

**Editorial:****The quality of life of university students; fostering resilience of future practitioners****Mohamed H. Shehata**

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The pursuit of knowledge is a cornerstone of the medical profession. However, the demanding academic journey of medical students can come at a significant cost – their well-being. Burnout and depressive symptoms are significantly higher among medical students and physicians than among their peers. Burnout not only impacts the quality of life for medical students, but also poses a threat to their future careers and patient care. Studies have shown a correlation between student burnout and physician burnout later in practice. [1] Exhausted and disillusioned graduates may struggle with empathy, compassion, and the ability to effectively manage their own well-being, ultimately hindering the quality of care they provide to patients.

The Egyptian Family Medicine Journal has consistently advocated the importance of physician well-being, and this editorial sheds light on the concerning issue of

burnout and its impact on the quality of life of medical students, particularly in the face of contemporary stressors.

University students managing chronic diseases face the additional burden of self-care amidst demanding schedules, potentially exacerbating feelings of exhaustion and hindering academic performance. This pressure intensifies when coupled with the potential presence of chronic illnesses within the student body itself. Studies like one conducted at Menoufia University revealed that the prevalence of Diabetes Distress (DD) among the study group was 50.8 %. More importantly this is reversible with proper coping skills training. [2]

The spectre of COVID-19 has further complicated the medical student experience. Disruptions to traditional learning formats, anxieties surrounding personal and professional exposure to the virus, and the emotional toll of witnessing a



global health crisis all contribute to a heightened sense of stress. In this issue, one study found that a staggering 94.8% of medical students at Suez Canal University reported moderate to high levels of perceived stress during the pandemic. Furthermore, 83.6% of the students experienced sleep disturbances according to the Pittsburgh Sleep Quality Index. These findings underscore the significant impact of COVID-19 on the mental and physical well-being of medical students. [3]

While some study results paint a concerning picture of burnout among medical students, it's important to acknowledge the emerging strength and resilience they've demonstrated in the face of the COVID-19 pandemic. This experience, though challenging, may have equipped them with valuable coping mechanisms that can be further nurtured. This is supported by the findings of a third article published in this issue by Tosson [4] who concluded that covid-19 pandemic had a little effect on quality of life and psychological health of medical students when the later were evaluated between February 2021 to December 2022.

Medical schools and educators can leverage this post-COVID resilience by implementing programs that promote well-

being, fostering supportive learning environments, and encouraging open communication about mental health. By addressing burnout proactively, we can ensure these future doctors not only survive the demanding path of medicine but thrive in it. [5]

The future of healthcare hinges on the well-being of medical students today. While burnout paints a concerning picture, recent experiences with the COVID-19 pandemic may have instilled valuable coping mechanisms in this dedicated group.

This editorial serves as a starting point for a much-needed conversation. Future research efforts are crucial to understand the specific challenges faced by medical students and tailor interventions accordingly. The studies highlighted here [2-4] provide valuable insights into various contributors to burnout among university students. More importantly, a multi-pronged approach to address burnout can be considered. Early identification, readily available support systems, curriculum reform that prioritizes work-life balance, faculty development to create a safe space for mental health discussions, and promoting healthy habits are all crucial. By working together, medical schools, faculty, and healthcare professionals can cultivate a supportive learning environment. Through

these efforts, we can protect the burning flame of academic passion in our future doctors, ensuring they are not only academically qualified but also emotionally resilient and well-equipped to provide compassionate care.

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