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MAIN CAUSES FOR MEDICAL STUDENT BURNOUT OVER THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC: SCOPING REVIEW

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Background:

Burnout is a common syndrome experienced by medical students and doctors.(1) COVID-19 could have contributed to increased burnout rates amongst medical students due to increased isolation and reduced social support. This review explores reasons resulting in burnout amongst medical students during the COVID-19-era.

Methods:

PubMed and Medline databases were searched systematically on 22nd December 2022. The search was limited to studies relating to medical students with English language peer-reviewed full text. Timeframe was limited from 1st January 2020 to 21st December 2022.

Results:

102 out of 1827 records were included. Scope of data analysis was from January 2020 to December 2022. Studies originated from 33 nations.

Academic stress (n=28), followed by emotional exhaustion (n=22), COVID-19-related experience (n=13), depression (n=12) and female gender inequality (n=12) were main causes of burnout. Other factors include socioeconomic factors, poor sleep, perceived poor learning environment, anxiety and cynicism.

Discussion:

COVID-19 has contributed to burnout in medical students. The observation of the effects of the pandemic on people close to them and patients contribute to the emotional exhaustion felt by medical students.(2) Medical students feel that the transition to online learning has compromised the quality of education, resulting in academic stress.(3)

Increased social isolation could contribute to emotional exhaustion and depression among medical students too.(4)

Conclusion:

This review identified factors such as academic stress, emotional exhaustion, COVID-19-related experiences, depression and female gender inequality as pertinent causes of burnout. We hope this review aids course organisers within medical schools in tackling and lowering burnout rates.

References:

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