Review Article

Stress and Medical Education: Brother in Arm

Authors
1 Dr. Mesurani Paresh, 2 Dr. Harkanwal Preet Singh,
3 Dr. Sandeep Kumar Bains, 4 Dr. Tajinder Bansal

Address for Correspondence:
1, 2 Dept. of Oral and Maxillofacial Pathology and Microbiology Swami Devi Dyal Hospital and Dental College, Panchkula (Haryana)
3, 4 Dept. of Oral Medicine & Radiology Swami Devi Dyal Hospital & Dental College, Panchkula

Abstract
Stress in medical students is observed world wide and it should be dealt as a global issue. This article has attempted to initiate a world wide open dialogue regarding causes and prevention of stress. We have summarized the main causes and consequences of stress, stress management techniques and their effects. Keeping in mind the fact that medical training has many difficult unchangeable aspects but it is time to make medical education interesting, restore enthusiasm and to project a more realistic, human image of the profession.

Key words: Depression, Medical, Profession, Stress.

Introduction:
Beginning new life in colleges, high school students’s life involve several changes which results in stress. It has been reported that as compare to general population, medical students are more prone to distress, anxiety and depression.1 Medicine is an emotionally demanding training and therefore a career in medical education can sometime be stressful.2
Causes of Stress in Medical Students:

Stress is matter of perception and not all are equally affected. Studies have shown that females are affected more than males.\textsuperscript{1,3} The stress of medical training stems from academic pressure, perfectionist standards and demanding nature of medical practice.\textsuperscript{2,4} The continuous evaluation process, exhausting work hours, striving for earning high grades, goals etc are not the only source of stress for medical students.\textsuperscript{5} Other potential sources of stress include lack of peer support, imbalance between professional and personal lives, lack of recreational activities, cultural and minority issues, mismatch between capability and expectation are some reasons of stress.\textsuperscript{6}

Consequences of Stress:

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.\textsuperscript{5} They 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.\textsuperscript{7,8} In stressfull students, incidence of alcohol and drug consumption increases.\textsuperscript{8} Recently, Dyrbye et al in his study in America have shown that suicidal ideation was seen in 11.2% students and it had a strong relationship with personal distress or burnt reported in 49.6% of students of America.\textsuperscript{9}

Preventive Intervention:

For reducing stress among medical students and improve their life-style is very important factor in achieving an improved level of health.\textsuperscript{10} College administration should incorporate stress management plans as a co curricular activity. Several methods have been adopted in different institutions for stress management. These include primary preventive measures such as emotional support, recreational activities, regular communication, psychoeducational lectures,
seminars and therapeutic management like crisis intervention and counseling.\textsuperscript{11} Appropriate modification in medical education system should be done to reduce undue stress.

**Conclusion:**

Though it is not possible to completely eliminate stress in our education system, but it is imperative that stress intervention programs may be designed to address an effective intervention. Therefore, increased awareness about stress, its consequences, and stress management modalities early in the medical education system has paramount importance.

**References**


