



COMPARISON OF PERCEIVED STRESS SCORES OF DENTAL AND MEDICAL STUDENTS IN FIRST PROFESSIONAL YEAR (A CROSS-SECTIONAL STUDY)

Physiology

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ABSTRACT

Perceived stress is subjective feeling of stress by an individual. It is best evaluated with the tool, Perceived stress scale-14 (PSS-14). The study aimed to compare the perceived stress levels of dental and medical students, in their first professional year. It was a pilot cross-sectional study. Fifty dental and fifty medical students were included in this study. Dental students had significantly higher levels of perceived stress (PSS-14) than medical students (30.74 ± 6.218 Vs 27.32 ± 6.233 ; $p=0.007$). These results show that dental students suffer from higher degree of perceived stress than medical students, possibly because of greater competition for limited number of dental posts available and due to peer pressures forcing them to re-apply for medical seats.

KEYWORDS

INTRODUCTION-

In developing nation like India, availing a medical seat is a difficult task. Medical as well as dental seats, in both government and private institutes are limited. Aspiring students have to face hard competition to get through the entrance examination to avail a medical seat. The students, whose first preference is a medical seat, sometimes have to settle for a dental seat. This emotional turmoil created out of dissatisfaction causes great degree of personal life stress in lives of such students, superimposed by social and peer pressures.

Perceived Stress Scale-14 measures everyday routine stress in subjects over past one month and can be used as useful tool for assessment of perception of stress in a person's day-to-day stress. Its scores can be used to compare the stress levels subjectively in a study population. It scores from 0-56 and there is no cut-off scores for levels of stress.

Our study aimed to compare the perceived stress levels of dental and medical students. We hypothesise that, dental students have higher perceived stress levels than medical students.

MATERIALS & METHODS-

This study was conducted in the Physiology Department, King George's Medical University, Lucknow, India after ethical clearance from K.G.M.U. Institutional Ethics Committee. A total of 50 dental and 50 medical students (age group 18-30 years) were enrolled in this cross-sectional study after signing an informed consent. They were made to fill PSS-14 questionnaire and were evaluated subsequently for their scores.

RESULTS & DISCUSSION-

Dental students had perceived stress scores significantly higher than medical students 30.74 ± 6.218 Vs 27.32 ± 6.233 ; $p=0.007$. The stress levels faced during the academics combined with aspiration of getting a medical seat and peer pressures of their society members, contributed to the higher perceived stress scores of dental students.

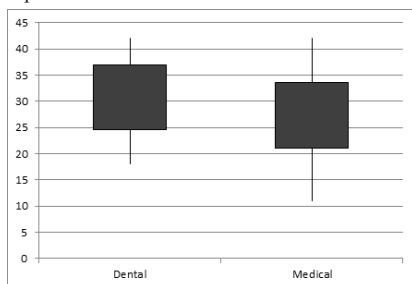


Table 1: Comparison of Perceived stress scores of dental and medical students