

A Multicenter Assessment on Psychological Well-Being Status among Medical Residents in the United Arab Emirates

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Abstract : Objective: Healthcare transformation from traditional to modern in the country recently prompted the need to address career choices, accreditation perception and satisfaction among medical residents. However, a concerted nationwide study to understand and address burnout in the medical residency program has not been conducted in the UAE and the region. Methods: A nationwide, multicenter, cross-sectional study was designed to evaluate professional burnout and depression among medical residents in order to address the gap. Results: Our results indicate that 75.5% (216/286) of UAE medical residents had moderate to high emotional exhaustion, 84% (249/298) had high depersonalization, and 74% (216/291) had a low sense of personal accomplishment. In aggregate, 70% (212/302) of medical residents were considered to be experiencing at least one symptom of burnout based on a high emotional exhaustion score or a high depersonalization score. Depression ranging from 6-22%, depending on the specialty was also striking given the fact the Arab culture lays high emphasis on family bonding. Interestingly 83% (40/48) of medical residents who had high scores for depression also reported burnout. Conclusion: Our data indicate that burnout and depression among medical residents is epidemic. There is an immediate need to address burnout through effective interventions at both the individual and institutional levels. It is imperative to reconfigure the approach to medical training for the well-being of the next generation of physicians in the Arab world.

Keywords : mental health, Gulf, Arab, residency training, burnout, depression

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