

Comparative Assessment of Quality of life, Mood changes and Sleep Deprivation in different streams of undergraduate students

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Introduction

College is the best time of life for almost all young adults. However, in the face of cut throat competition, academic demands and family expectations these years maybe undermined by anxiety, depression, substance abuse and sleep disorders. According to the Centre of Disease Control and Prevention, 7.8% of men and 12.3% of women in the age group of 18-24 years reported frequent mental distress. Quality of life is a multi-dimensional concept defined by WHO as "an individuals' perceptions of their position in life in the context of the culture and value systems in which they live and in relation to their goals, expectations, standards and concerns". It is a broad ranging and holistic concept incorporating in a complex way the persons' physical health, psychological state, level of independence, social relationships, personal beliefs and their relationships to salient features of the environment. With this study, we endeavoured to compare the quality of life and prevalence of mood disorders, predominantly Stress, Anxiety and Depression, in a cross section of students from various fields so as to assess the overall well being.

Objectives

To ascertain and compare the quality of life and prevalence of mood disorders among medical, engineering and other undergraduate students.

Materials and methods

Cross sectional study After obtaining due approval of the ethical committee of the institution, 150 students (age 18-22yrs) with 50 participants each from the medical, engineering and non-medical non-engineering stream were enrolled. After a brief history and clinical examination, subjects free of any medical or psychiatric illness were included in the study. All the students were required to fill the following

Questionnaires

World Health Organization Quality of life (WHOQOL) Bref instrument DASS-21 - for assessment of mood. ESS score- for assessment of daytime sleepiness.

Results

Medicos showed significantly higher levels of stress (p value=0.0001), depression (p value=0.002) and anxiety (p value=0.002). 30% of medicos labelled their quality of life as very good compared to 48% and 50% of engineering and other undergraduates. 62% of medicos were sleep deprived with 38% of them suffering from sleepiness compared to 12% of engineering and 6% of other undergraduates. Only 8% of medicos exercised daily compared to 38% of engineering and 32% of other undergraduate students.

Conclusion

The present study shows that medical students are most vulnerable to mood disorders and have a poor perceived quality life among the three segments of students compared in the study. Due to the demanding academic curriculum, very few medicos spare time for exercise as well as a higher percentage of them suffer from sleep deprivation. This study is a small step forward in creating awareness among students which would enable them to deal more effectively with stress and modify their lifestyle.