



Stress in Medical Students

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Medicine is an emotionally demanding training and therefore a career in medical education can sometime be stressful (1). Stress is prevalent among medical professionals, and that is also true for the medical students who have very busy and demanding schedule (2). The stress of medical training stems from academic pressure, perfectionist standards and demanding nature of medical practice which requires involvement with the most personal or emotionally draining aspects of life (human suffering, death, sexuality and fear) (1,3).

The continuous evaluation process, exhausting work hours, striving for earning high grades, goals etc are not the only source of stress for medical students (4). Other potential sources of stress for students may include academic stress: enormous syllabus to be covered in a limited time period, sudden change in their style of studying, flooding of medical science with new concepts, lack of proper guidance, thought of appearing/failing in exams, inadequate time allotted to clinical posting, insufficient bedside teaching, social stress: relationship with peer groups, hostel friends, senior teachers, displacement from home, expectations of parents, peer pressure, change in the medium of education, physical stress: inadequate hostel facilities, hostel food etc.

Stress may not only impair the quality of life of medical students but can also influence patient care and the complex psychodynamics of the doctor-patient relationship (4). As a consequence of increased stress, medical students can experience an alarming amount of stress-associated anxiety, depression, substance abuse, and even suicide. Chronic stress is also known to influence memory and learning, especially problem solving abilities which require flexible thinking. Thus,

stress can affect medical decisions and ultimately, patient care (5).

Preventive intervention with medical students in order to reduce stress and improve their life-style is very important factor in achieving an improved level of health (6). As stress has a detrimental effect both on health as well as academic performance, the college administration should incorporate stress management plans as a co-curricular activity. The stressors at the campus should be identified, stress coping mechanism viz-a viz the personality type of students determined. The influence of variables like gender, economic background, change in medium of education and hostel environment on the medical student's academic stress levels discussed with, and proper coping assistance should be provided to individual students. As the medical students have a significant vulnerability to the adoption of health risk behaviors the impact of stress level on health risk behaviors and life styles such as eating habits, physical exercise, alcohol and drug consumption etc should also be monitored (7,8).

Steps should be evolved to prevent stress. In view of the potential long term benefits of managing stress in a more effective way, it may be important for students to develop such stress coping skills early in their medical career. If required, counseling may be introduced at an appropriate stage. In susceptible cases or obvious cases of stress voluntarily admitted by students. Counseling may be started at an appropriate stage integrated with medical curriculum and extracurricular activities, yoga etc in close association with parents, where ever required. Appropriate modification in the teaching and evaluation system in medical education to reduce undue

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stress should be evolved. Through, such interventions like reduction of stress, perceived by students approaching exam can be planned while laying more emphasis on regular, day by day reading, mock examinations and use of question banks could alleviate the fear and anxieties associated with the university examination.

Numerous authors have emphasized the role of positive mental health among students for their future growth (9). It may not be possible to completely eliminate stress in our colleges, but it is important that stress intervention programs may be designed to address an effective intervention and the stressors specific to college students must be determined. There is an urgent need of preventive intervention for medical students in order to prevent negative consequences of stress and improve their life-style, by promoting individual and social resources as well as doctor patient relationship at the formative period of the student's career. Therefore, increased awareness about stress, its consequences, and stress management modalities early in the medical carrier is very important. Preliminary talks by the community psychiatrist may be extremely useful in the first year of the carrier of medical students.

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ADVISE FOR MEDICAL STUDENTS

Never regret a day in your life.
Good days give you happiness
Bad days give you experiences;
Both are essential to life.

A happy and meaningful life requires our continuous input and creativity. It does not happen by chance. It happens because of our choices and actions. And each day we are given new opportunities to choose and act and, in doing so, we create our own unique journey."

Keep going.....

Happiness keeps you Sweet,
Trials keep you Strong, Sorrows keep you Human,
Failures keep you humble , Success keeps You Glowing, but Only God
keeps You Going!

Life is GIFT form GOD, Let's celebrate it..... Source -Internet