

## Knowledge State of Medical Students in Morocco Regarding Metabolic Dysfunction Associated with Non-alcoholic Fatty Liver Disease (MASLD)

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**Abstract :** Introduction: Metabolic Dysfunction Associated with Non-Alcoholic Fatty Liver Disease (MASLD), formerly known as Non-Alcoholic Fatty Liver Disease (NAFLD), is the leading cause of chronic liver disease. The cardiometabolic risk factors associated with MASLD represent common health issues and significant public health challenges. Medical students, being active participants in the healthcare system and a young demographic, are particularly relevant for understanding this entity to prevent its occurrence on a personal and collective level. The objective of our study is to assess the level of knowledge among medical students regarding MASLD, its risk factors, and its long-term consequences. Materials and Methods: We conducted a descriptive cross-sectional study using an anonymous questionnaire distributed through social media over a period of 2 weeks. Medical students from various faculties in Morocco answered 22 questions about MASLD, its etiological factors, diagnosis, complications, and principles of treatment. All responses were analyzed using the Jamovi software. Results: A total of 124 students voluntarily provided complete responses. 59% of our participants were in their 3rd year, with a median age of 21 years. Among the respondents, 27% were overweight, obese, or diabetic. 83% correctly answered more than half of the questions, and 77% believed they knew about MASLD. However, 84% of students were unaware that MASLD is the leading cause of chronic liver disease, and 12% even considered it a rare condition. Regarding etiological factors, overweight and obesity were mentioned in 93% of responses, and type 2 diabetes in 84%. 62% of participants believed that type 1 diabetes could not be implicated in MASLD. For 83 students, MASLD was considered a diagnosis of exclusion, while 41 students believed that a biopsy was mandatory for diagnosis. 12% believed that MASLD did not lead to long-term complications, and 44% were unaware that MASLD could progress to hepatocellular carcinoma. Regarding treatment, 85% included weight loss, and 19% did not consider diabetes management as a therapeutic approach for MASLD. At the end of the questionnaire, 89% of the students expressed a desire to learn more about MASLD and were invited to access an informative sheet through a hyperlink. Conclusion: MASLD represents a significant public health concern due to the prevalence of its risk factors, notably the obesity pandemic, which is widespread among the young population. There is a need for awareness about the seriousness of this emerging and long-underestimated condition among young future physicians.

**Keywords :** MASLD, medical students, obesity, diabetes

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