

Assessing and Addressing Burnout in Dental Students

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Dear Editor,

Burnout represents a pervasive challenge within dental education, manifesting as a profound state of exhaustion that permeates the lives of students. This condition is characterized not merely by fatigue but by an all-encompassing depletion of energy, adversely affecting academic and clinical pursuits as well as personal well-being. Recent scholarly investigations have illuminated the prevalence and determinants of burnout among dental students globally [1]. A notable study examined the Persian adaptation of the BCSQ-12-SS burnout questionnaire, affirming its efficacy in evaluating Iranian dental students. Intriguingly, the research revealed that financial support and gender significantly influence burnout levels, underscoring the complexity of this phenomenon [2]. Another inquiry delved into the interplay between resilience, denoted as 'grit', and happiness. The findings suggest a positive association, indicating that students with higher grit levels tend to experience greater happiness. This insight prompts consideration of grit as a potential criterion in the selection process for dental students, aiming to enhance their future success and satisfaction [3]. During the unprecedented COVID-19 lockdown, a study from the United Arab Emirates explored the impact of the pandemic on dental students. Contrary to expectations, traditional demographic factors such as age, gender, and proximity to family were not significantly correlated with burnout. However, the presence of a scholarship or familial support emerged as influential factors [4]. Furthermore, research from Korea highlighted the alarming rates of burnout and incipient depression among senior dental students, signaling a pressing need for augmented support and counseling services. These students reported significant emotional exhaustion and a sense of detachment, coupled with dissatisfaction with their educational experience [5]. The implications for dental

education are profound. Burnout can compromise cognitive function, academic achievement, and physical health, potentially leading students to question their professional aspirations. Moreover, it can strain interpersonal relationships, further exacerbating the issue. Fortunately, dental schools possess the capacity to mitigate these challenges. By offering counseling, stress management workshops, and mentorship opportunities, institutions can proactively address burnout [6]. Early detection and intervention are keys to preventing the escalation of burnout and preserving the mental health and academic integrity of dental students. In essence, while burnout poses a formidable obstacle, it is not insurmountable. Through concerted efforts and the provision of appropriate support mechanisms, dental students can navigate these challenges and emerge resilient, prepared to thrive in their future careers [7].

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