

## Determinants of Quality of Life and Mental Health in Medical Students During Two Years Observation

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**Abstract :** Objective: Medical students experience numerous demands during the education process, determining their quality of life (QoL) and health status. POLLEK (POLski LEKarz, eng. Polish Physician) study aims to identify and evaluate the quality of life, mental health status, and ever-recognized chronic diseases by simultaneously assessing their determinants in Polish medical students during long-term observation. Material and Methods: The POLLEK is the follow-up cohort study conducted among medical students at the Medical University of Silesia in Katowice. Students were followed during two observation periods: in their first year of studies, the academic year 2021/2022 (T1), and in their second year, the academic year 2022/2023 (T2). Results: The total number of participants in the first year of observation (T1) was 427 while in the second year (T2) was 335. Obtained results confirmed that the QoL score significantly decreased in their second year of studies mainly in the somatic and psychological domains. Moreover, we observed a significant increase in self-declared scoring of somatic symptoms year by year (from M=4.75 at T1 to M=8.06 at T2,  $p<0.001$ ) in the GHQ-28 questionnaire survey. The determinants of QoL domains common to T1 and T2 remained self-declared health status, frequency of physical activity, and current financial situation. In the first year of evaluation, 56 students (13.10%) were overweight or obese, and 52 (15.8%) in the second. Regardless of the academic year, the increased risk of being overweight or obese was significantly associated with dissatisfaction with personal health, financial deficiencies, and a diet abundant in meat consumption. Conclusions: The QoL in medical students and selected determinants of their health status deteriorated during the observation period. Our findings suggest that medical schools should actively promote the activity needed to achieve a balance between schoolwork and the personal life of medical students from the beginning of university study.

**Keywords :** quality of life, mental health, medical students, follow-up study

**Conference Title :** ICOH 2025 : International Conference on Occupational Healthcare

**Conference Location :** Tokyo, Japan

**Conference Dates :** May 27-28, 2025