

Impact of perceived stress in Odontology students: a university challenge

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Dear Editor:

After reading the article published in your prestigious journal, entitled “Perceived stress in dental students at a private university in Acapulco, Mexico”, in the year 2023 (January-September), where it is reported that at least six out of ten students perceived high variations of stress (1). This situation has caught our attention, since it would constitute a serious impact on public health in the faculties and schools of dentistry of the different universities.

Currently, it has been reported that dental students experience considerable amounts of stress in the student period. This stress is mainly due to the demanding nature of the academic training of the dental surgeon’s profession (2). It has been explained that the academic stress of students during the pandemic was due to several factors, such as the accumulation of university assignments, emotional conditions, financial factors, family issues, Internet connection, fear of testing positive for COVID-19, and lockdown (3).

The results of a systematic review contribute to the explanation that student academic stress during the pandemic was due to a variety of factors, in addition to those described above, such as symptoms of student mental disorders, physiological health problems, depression, symptoms of distress, anxiety, and poor sleep quality, which impact academic performance as well as other areas. In general, the impact of college students’ stress translates into depression, burnout, inadequate mental health, and even suicidal thoughts (3).

Most of the available evidence is based on cross-sectional studies, so future longitudinal studies are needed to monitor students throughout their careers. Further research is needed to explore and test stress management interventions (2). Therefore, it is important to recognize the multiple academic activities of students—including work in some cases—which should be a challenge for university authorities to establish preventive and promotional measures in the primary stages of student stress.

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