

Prevalence of depression, anxiety and stress disorders among medical students in Alexandria Faculty of Medicine during COVID-19 pandemic

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Aims. We aimed to assess the impact of the current pandemic on the mental well-being of undergraduate medical students of Alexandria Faculty of Medicine, Egypt.

Method. We designed a structured anonymous online questionnaire and encourage students to fill it in on social platforms. The questionnaire is composed of seven parts, each one includes multiple choice questions aimed to measure the impact of the pandemic on different aspect of daily activities namely: academic performance, social and family relationship, eating and smoking habits, sleep pattern, physical activity and the Depression, anxiety and stress scale (DASS-21). The last part was an open question where participants can state their comments about the experiences during the quarantine and how they affected their mental health.

Result. A total of 1181 students from the six academic grades responded. Females and students in the third academic year showed the highest prevalence of depression, anxiety and stress. Overall, most respondents reported that the current pandemic had negative impacts on their academic performance (71%) and social relationship (67.5 %). The majority of the students stated that they became less physically active (74.6%) and 52.2% experienced a weight gain. Despite that 60% of the studied population rated their sleeping quality as "very good" and "fairly good", 45.3% and 39.6% suffered from increased sleeping hours and disturbed sleep respectively. Based on students' responses of the DASS-21, over half of the participants (62.2%) were experiencing moderate to extremely severe stress and over 33% were consistent with symptoms of extremely severe anxiety. In respect of depression, nearly half of the sample (46.4%) can be described as having extremely severe depression according to the cut-off points of the DASS-21.

Conclusion. The current pandemic has increased the challenges and burdens on undergraduate medical students. These impacts can be more profound in developing countries such as Egypt. The levels of psychiatric symptoms are alarming compared to previous local and international studies. These unprecedented consequences should be addressed promptly through students' counselling and psychiatric assistance. To date, this is the largest psychiatric and survey-based study conducted on Alexandria Faculty of Medicine.

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Post traumatic growth during COVID-19: unity in diversity

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Aims. This poster reflects how the experience of staying with people of diverse nations and cultural background helped the stranded IMGs cope with this agony in a foreign land during an unprecedented tumultuous situation. The aim is to show that despite diversity among people, the hard times made them unite and overcome countless difficulties.

Background. The COVID 19 pandemic has been a period of global health crisis and has exponentially affected mental health issues in the world population. In these difficult times, several International Medical Graduates (IMGs), who had come to the UK to attend their PLAB exams, were left stranded as the exams were postponed, flights cancelled and borders sealed. Faced with huge uncertainty their mental health was of great concern.

At this time the British Association of Physicians of Indian Origin (BAPIO) came forward to help this cohort of stranded doctors in terms of accommodation, finances, mental health support, preparation for exams to the extent of liaising with General Medical Council (GMC) and Home Office. The virtual support group provided a platform for IMGs from different nations and cultures to get in touch with each other helping overcome mental burden and stress.

The stories presented in the poster show how unity in diversity helped these young doctors deal with mental trauma amidst the Pandemic.

Method. 276 doctors from 27 countries were looked after by BAPIO. From those excerpts taken from 26 IMGs, personal narratives was used as a method for qualitative assessment.

The percentage of IMGs clearing their exams and getting jobs in the NHS has been used for quantitative assessment.

Result. Qualitative: The personal narratives of the IMGs show how they were positively impacted by staying together albeit different nationalities and cultural background.

Quantitative: A total of 21 IMGs out of the 26 cleared their PLAB 2 exams and got registration under General Medical Council giving a percentage of 81.7%. 20 IMGs have successfully joined the NHS in various posts giving a job success rate of 95.2%.

Conclusion. The experience of living and sharing housings with people from different nationalities, has increased appreciation and also prepared them to work in the NHS which has a diverse work force. This learning experience has been integral for all of us in shaping our life in the UK making everyone more compassionate.

Attitudes of medical students towards choosing psychiatry as a career

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Aims. Our aim is to study factors influencing attitudes of medical students towards pursuing Psychiatry as a career. We hypothesise that the minimal exposure and/or importance given to Psychiatry during medical school is insufficient to let a student truly experience and appreciate the specialty.

Background. Studies report an annual decline in Psychiatry Trainees in many parts of the world. This deficiency is projected to create gaps between mental health service needs and providers. Studies have also explored the crisis in recruitment and the

positive impact a short course can have in promoting engagement in Psychiatry by students.

Method. An anonymous questionnaire was distributed amongst medical students, from years 1 to 5, in the College of Medicine, Alfaisal University, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. Factors assessed in the survey included demographics, specialty ranking, acceptance ratios, role models and personal experiences, among others. Those who didn't express interest were asked about the lack of exposure to Psychiatry during medical school along with other influential factors that have been studied elsewhere, including those that we hypothesise to be of significance in our study population.

Result. A total of 153 students responded. Positive views towards Psychiatry increased linearly by year (50% in Year 1 to 90% in Year 5). 33% of students selected psychiatry as a top 3 choice with the most significant factors being a unique patient-doctor relationship ($P < 0.05$), and the challenges faced in the specialty (95%).

Of the 67% of students who did not prefer Psychiatry, insufficient exposure to ward experiences and the specialty as a whole were unanimously agreed upon factors. Other deterring factors included lack of instant gratification when treating a psychiatric patient (72%), and an underestimation by the non-medical community of a Psychiatrists role (26%).

Conclusion. Our findings give an optimistic view towards the future of Psychiatry in the region, given the large number of students (33%) who consider it in their top 3 choices for a career. However, a larger number of students continue to have a negative view towards Psychiatry, especially due to the lack of exposure to the specialty during medical school. The factors identified in our study should be tackled by medical schools or curriculum provision authorities, as this has shown to be of benefit in studies in other parts of the world.

The impact of psychiatry school on attitudes towards psychiatry in medical students and junior doctors in Pakistan

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Aims. To assess the impact of Psychiatry School on the attitudes towards psychiatry in Pakistani medical students (MS) and junior doctors (JD).

Method. Inspired by the Royal College of Psychiatrists' 'Choose Psychiatry' campaign, an online event by the name of 'Psychiatry Autumn School Pakistan' was held on the 1st of November 2020. The event was promoted through social media and medical students and junior doctors from across Pakistan were invited to attend. Moreover, a panel of British and Pakistani psychiatrists belonging to different sub-specialties was invited to deliver talks. The attendees were provided an insight into psychiatry as a viable career option and were introduced to the training pathways, research opportunities, and the various sub-specialties present within the field.

Participants were requested to complete the 'Attitudes Towards Psychiatry' (ATP-30) questionnaires before and immediately after the event. Individual scores on the questionnaire can range from 30 to 150 and a high score indicates a positive attitude. Statistical analysis was performed using a paired t-test.

Result. 41 attendees (MS = 30, JD = 11) completed the pre-and post-school survey. The respondents were majorly female (76%) and from public sector universities (76%), with an average age of 23 years. The mean ATP score before the course was 119 (MS = 117, JD = 121) which increased by 9 points to 128 (MS = 126, JD = 131) after the event. When the two samples were compared using a paired t-test, the difference was statistically significant $p < 0.005$.

Conclusion. We conclude that a psychiatry school can positively influence attitudes towards psychiatry in medical students and junior doctors and our findings are consistent with similar studies done in other countries.

In Pakistan, unfortunately, only 2–4% of undergraduate students opt for a career in psychiatry owing to insufficient knowledge and awareness about the available treatment modalities and advancement in the field. Hence, such an intervention can greatly enhance recruitment within the profession as it makes psychiatry more accessible and visible as a career choice, generates awareness about the effectiveness and evolution of psychotherapeutic practices, and eradicates misconceptions about the field that prevail among young doctors.

This was the first psychiatry school held in Pakistan and the findings of the study as well the feedback received from the participants and the speakers motivate us to continue campaigning for 'Choose Psychiatry.'

Prevalence and correlates of depression and quality of life among primary caregivers of patients with schizophrenia attending a Nigerian Tertiary Hospital

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Aims. To determine the prevalence and correlates of depression and quality of life and their relationship among primary caregivers of patients with schizophrenia in a psychiatry specialist hospital.

Method. A total of 138 caregivers of patients diagnosed with schizophrenia attending the outpatient clinic of the Neuropsychiatric Hospital Aro, Abeokuta were recruited. Sociodemographic questionnaire, Mini International Neuropsychiatric Interview (MINI-PLUS) (depressive module) and World Health Organization Quality of Life-Bref (WHOQOL-Bref) were administered on the caregivers while Brief Psychiatric Rating Scale (BPRS) was used to measure symptoms severity in the patients.

Result. The mean ($\pm$ SD) age of respondents was 48.3 years (± 14.7), 53.6% were females and 33.3% were without partners. The prevalence of depression among the caregivers who participated in the study was 13.8%. Female gender ($\chi^2 = 5.68$, $df = 1$, $p = 0.02$), hailing from a minority tribe ($\chi^2 = 9.78$, $df = 1$, $p < 0.01$), and Previous treatment for mental illness ($\chi^2 = 8.24$, $df = 1$, $p < 0.01$) were associated with depression. Female gender ($\beta = 1.35$, OR = 3.86, $p = 0.03$), minority tribe ($\beta = 1.95$, OR = 7.03, $p < 0.01$), and previous treatment for mental illness ($\beta = 3.19$, OR = 24.21, $p = 0.01$) were independently predictive of depression in the caregivers.

Independent predictors of lower quality of life (QOL) were: Parents/siblings relationship for social relationship domain ($\beta = -7.076$, $p = 0.037$) and spending more than 35 hours per week for Environmental domain ($\beta = -5.622$, $p = 0.028$).