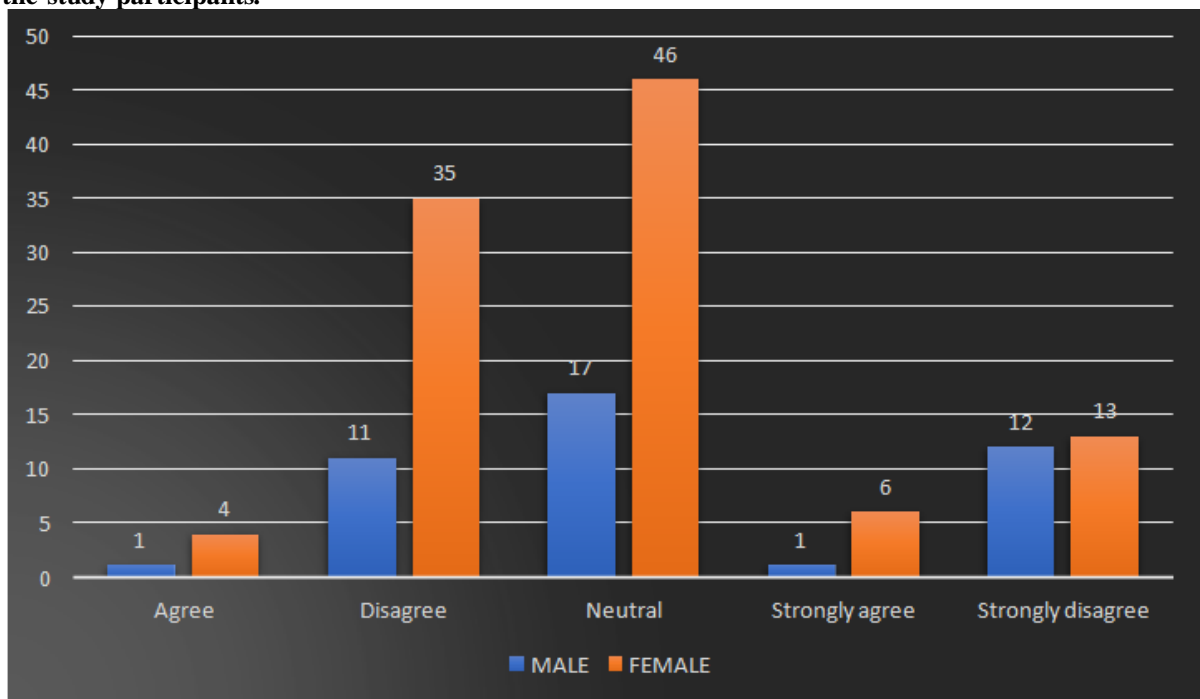
Graph 3 shows comparison between different academic years and the questionnaire (my family is violent) and it depicts that the interns (31) and second year (17) chose that their family is not violent.

**Graph 4: The Questionnaire (The Members Of My Family Really Care About Each Other) Was Compared With The Gender Among The Study Participants**



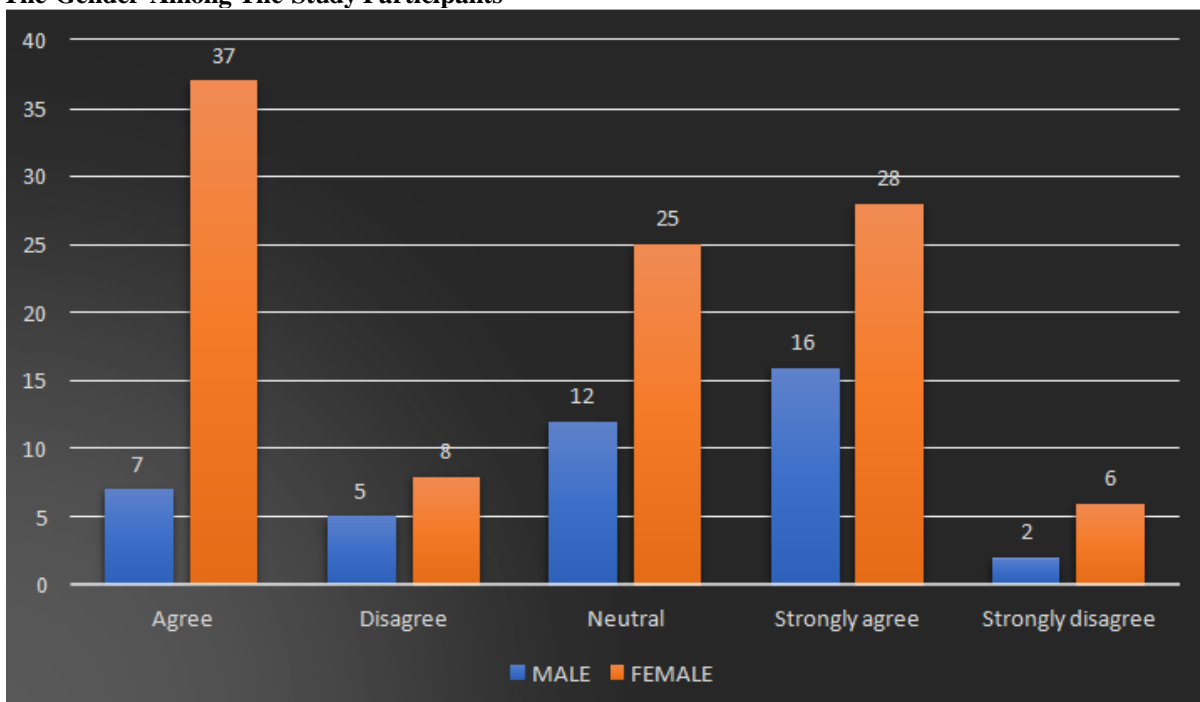
Graph 4 shows the comparison between the questionnaire (The members of my family really care about each other) and genders among the study participants and it depicts that the female (34) agreed.

**Graph 5: The questionnaire (My family does not understand me) was Compared with the gender among the study participants.**



Graph 5 shows comparison between the questionnaire (My family does not understand me) with gender among the study participants and it depicts female (46) are neutral and (35) disagreed.

**Graph 6: The Questionnaire (My Family Members Really Support Each Other) Was Compared With The Gender Among The Study Participants**



Graph 6 shows the comparison between the questionnaire (My family members really support each other) with gender among the study participants and it depicts that the female (37) agreed.

**DISCUSSION**

Descriptive statistics has done to assess the frequency and percentage among the study variables. It has been found that 28.1% of the participants/subject feel left out with the family.

21.9% of the participants gave response that their family members argue too much. Additionally, it has been noted that the 11.0% of the participants often feel sad and 10.3% of the participants does not feel capable of doing the work.

Being accordant with the foregoing studies, we ascertained that the sense of coherence was unfavorably related with the extent of stress perceived stress, favorably related with the educational attainment. Resembling to a Finnish research work, we found that a high sense of coherence was strongly related to family support than that with of socioeconomic background such as families educational background, income, or with simply having a relationship such as having a partner.[12] The reason for the 11.0% responses of the participants often feel sad or 10.3% of the participants does not feel capable can be lack of family support or trust. The family quarrel may aggregate the distressing situation which occurs in college and impact their educational attainment compromising their life projects while in college [13].

It is also reported that nonacademic events such as difficulties with the journey to university, family responsibilities, money, and social distractions could be sources of a stressor for the students as well [14]. The Previous study states that the anxiety symptoms were related with family quarrel or poor family environment and less or no support from friends[15]. Whereas, in this study majority of the participants have good family environment and hence there is a positive attitude towards handling the situation. Association between the year of study and questionnaire reveals that students doing internship have the feeling that they are not capable enough to do the work as compared to other academic years because they are not able to manage their stress. This might be because of the limited participants participated in this survey. Whereas, Naidu and colleagues observed that stress among first and second year dental students was more academic as compared to clinical and patient management related stress among students during third year , final year and internship [16].

Association between gender and questionnaire, it has been recorded that female have feeling of being sad or de-motivated as compared to male participants. In this study the numbers of female participants are more compared to male participants hence there is a gender bias. In this study it is also recorded that female often feel that they are not capable enough to do the work or there is little meaning in what they are doing. In foregoing study it is noted that the measurement of different levels of stress between male and female students in the field did not describe any notable differences[17].

Many studies have also suggested the association between stress perception and various factors such as gender, marital status, family environment and the year of study[18].

Dentistry is often considered as difficult and stressful course and one should be mentally prepared themselves for all the circumstances. The personal beliefs and values can impact one's sense of coherence [19]. In this study, the association

between the year of study and questionnaire reveals that there are no significant differences noted between different academic years in terms of stress management.

It is observed in foregoing studies that students often feel stressful about the circumstances faced in academic years; when family have high expectations from their children to choose a profession like dentistry, which is one of the respected profession. This is very Common in India with strong family values where children don't let their parents down [20]. In this study, it is recorded that majority of the participants (54.8%) can start the discussion in their family easily, which indicates that they have healthy communication with their families. This research only includes a tiny population.. If this is conducted for a larger population, the results would have been variations.

### LIMITATIONS

The study is conducted among small population and if it was conducted for a larger population, there would have been a variations and the study would have been proved more effective or ineffective. Further study must be conducted to eliminate the limitations.

### CONCLUSION

The stress among dental students are multifactorial, it can be academic or familial. The family plays a vital role in student's ability to perceive the stress the vast majority of individuals in our research (54.3%) have a healthy family environment and hence they have high sense of coherence when compared to others students who have family dysfunction. In this study, the association between the gender and questionnaire does show a difference and this might be because the number of female participants are more compared to male participants. In this study, it is recorded that students doing internship Often have the feeling of being sad or lost as compared to any academic years. It can be concluded that the family relationships has a great impact on the sense of coherence among dental students.

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