

INTRODUCTION

- A growing body of literature demonstrates that significant burnout occurs in as many as 50% of US medical students and is associated with an increased risk of anxiety and depression. These concerns have been heightened by the additional stress placed on society by the COVID-19 pandemic.
- There is limited data, however, about how students in medical school compare to the general student population in universities.
- Over 400 universities and colleges across the United State have participated in the Healthy Minds Study.

OBJECTIVE

- Our study compares the students in a particular mid-west medical school with the average student scores from all the colleges and universities participating in the Healthy Minds Study.

METHODS

- The Healthy Minds Network's annual web-based survey study examining mental health, service utilization, and related issues among undergraduate and graduate students.
- Since its national launch in 2007, HMS has been fielded at about 400 colleges and universities, with over 550,000 survey respondents.
- The results of the Healthy Minds Study at the Northeast Ohio Medical University (NEOMED) were compared to the average student scores from all the colleges and universities.
- Categories included emotional distress, previous diagnoses of mental illness, stress regarding financial status, mental health/social support, psychiatric medications, and barriers to care.

RESULTS

Question	Answers	% NEOMED 20-21	% All Universities 20-21	p
If you were experiencing serious emotional distress, whom would you talk to about this?	Professional clinician	19	33	0.02
	Friend (not roommate)	22	43	0.00
	Significant Other	20	35	0.01
	Family Member	22	43	0.00
In the past 12 months have you taken any of the following types of prescription meds (several times per week minimum)	Anti-anxiety medications	4	12	0.02
	Other medication for mental or emotional health	1	6	0.03
In the past 12 months, which of the following factors have caused you to receive fewer services (counseling, therapy, or medications) for your mental or emotional health than you would have otherwise received? (Select all that apply)	No need for services	13	40	0.00
	Not sure where to go	4	13	0.01
	Prefer to deal with issues on my own or with support from family/friends	7	21	0.00
In the past 4 weeks, how many days have you felt that emotional or mental difficulties have hurt your academic performance?	None	28	17	0.01
I currently need help for emotional or mental health problems such as feeling sad, blue, anxious or nervous.	Strongly Disagree	6	3	0.05
Previous Diagnoses of Mental Disorders	Depression	17	28	0.04
	Anxiety	19	31	0.03

RESULTS CONT.

There were no statistical differences in the response of NEOMED medical students and general university students when it came to:

- Needing help for emotional or mental health problems
- Taking psychostimulants, anti-depressants, anti-psychotics, mood stabilizers, or sleep medications
- The stress from their financial situation

The NEOMED medical students were significantly more likely to:

- Have no days in the last month when emotional or mental difficulties hurt their academic performance (p=.005)
- Deny the need for help with emotional or mental health problems (p=.047)
- State that they had no need for services (p=.00002) or preferred to deal with issues without professional help (p=.002)

The NEOMED medical students were significantly less likely to:

- Have a previous diagnosis of depression (p=.044) or anxiety (p=.028)
- Be willing to talk with a professional clinician (p=0.017), friend (p=.001), significant other (p=.009), or family member (p=.001) about serious emotional distress
- Be taking anti-anxiety medications (p=.018)

CONCLUSIONS

- Students at NEOMED seemed to be functioning at or above the level of a general student population with fewer days of emotional distress causing impairment and no difference in the need for mental health services currently or in the past 12 months.
- They were less likely to be on anti-anxiety medications and no more likely to be on any other category of psychotropic medications.
- Despite the costs of medical education, NEOMED students did not seem more stressed about finances than the general student population.
- The hesitation of NEOMED medical students' to talk to professional clinicians, friends, family members, or significant others about serious emotional distress seemed related to resilience rather than barriers to receiving care.
- Potential next steps could be to compare the Healthy Minds Study results of NEOMED medical students with other medical schools.

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