

a workshop on financial literacy is timely, important and changes student approaches towards budgeting, saving and financial literacy.

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doi: 10.1111/j.1365-2923.2011.04131.x

Burnout syndrome among internship medical students

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Context and setting During our experience of 15 years teaching a paediatrics internship in a public federal university in Brazil, we have recognised in some of our medical students the presence of psycho-emotional conflicts concerning the educational model and interpersonal relationships within medical school. These conflicts seem to influence the health of future professionals, the quality of their relationships and the care they deliver to patients. Although ours is the first medical school to have been established in Brazil, it does not have in place a systematic service to promote and care for the mental health of undergraduates. The provision of such a service is especially important in view of the curriculum reform taking place in line with the National Curriculum for Medical Education Guidelines defined by the Ministry of Education and the subsequent inclusion of a more humanistic approach.

Why the idea was necessary Systematic research was undertaken to enable us to better understand the mental health needs of students. During the study, we had the opportunity to work more closely with our school's board of directors. This has strengthened the possibility of developing a project to establish a programme of institutional support for the mental health of medical students, focusing on

the promotion and support of mental health, the prevention of possible illness occurrence in the course of a future career, and eventually resulting in the provision of more effective care to the population. **What was done** With the approval of our institution's ethics committee, a survey was conducted during January–December 2010 to assess the incidence of symptoms of burnout syndrome (BS) and associated factors among interns at medical school ($n = 303$). We used qualitative and quantitative methods. Two focus groups were conducted with 18 students and two questionnaires (a specific questionnaire [SQ] and the Maslach Burnout Inventory-Student Survey [MBI-SS]) were administered to and returned by 234 subjects (77.2%). Results were subsequently analysed.

Evaluation of results and impact The MBI-SS showed high scores on emotional exhaustion (63.2%) and cynicism (53.8%), as well as low professional effectiveness (50.9%). The prevalence of BS was 14.5%. Characteristics of students likely to suffer BS included: being a fifth-year intern; being single; being male; being childless; living with parents; not having one's own income; desiring to leave college; having a good academic record; considering oneself as insufficiently skilled to be a doctor, and not having developed mental illness before or during medical training. These results are in agreement with the contents of the focus groups, in which issues that arose included: the participants' medical training (e.g. the high requirements of the course, the difficult path to academic qualification, insecurity about having skills sufficient to practise medicine, interpersonal relationship difficulties, the need to postpone personal life projects); psycho-emotional suffering related to the physical and mental health of interns (e.g. physical illness, changes in behaviour), and feelings of extenuation, anguish, injustice, stress and frustration. These findings may contribute to the development of BS in this population. Based on the initial report of these findings to the board of directors, a decision was made to build an effective partnership with the medical school to put in place an institutional support unit for medical students. In the future, further studies will be carried out to support the comparison of findings on equivalent parameters after the implementation of the unit.

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doi: 10.1111/j.1365-2923.2011.04108.x