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Research Article

**PREVALENCE OF ACADEMIC DISHONESTY AMONG
MEDICAL AND DENTAL STUDENTS**Dr. Afshan Afzal Wahla¹, Dr. Anam Javaid², Dr. Tayyeba Rasool³¹ Govt. Teaching Hospital Shahdara² Mayo Hospital Lahore³ Bahawal Victoria Hospital Bahawalpur**Article Received:** February 2020**Accepted:** March 2020**Published:** April 2020**Abstract:**

Academic dishonesty, academic misconduct, academic fraud and academic integrity are related concepts that refer to various actions on the part of students that go against the expected norms of a school, university or other learning institution. The mean age of the students was 23.12±2.56 years. Ninety-one students (70%) responded that they cheat in the examinations. Regular educational programmes for students in the form of workshops, debates and talks by prominent academicians from the very first year of medical college would provide the necessary ambience for students to change their perception about misconduct.

Keywords: *Academic cheating, dishonesty, medical students*

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INTRODUCTION:

Academic dishonesty, academic misconduct, academic fraud and academic integrity are related concepts that refer to various actions on the part of students that go against the expected norms of a school, university or other learning institution. Definitions of academic misconduct are usually outlined in institutional policies. Academic dishonesty has been documented in every type of educational setting from elementary school to graduate school. Throughout history this type of dishonesty has been met with varying degrees of penalties.

In the United States, one study has shown that 20% of students started cheating in the first grade. Similarly, other studies reveal that currently in the U.S., 56% of middle school students and 70% of high school students have cheated. A large-scale study in Germany found that 75% of the university students admitted that they conducted at least one of seven types of academic misconduct (such as plagiarism or falsifying data) within the previous six months.

Students are not the only ones to cheat in an academic setting. A study among North Carolina school teachers found that some 35% of respondents said they had witnessed their colleagues cheating in

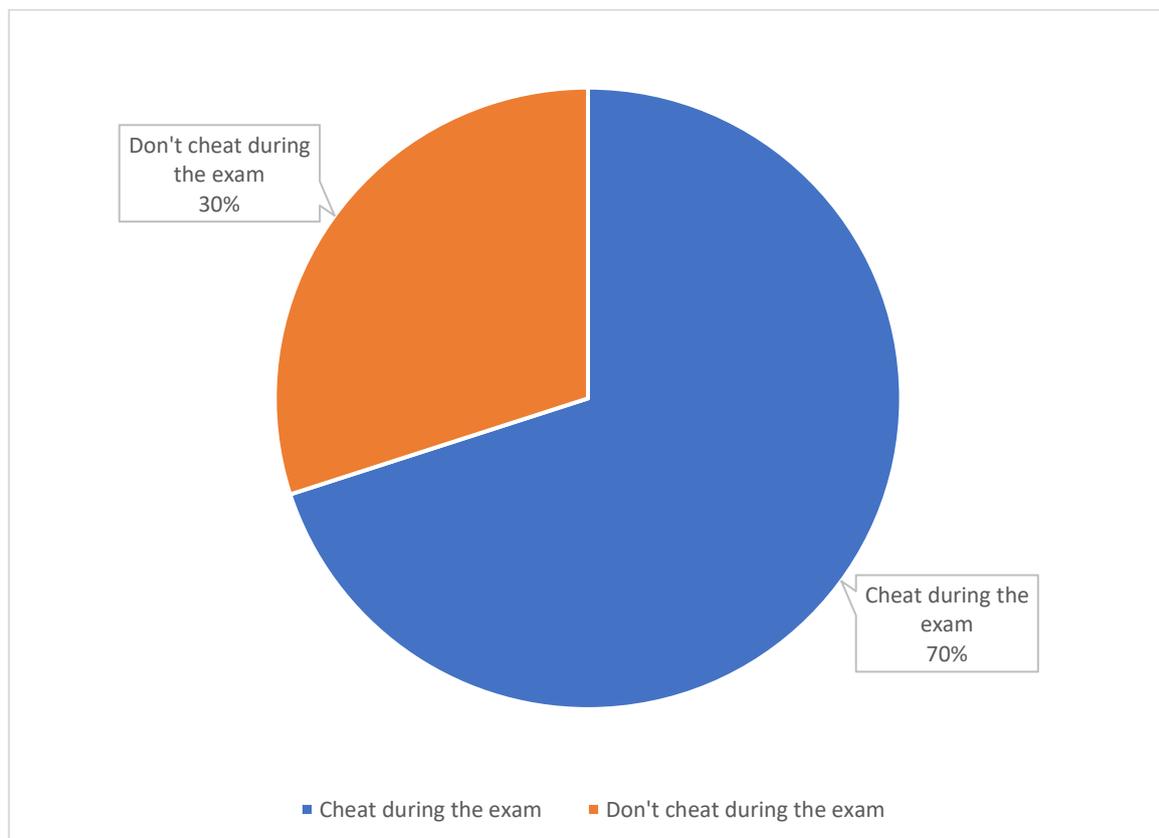
one form or another. The rise of high-stakes testing and the consequences of the results on the teacher is cited as a reason why a teacher might want to inflate the results of their students [1,2, 3].

MATERIAL AND METHODS:

This cross-sectional study was conducted among the medical and dental students of different colleges. A total of 130 medical and dental students, both male and female were included. All the students were given a predefined proforma and responses were collected. The data was collected and analyzed using SPSS Ver. 25.0. The qualitative data was presented as frequency and percentages. The quantitative data was presented as mean and standard deviation.

RESULTS:

The mean age of the students was 23.12 ± 2.56 years. The mean age of male students was 23.89 ± 2.14 years and the mean age of female students was 22.67 ± 2.23 years. There were 65 (50%) male and 65 (50%) female students. Ninety-one students (70%) responded that they cheat in the examinations. Sixty of them cheat frequently during the examinations and thirty-one of them do it occasionally. Thirty-nine students responded that they don't do the cheating. Main reasons of the cheating were fear of failure, difficult examination, poor quality of lectures by the teachers etc.



DISCUSSION:

Medical science, by its very nature requires its practitioners to be honest, ethical, of high moral fibre and have virtues not normally expected of other professionals. Academic dishonesty can be defined as "an intentional act of cheating or deceit while fulfilling academic requirements and/ or duties." Much has been said on this topic though little has been done in Pakistan to address this disturbing issue.

Some of the medical schools in the USA, UK and Canada have started centres for academic integrity. These centres serve to promote moral behaviour in all spheres of academics and give information on what is appropriate behaviour for a professional. It includes encouraging students to be truthful and honest in examinations and reporting instances of dishonesty among students and faculty. Information on topics such as scientific writing, ethics of research, publication etc., can be obtained from here [4,5,6].

CONCLUSION:

Regular educational programmes for students in the form of workshops, debates and talks by prominent academicians from the very first year of medical college would provide the necessary ambience for students to change their perception about misconduct. Faculty too should be involved in these training programmes as well as have separate workshops on professional ethics, professional conduct and other topics so that they are trained to detect and handle misconduct.

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