



ORIGINAL RESEARCH PAPER

Anatomy

PERCEIVED STRESS ON MEDICAL STUDENTS DURING THEIR MEDICAL EDUCATION

KEY WORDS:

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INTRODUCTION :

Medical studies involve difficult, demanding courses over a long duration and are a known cause of stress and anxiety among medical students⁽¹⁾. The level of stress among medical students depends on the setting of the medical school, the curriculum and the examination system. The curriculum is traditional starting with pre-clinical studies followed by clinical courses⁽²⁾. Transition from pre-clinical to clinical training, and from introductory clinical cycle to clerkship cycle, has been identified as a crucial stage of medical school since it is when students in traditional curriculums begin to grasp the image of their future profession. However, students stress increases⁽³⁾ when entering the clinical environs.

Students may become more inclined to experience burnout and compassion fatigue. Transitions from one stage to another, and direct contact with seriously ill people who have poor prognoses, likely to contribute. Excessive workload and educational content, combined with high levels of educational demands, a lack of leisure time, limited contact with family and friends, choosing a specialty, and delayed income may also contribute to medical students stress. The clinical period of medical education opens up additional challenges such as studying away from home, living up to high parental expectations, completing degree requirements, and preparing for exams.

In the present study, we aimed to determine the prevalence, sources, and predictors of high stress levels and burnout among medical students at Apollo institute of medical sciences and research during the course period. Understanding of these factors may help with planning measures to reduce perceived stress and burnout.

MATERIAL AND METHODS:

A cross-sectional survey of medical students is taken. A self-reported questionnaire was used which covered all categories, including various sources of stress.

Sample size: 100 students from preclinical and clinical phases (Of these 36 were male and 64 were female)

The questionnaire was administered and collected by the researcher. Students were given detailed instructions on how to complete the questionnaire and informed about the objectives of the study. They were assured of the confidentiality of their responses and that no harm or legal consequences would result from the study. The responses were scored quantitatively on a five-point Likert scale ('strongly agree', 'agree', 'true sometimes', 'disagree' or 'strongly disagree').

RESULTS:

Table 1- Stress factors faced by students

Item	Strongly agree	Agree	True sometimes	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Frequent tests	38	11	26	16	11
Lack of time to study the material to be tested	38	32	24	2	4
Studying at night	24	24	24	17	11
Missing classes	33	25	24	12	6
The amount of material covered on tests	27	28	29	10	6

Test subject matter goes beyond what was covered in the classroom	28	4	16	42	10
Amount of details required by teachers	11	17	32	27	5
Dealing with new forms of assessment, such as the objective structured practical and problem-based learning	27	9	26	22	19
Amount of extracurricular activities	9	15	5	38	28
Heavy demand to study	35	27	15	11	9
Difficulty in memorizing the content	54	17	24	0	2
Competitiveness among students	21	36	11	17	11
Comparison with opposite gender	15	11	28	9	32
Waking up very early to go to school	48	12	4	15	18
Family problems(Income)	0	0	24	27	48
High parental expectations	21	27	24	15	12

Table 2- Factors that help to cope the stress faced by students

Item	Strongly agree	Agree	True sometimes	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Studying the minimum needed to pass subjects	39	27	21	9	3
Avoiding comparing grades with other students	36	33	12	9	9
Getting together with family and friends	51	27	6	12	3
Habits like smoking / consuming alcohol	0	6	9	27	57
Skipping classes to perform activities that give pleasure (sports, etc.)	45	15	15	9	15
Blame yourself	24	18	6	36	15
Student Mentors in college	36	32	18	18	6

DISCUSSION:

The results of this study with regard to stressors are similar to those in the literature, including curricular factors, academic concerns, long studying hours, high parental expectations, little time for leisure and sleeping difficulties⁽⁴⁾. Vitaliano et al. classified stressors among medical students into the main categories of academic pressure, social issues and financial problems⁽⁵⁾. The present study showed that examinations are a major source of stress, as shown previously. It has been suggested that medical educators should monitor the psychological impact of modifying curricula in order to prevent stress and depression.¹⁹

CONCLUSION:

Medical students face a wide range of intense stress factors but find coping strategies to overcome them. The Student Council and Student Rights offices play an important role in helping students to cope with stressors.

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