



The Dual Role of Private Clinics in Dental Colleges: Bridging Education and Practice While Navigating Pros and Cons

S-Manjula^a, G-Doddawad Vidya^b, HP Chanchala^c, S Sowmya^d, B-V Deepa^B, Godhi-Suhas Brinda^C

(a) Department of oral & maxillofacial surgery. JSS Dental College and Hospital. JSS Academy of Higher Education, Karnataka, India

(b) Department of oral pathology and microbiology. JSS Dental College and Hospital. JSS Academy of Higher Education & Research, Karnataka, India

(c) Assistant Professor, Department of Paediatric & Preventive Dentistry. JSS Dental College and Hospital. JSS Academy of higher education and research, Karnataka, India

(d) Assistant professor, Department of Prosthodontics and Crown and Bridge. JSS Dental College and Hospital. A constituent college of JSSAHER, Karnataka, India

Recibido el 20 de enero de 2025; aceptado el 18 de febrero de 2025

Dental colleges play a crucial role in training future oral health professionals and contributing to the overall improvement of dental care. One significant aspect of many dental colleges is the presence of private clinics within their premises. These private clinics serve various purposes, including providing hands-on clinical experience for students, offering affordable dental care to the community, and generating revenue for the institution. However, like any system, private clinics in dental colleges have their advantages and disadvantages.

Significance of Private Clinics in Dental Colleges

1. Clinical training for students: Private clinics in dental colleges serve as invaluable training grounds for dental students. Here, students gain hands-on experience under the supervision of experienced faculty members. This practical exposure enhances their clinical skills, patient interaction, and overall preparedness for real-world dental practice¹.
2. Community outreach and affordable care: Dental colleges often aim to bridge the gap in access to oral healthcare services. Private clinics offer an opportunity for the community to receive affordable dental care, often at lower costs than private practices. This not only benefits patients but also fulfills the social responsibility of the institution².
3. Revenue generation: Private clinics can be a significant source of revenue for dental colleges. The income generated from patient services can be reinvested into improving infrastructure, updating equipment, and enhancing educational resources. This financial stability contributes to the overall development of the institution³.
4. Research opportunities: Private clinics within dental colleges create a conducive environment

for clinical research. Students and faculty members can conduct studies, trials, and gather data that contribute to advancements in dental science. This synergy between clinical practice and research fosters an environment of continuous improvement and innovation⁴.

5. Professional collaboration: Private clinics often attract experienced dental practitioners who collaborate with the college. This collaboration not only benefits the students by exposing them to diverse perspectives but also creates networking opportunities that can extend beyond the academic setting. Such partnerships contribute to the overall growth and reputation of the dental college⁵.

Disadvantages of Private Clinics in Dental Colleges

1. Financial dependence: While revenue generation is a significant advantage, dental colleges may become overly dependent on private clinic income. This financial reliance can lead to compromises in educational quality and priorities, potentially impacting the overall mission of the institution (6).
2. Ethical dilemmas: Balancing the educational mission with the commercial aspects of private clinics can pose ethical challenges. Pressure to generate revenue may influence treatment decisions, potentially compromising the ethical standards of patient care and student education⁷.
3. Limited focus on public health: Private clinics, while providing affordable care, may not address broader public health issues comprehensively. The emphasis on clinical training and revenue generation might divert attention from community outreach programs and address oral health disparities on a larger scale⁸.
4. Resource allocation: The resources invested in establishing and maintaining private clinics might be at the expense of other critical areas, such as research facilities, faculty development, or student scholarships. Imbalanced resource allocation can hinder the overall growth and sustainability of the dental college⁹.
5. Competition with private practices: The presence of private clinics within dental colleges may create competition with private dental practices in the community. This competition could lead to strained relationships with local practitioners and potentially impact the referral network essential for comprehensive patient care¹⁰.

Conclusion

Private clinics within dental colleges play a crucial role in shaping the future of dental professionals, providing valuable clinical experience, and contributing to community oral health. However, it is essential to

recognize and address the potential disadvantages associated with financial dependence, ethical concerns, limited focus on public health, resource allocation, and competition with private practices. Striking a balance between the educational and commercial aspects is vital to ensuring the long-term success and sustainability of both the dental college and the private clinic.

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