

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

Hanan M. Hemeed<sup>1</sup>, Sarah Hemeed<sup>1</sup>, Ahmed Shaheen<sup>1</sup>, Nour Shaheen<sup>1</sup>, Ehab Elrewany<sup>2</sup> and Hesham Adel Sheshtawy<sup>1,\*</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Alexandria Faculty of Medicine and <sup>2</sup>High Institute of Public Health, Alexandria University

\*Corresponding author.

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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

Meena Afzal Lakha<sup>1,\*</sup>, Anindya Bhowmik<sup>2</sup>, Sneha Bisht<sup>3</sup>, Suzani Shrestha<sup>4</sup>, Kantappa Gajanan<sup>5</sup> and Samir Shah<sup>6</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Wrightington Wigan & Leigh NHS Foundation Trust; <sup>2</sup>London Northwest University Healthcare Trust; <sup>3</sup>Cambridge University Hospital NHS Foundation Trust; <sup>4</sup>Oxford University Hospital NHS Foundation Trust; <sup>5</sup>The Christie NHS Foundation Trust and <sup>6</sup>Priory Hospital Altrincham

\*Corresponding author.

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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

Mohammad Ahmad<sup>1,\*</sup>, Marwan Dabbagh<sup>2</sup>, Alawwab Dabaliz<sup>3</sup> and Akef Obeidat<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Barnet Enfield and Haringey MH NHS Trust, Lancashire Care NHS Foundation Trust; <sup>2</sup>Alfaisal University and <sup>3</sup>University Hospitals, Cleveland Medical Center

\*Corresponding author.

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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 speciality.

**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