

Retrospective Analysis of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery Questions Asked in the Dentistry Specialization Training Entrance Exam

Diş Hekimliği Uzmanlık Eğitimi Giriş Sınavında Sorulan Ağız, Diş ve Çene Cerrahisi Sorularının Retrospektif Analizi

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ABSTRACT Objective: The Dentistry Specialization Exam (DSE) is a central exam that dentists must take when they want to receive specialization training. This study aims to inform candidates who wish to receive specialization training and academicians who train these candidates by conducting a retrospective analysis of questions asked in the field of oral and maxillofacial surgery in the last ten years. **Material and Methods:** DSE exam questions of Student Selection and Placement Center (SSPC) conducted by the Council of Higher Education were accessed from SSPC's official website "https://www.osym.gov.tr". The study included the DSE exam administered 13 times between 2012 and 2022 and 128 oral and maxillofacial surgery questions asked in these exams. DSE oral and maxillofacial surgery questions were statistically analyzed according to their topics and the year they were asked. **Results:** The topics of the oral and maxillofacial surgery field were evaluated under 11 titles by examining the resources indicated by SSPC as reference books. The highest percentage of questions in the study came from the topic of oral diseases (27.34%), the lowest percentage of questions came from the topic of orofacial pain (1.56%). **Conclusion:** It has been determined that the distribution of topics and the frequency and rates of subtopics of oral and maxillofacial surgery questions asked in DSE have changed over the years. We believe that the data obtained from the study will be useful to candidates in the preparation process for the DSE exams.

ÖZET Amaç: Diş Hekimliği Uzmanlık Sınavı (DUS), diş hekimlerinin uzmanlık eğitimi almak istediklerinde girmeleri gereken merkezi bir sınavdır. Bu çalışma, son 10 yılda oral ve maksillofasiyal cerrahi alanında sorulan soruların retrospektif analizini yaparak uzmanlık eğitimi almak isteyen adayları ve bu adayları eğiten akademisyenleri bilgilendirmeyi amaçlamaktadır. **Gereç ve Yöntemler:** Yükseköğretim Kurulu Başkanlığı tarafından yürütülen Öğrenci Seçme ve Yerleştirme Merkezi (ÖSYM) DUS sınav sorularına ÖSYM'nin resmi internet sitesi "https://www.osym.gov.tr/" adresinden ulaşılmıştır. Çalışmaya 2012-2022 yılları arasında 13 kez uygulanan DUS sınavı ve bu sınavlarda sorulan 128 ağız, diş ve çene cerrahisi sorusu dâhil edilmiştir. DUS ağız, diş ve çene cerrahisi soruları konularına ve sorulduğu yıla göre istatistiksel olarak analiz edilmiştir. **Bulgular:** Ağız, diş ve çene cerrahisi alanının konuları ÖSYM'nin kaynak olarak gösterdiği referanslar incelenerek 11 başlık altında değerlendirilmiştir. Çalışmada en yüksek soru yüzdesi ağız hastalıkları konusundan (%27,34), en düşük soru yüzdesi ise orofasiyal ağrı konusundan (%1,56) gelmiştir. **Sonuç:** DUS'ta ağız, diş ve çene cerrahisi sorularının konu dağılımının ve alt konularının sorulma sıklığının ve oranlarının yıllar içinde değiştiği belirlenmiştir. Çalışmadan elde edilen verilerin DUS sınavlarına hazırlık sürecinde adaylara faydalı olacağına inanıyoruz.

Keywords: Dentistry; dentistry specialization exam; specialization education; oral and maxillofacial surgery

Anahtar Kelimeler: Diş hekimliği; diş hekimliği uzmanlık sınavı; uzmanlık eğitimi; ağız, diş ve çene cerrahisi

Dentistry education consists of a combination of extremely comprehensive theoretical and practical courses. However, when it comes to human health, in some cases undergraduate education alone is not

sufficient. Thanks to the specialist training received following undergraduate education, it is possible to plan the diagnosis and treatment stages of cases that are not frequently encountered.¹ Dentists who com-

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Peer review under responsibility of Türkiye Klinikleri Journal of Dental Sciences.

Received: 25 Jun 2024

Received in revised form: 02 Sep 2024

Accepted: 10 Sep 2024

Available online: 16 Sep 2024

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plete a 5-year undergraduate program in dentistry in Türkiye must pass the Dentistry Specialization Exam (DSE) to specialize in their field.

Specialization training in dentistry with the amendment made in the “Omnibus Law” No. 6225 published in the Official Gazette No. 27916 dated April 26, 2011 in Türkiye; it is divided into 8 different sections: oral, and maxillofacial surgery, oral and maxillofacial radiology, pediatric dentistry, endodontics, orthodontics, periodontology, prosthetic dentistry, and restorative dentistry.² “Oral Pathology” became law as a specialty branch with the 6th article of the “Law No. 7151 on Amendments to Certain Health-Related Laws and Decree Laws”, which came into force after being published in the Official Gazette No. 30616 on December 5, 2018.³ DSE is a central exam administered by the Student Selection and Placement Center (SSPC) for dentists who want to receive specialization training in dentistry faculties of universities. To enter DSE, the dentistry diploma must be registered as of the exam date, and foreign language proficiency is required for the placement process.⁴ The DSE exam, first implemented in the spring semester of 2012, was held twice a year in September and April between 2012 and 2014, and once a year between 2015 and 2022. Starting from 2023, it has been increased to twice a year in the first and second semesters.⁵ While the DSE exam was held in Ankara, İstanbul, and İzmir between 2012 and 2016, it was held only in Ankara between 2017 and 2021, and as of 2022, it is applied in both Ankara and İstanbul.

The DSE exam is a central exam with a total of 120 multiple-choice questions, 80 in clinical sciences, and 40 in basic sciences. 12.5% of the eighty-ques-

tion clinical sciences test consists of oral and maxillofacial surgery questions (Table 1). Candidates are given 150 minutes to answer the questions. Candidates, whose scores are determined, make their choices in line with the preference guide published by SSPC in the relevant year and can receive specialist training in dentistry faculties according to their preferences. Candidates who are successful in DSE are placed in relevant departments of dentistry faculties and receive specialist training for a period of 3 to 4 years. The threshold score in DSE is 45, and candidates taking the exam must get at least 45 points to choose. According to DSE data between 2012 and 2022, the percentage of candidates being placed in their preferences is between 27-60%.⁶ Being successful in DSE becomes more difficult with each exam and the information is constantly updated. To be successful in this exam, candidates must work hard. Recently, studies analyzing the questions in DSE in the branches of restorative dentistry and endodontics have appeared in the literature.^{7,8} So far, there is no study in the literature that analyzes the oral and maxillofacial surgery questions asked in DSE. This study aims to analyze the DSE oral and maxillofacial surgery questions under certain topics; to contribute to dentists who want to specialize and to academicians and specialist physicians who train these physicians.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

Since our study was not conducted on humans or samples taken from humans, and was conducted using a public website, ethics committee approval was not required.

TABLE 1: Distribution of dentistry specialization training entrance exam questions according to branches.

Clinical sciences			Basic sciences		
	n	%		n	%
Restorative dentistry	10	12.5	Anatomy	6	15
Prosthetic dentistry	10	12.5	Physiology	6	15
Oral and maxillofacial surgery	10	12.5	Histology and embryology	4	10
Oral and maxillofacial radiology	10	12.5	Medical biochemistry	6	15
Periodontology	10	12.5	Medical microbiology	6	15
Endodontics	10	12.5	Medical pathology	4	10
Pediatric dentistry	10	12.5	Medical pharmacology	4	10
Ortodontics	10	12.5	Medical biology and genetics	4	10
Total	80	100	Total	40	100

DSE was performed 17 times in ten years between 2012 and 2024. This study included 13 DSEs performed between 2012 and 2021 and published on the SSPC official website.⁹ A total of 128 questions were evaluated in oral and maxillofacial surgery. The subject headings and sub-headings of the fields were examined under 11 headings for oral and maxillofacial surgery by reviewing the resources cited by SSPC as reference books.¹⁰⁻¹⁵ The topic distribution of the questions asked in the branch of oral and maxillofacial surgery by years was examined. Additionally, the number of questions according to each topic subheading was analyzed.

Statistical analysis of the data was performed using the SPSS statistical program, version 20 (SPSS Inc, Chicago, IL, USA). Mean and standard deviation values were given in descriptive statistics of continuous data, and number and percentage values were given in nominal data.

RESULTS

Thirteen DSE conducted between 2012 and 2022 and published on the SSPC official website were included in this study. One question each in the field of oral

and maxillofacial surgery was canceled in 2015 and 2017, and since the questions were not published by SSPC, they could not be included in the study. In the research, 128 questions were examined due to the cancellation of 2 questions.

When the oral and maxillofacial surgery questions were examined, it was seen that most questions came from oral diseases (27.34%). It was observed that at least 2 and at most 4 questions were asked about the topic of oral diseases every year. After oral diseases, the most frequently asked topics were systemic disease (12.5%), maxillofacial trauma (11.71%), dento-alveolar surgery (10.93%) and anesthesia (9.37%). It was seen that at least 1 question was asked about the topic of systemic diseases every year except in 2017. In addition, it was observed that the least number of questions among the topics was about orofacial pain (1.56%). This was followed by dental implantology (3.12%), orofacial infection (4.68%), and orthognathic surgery (4.68%) (Table 2, Figure 1).

Questions in the field of oral and maxillofacial surgery were divided into sub-topics and examined separately. Among dentoalveolar surgery topics, the

TABLE 2: Distribution of oral and maxillofacial surgery questions by years.

Topics	2012/1	2012/2	2013/1	2013/2	2014/1	2014/2	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	Total
Dento-alveolar surgery	1	-	2	-	2	1	1	1	1	1	-	2	2	14
Systemic diseases	1	1	1	2	2	1	1	1	-	1	1	2	2	16
Anesthesia	1	1	2	1	1	-	-	2	1	1	1	1	-	12
Oral diseases	2	4	2	2	2	3	2	3	3	4	3	2	3	35
Maxillofacial trauma	1	1	1	2	-	1	2	1	2	1	2	-	1	15
Temporomandibular disorders	1	-	1	1	-	1	1	1	1	-	1	1	-	9
Orofacial infections	-	-	1	-	-	-	1	-	-	1	1	1	1	6
Dentofacial syndromes	1	1	-	1	2	1	-	1	-	-	1	-	1	9
Orthognathic surgery	1	-	-	-	1	1	1	-	1	-	-	1	-	6
Dental implantology	1	1	-	1	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	4
Orofacial pain	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	2
Total	10	10	10	10	10	10	9	10	9	10	10	10	10	128

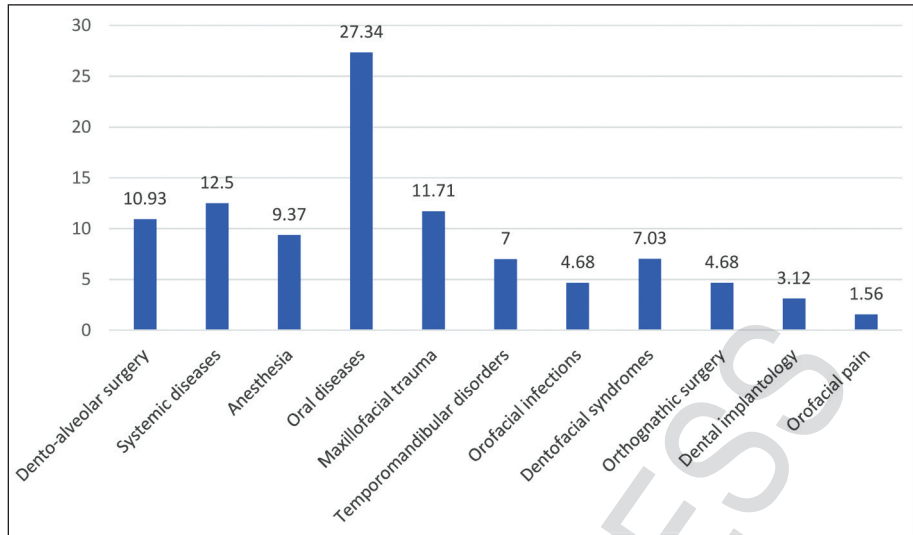


FIGURE 1: Distribution of questions in the oral and maxillofacial surgery branch according to topics (%).

most questions came from flap and suture techniques (21.42%), followed by impacted teeth (14.28%). Regarding oral diseases, the majority of the questions were about odontogenic or non-odontogenic cysts and tumors. Apart from these, there were questions about infectious diseases, salivary gland diseases, and other topics related to oral mucosa lesions. Maxillofacial trauma questions were mostly related to mandibular fractures (46.66%) and midface fractures (40%), followed by dentoalveolar trauma (13.33%) questions. Among the questions regarding dentoalveolar syndromes, the most questions were about cleft lip and palate (33.33%), followed by Frey syndrome (22.22%). The most questions regarding systemic diseases were about autoimmune diseases (25%). This was followed by hematological diseases, oncological diseases, cardiovascular system diseases, and endocrine system diseases. Among the questions about anesthesia, the most common questions were anesthesia type (33.3%) and anesthesia complications (33.3%), followed by anesthesia techniques (24.97%). Questions about temporomandibular joint were mostly related to temporomandibular disorders (44.4%) and temporomandibular joint treatment methods (44.4%). Among orofacial infections, fossa canine abscesses (33.3%) and actinomyces infections (33.3%) were the most frequently asked topics. Among orthognathic surgery topics, most questions

were about distraction osteogenesis (33.33). Half of the dental implantology questions were about dental implants, while the other half were about alveolar augmentation methods. There were 2 questions about orofacial pain, and both of them were related to trigeminal neuralgia (Table 3).

DISCUSSION

Scientific and technological developments make university undergraduate programs inadequate both qualitatively and quantitatively and create a need for expertise in dentistry, as in many professional groups.¹⁶ Dentists who complete a 5-year undergraduate program in dentistry in Türkiye must pass the DSE to specialize in a particular field. To be successful in DSE, dentists must be successful in all clinical and basic science courses they have taken during their undergraduate education. In this study conducted for the first time in the literature to guide the candidates entering the DSE and the academicians who train them, a retrospective analysis was made of the questions in the field of oral and maxillofacial surgery in the exams held between 2012 and 2022.

Oral diseases is a field within dentistry that deals with the diagnosis, and medical and dental treatment of diseases of the mouth and surrounding tissues. When the questions asked in DSE were examined by

TABLE 3: Distribution of oral and maxillofacial surgery questions according to subtopics.

Topics	n	%	Topics	n	%
Dento-alveolar surgery	14	100	Systemic diseases	16	100
Biopsi	1	7.14	Autoimmune disease	4	25
Flap and suture principles	3	21.42	Cardiovascular diseases	2	12.5
Wisdom teeth	2	14.28	Endocrine diseases	2	12.5
Alveoler osteitis	1	7.14	Hematological diseases	3	18.75
Maxillary sinus surgery	1	7.14	Oncological diseases	3	18.75
Odontogenic cyst treatments	1	7.14	Respiratory system diseases	1	6.25
Preprosthtic surgery	1	7.14	Xerostomia	1	6.25
Apical surgery	1	7.14	Anesthesia	12	100
Wound care	1	7.14	Anesthetic type	4	33.3
Maxillo-facial anatomy	1	7.14	Anesthesia technique	3	24.97
Dental technologies	1	7.14	Complications	4	33.3
Oral diseases	35	100	ASA	1	8.32
Benign odontogenic tumors	4	11.42	Temporomandibular disorders	9	100
Benign non-odontogenic tumors	4	11.42	Treatment methods	4	44.4
Malignant tumors	5	14.28	TMJ disorders	4	44.4
Premalign lesions	2	5.71	TMJ infections	1	11.1
Odontogenic cysts	3	8.57	Orofacial infections	6	100
Non-odontogenic cysts	5	14.28	Fossa canine abscess	2	33.33
Oral mucosa lesions	3	8.57	Infratemporale abscess	1	16.6
Salivary gland disease	4	11.42	Actinomycosis infections	2	33.33
Viral and fungal infections	5	14.28	Ludwig angina	1	16.6
Maxillofacial trauma	15	100	Orthognathic surgery	6	100
Dentoalveolar traumas	2	13.33	Le Fort I and genioplasty	1	16.6
Midface fractures	6	40	Wassmund segmental osteotomy	1	16.6
Mandible fractures	7	46.66	Distraction osteogenesis	2	33.33
Dentofacial syndromes	9	100	Obstructive sleep apnea	1	16.6
Cleft lip palate	3	33.33	Malocclusion	1	16.6
Frey syndrome	2	22.22	Dental implantology	4	100
Eagle syndrome	1	11.11	Dental implants	2	50
Pierre Robin syndrome	1	11.11	Alveoler augmentation	2	50
Gorlin-Goltz syndrome	1	11.11	Orofacial pain	2	100
McCune-Albright syndrome	1	11.11	Trigeminal nevralgia	2	100

ASA: American Society of Anesthesiologists; TMJ: Temporomandibular joint.

branches, it was seen that most questions in the field of oral and maxillofacial surgery were asked under the title of oral diseases. Oral diseases are also important for other clinical branches of dentistry other than oral and maxillofacial surgery, and the fact that they are asked more than once in each DSE shows the importance of the subject. Although many diseases or lesions fall within the scope of oral diseases, the majority of questions in this category appear to be odontogenic/non-odontogenic cysts and tumors.

Especially in studies conducted in the last 20 years, it has become evident that there is a two-way relationship between oral health and general health.¹⁷ The situation that is tried to be expressed in two ways; it is explained that some systemic disease findings are oral symptoms and that oral health has an indirect or direct impact on general health.¹⁸ Dentists should ensure that the risks of systemic complications of these patients are minimized during or after dental treatment.¹⁹ In addition, since oral and maxillofacial

surgery is a surgical branch and has a higher risk of complications compared to other fields, it is important to evaluate the patient's general health status and systemic diseases more carefully. In DSE, systemic diseases that are considered important for dental treatments are frequently asked in this category. Considering the importance of the subject and the fact that questions are asked in almost every exam, this subject will remain important in terms of future exams. Another fundamental issue that concerns all branches of dentistry practice is anesthesia. As expected, questions are asked about the main topics about local anesthetic agents, anesthesia techniques and local or systemic complications due to anesthesia.

Maxillofacial traumas are an important public health problem worldwide and are one of the most common causes of death in individuals under the age of 40. Maxillofacial traumas are seen in 72% of general body traumas.²⁰ Maxillofacial traumas are one of the main topics of oral and maxillofacial surgery and questions are asked about this subject in almost every exam. Regarding this topic, midface fractures and mandibular fractures constituted the majority of questions asked, while fewer questions were asked about dentoalveolar injuries. The fact that dentoalveolar injuries are included in the curricula of branches such as pedodontics or endodontics may be the reason why few questions are asked about this subject in oral and maxillofacial surgery.

Dentoalveolar surgery is the basis of maxillofacial surgery and covers many subheadings such as impacted teeth, basic surgical principles, biopsy types, pre-prosthetic surgery. It can be said that the number of questions asked about this subject in the DSE exam is relatively low compared to the importance of the subject. These data show that the number of questions asked in DSE on some subjects, such as dentoalveolar surgery, is not directly proportional to the importance of the subject in professional practice. Similarly, while dental implantology has an important place in oral and maxillofacial surgery practice, it appears that this is not reflected in the exam questions. The fact that subjects such as dental implantology and orthognathic surgery are included in detail in the post-graduate specialty training curriculum

may be the reason why fewer questions are asked on this subject. Odontogenic infections are one of the most common diseases in the oral and maxillofacial region.²¹ The reason why fewer questions are asked about orofacial pain or orofacial infections in the field of oral and maxillofacial surgery may be because these topics are also included in other clinical sciences.

Regarding dentofacial syndromes and temporomandibular disorders, 9 questions were asked in DSE between the years examined, constituting 7.03% of all questions. Cleft lip palate is the most frequent congenital facial malformation worldwide, so most questions came from this topic in the DSE exam.²² It is noteworthy that while a total of 1 question has been asked about other syndromes so far, a question has been asked about Frey syndrome twice. Temporomandibular disorders are the most common orofacial pains of nondental origin.²³ Considering the number of questions asked about the temporomandibular joint, which is the only movable joint of the head and neck region, and its related diseases and treatments, we can think that this topic will be important in the future DSE exam questions.

Adequate training in clinical medical sciences must be given to dentists to train them as physicians who do not perceive the patient only in terms of mouth and teeth but can evaluate the patient as a whole and give the right guidance at the right time when necessary.²⁴ Oral and maxillofacial surgery courses are included in the curriculum starting from the 3rd year of undergraduate education. In addition to the oral and maxillofacial surgery course, students take courses related to this course such as dental anesthesia, oral diseases, dental implantology, and temporomandibular disorders. Therefore, the oral and maxillofacial surgery course topics in the DSE exam are quite comprehensive and students need to study very well to answer these exam questions. We believe that the results of this research will provide useful information about the topics and content of the questions asked to students who will take the DSE.

Although DSE has been conducted 17 times, the evaluation of 13 DSE exams published by SSPC is a limitation of this study. However, this

study is the first study in the literature to evaluate the oral and maxillofacial surgery questions asked in DSE.

CONCLUSION

When the oral and maxillofacial surgery questions asked in DSE were examined, it was determined that the distribution of topics and the frequency and rates of sub-topics varied over the years. While some topics were asked yearly, no questions were asked about some. According to the results of this study, oral diseases were the most frequently asked topic, followed by systemic diseases, maxillofacial trauma, den-toalveolar surgery and anesthesia. The least frequently asked topic was orofacial pain, followed by dental implantology, orthognathic surgery and orofacial infections. We believe that the data obtained from the study will be useful for DSE candidates in the exam preparation process.

Source of Finance

During this study, no financial or spiritual support was received neither from any pharmaceutical company that has a direct connection with the research subject, nor from a company that provides or produces medical instruments and materials which may negatively affect the evaluation process of this study.

Conflict of Interest

No conflicts of interest between the authors and / or family members of the scientific and medical committee members or members of the potential conflicts of interest, counseling, expertise, working conditions, share holding and similar situations in any firm.

Authorship Contributions

Idea/Concept: Ömer Ekici; **Design:** Ömer Ekici; **Control/Supervision:** Ömer Ekici; **Data Collection and/or Processing:** Ömer Ekici, İsmail Çalışkan; **Analysis and/or Interpretation:** Ömer Ekici, İsmail Çalışkan; **Literature Review:** Ömer Ekici, İsmail Çalışkan; **Writing the Article:** İsmail Çalışkan; **Critical Review:** Ömer Ekici; **References and Fundings:** Ömer Ekici; **Materials:** Ömer Ekici, İsmail Çalışkan.

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