

Medical Trainees in a COVID-19 World: The Impact of Level of Training and Personal Health Conditions on Mental Health Outcomes

Authors: Yael Mayer, Ido Lurie, Noga Shifman, Shir Etgar, Tal Jarus

Presenter: Yael Mayer

Co-Presenter: Noga Shifman

Time: 12:15 – 12:30pm

Background: There is growing evidence on how the level of training and other risk factors, such as chronic health conditions may impact the mental health of medical trainees. During the COVID-19 pandemic, medical trainees and especially those with personal health conditions were more vulnerable to experience psychological distress. This study aimed to explore how the level of training as well as other health risk factors impacted the mental health outcome of medical interns, residents, and experts during the pandemic.

Methods: Participants in the study were 68 interns, 132 residents and 147 experts in various fields of medicine in Israel. Participants filled up an online survey including the Fear of COVID-19 scale, the depression and anxiety stress scale (DASS-21), and the mental health continuum scale to measure well-being.

Results: Participants with a disability or a health risk factor for COVID-19 experienced higher levels of fear of COVID-19, depression, anxiety, stress, and lower levels of well-being than participants with no health conditions. In general, residents experienced higher levels of stress and lower levels of well-being.

Implications: Medical residents, and especially residents with a disability or a health condition, are at risk of experiencing high levels of stress during the COVID-19 pandemic more than medical interns and experts. Therefore, educational programs must provide residents the support they need to cope with the psychological burden they may experience during the pandemic, while promoting a culture of legitimation to express emotional hardships and receive support.

Keywords: Medical training, disabilities, mental-health, COVID-19

New Graduate Health Professionals' Experiences with Employer Supports

Author: Teresa Green

Presenter: Teresa Green

Time: 12:30 – 12:45pm

Background: New graduate health care professionals face challenges when transitioning from training to employment. However, employers looking to the literature to inform the development of supports to ease transition to practice will find weak evidence. The aim of this research was to begin to address this gap by exploring newly hired new graduate occupational therapist experiences of onboarding activities to better understand what they value and why.

Methods: A constructivist phenomenological approach was used. Semi structured interviews were conducted with new graduate occupational therapists working in urban hospital settings. Interviews were audio recorded, transcribed, de-identified and coded. A series of iterative discussions were used to revise codes and themes and to organize the data at a conceptual level.

Results: Employers initiated a range of formal onboarding activities. Experiences of these activities were impacted by environmental factors that either facilitated or impeded their function or compensated for a lack of formal support. New employees described initiating activities themselves that acted in addition to, or compensated for, a lack of formal support. Employee-initiated activities were also facilitated or impeded by environmental factors.

Conclusion: Our findings suggest that employers of new health professionals should tailor the supports they provide based on the employees' past experience and ability to act proactively to create their own supports, while being conscious to account for or modify the nature of the work environment. Secondly, they suggest there is value in employers using transition to employment best practices to support new graduate health professionals' transition to practice.

How University Students are Kind: Implications for Student Well-being and Teaching Innovations

Authors: Sally Stewart, John-Tyler Binfet, Adam Lauze, Z. Draper, B. Calibaba, F. Green

Presenter: Sally Stewart

Co-Presenter: John-Tyler Binfet

Time: 12:45 – 1:00pm

Abstract: This presentation aims to bring together a few teaching research initiatives to illustrate how social/emotional content may be integrated into courses and benefit student well-being and the learning environment. Exploring how university students enact kindness holds potential for increasing feelings of belonging, mental well-being and academic success. Research supports that doing acts of kindness boosts well-being, decreases stress, increases sense of belonging, and increases class cohesion and enjoyment. A critical reason cited for high university dropout rates, is students not feeling like they belong, thus learning how students are kind, and understanding what they think it means to be kind, helps educators identify the interactions that can positively contribute to student well-being. Additionally, it can influence how and what is taught. Student feedback shows that instructors who demonstrate care, compassion and kindness, facilitated student engagement and academic success. As part of a kindness unit assignment in an undergraduate course on student health, students were asked to plan, complete, and reflect on self-chosen acts of kindness, and complete pre/post measures. We are keen to share our research and to inform the campus community about prosocial interactions that can contribute to an optimal teaching and learning climate. We will encourage, discuss and offer ideas about how instructors can play a significant role in impacting student well-being in the classroom, through fostering kindness amongst students, as well as showing kindness themselves. This has particular application to medical education due to its stressful nature and has implications for carry over into patient care.

Learning Objectives: Participants will:

1. understand the link between kindness, well-being, belonging and academic success
2. understand how university students enact kindness
3. gain simple and practical ideas about how they can foster kindness in the medical classroom.

Key Words: kindness; student well-being; optimal teaching and learning

Compassionate Medical Pedagogy in Times of Uncertainty: Reflections from Canada and Syria

Authors: Kusai Alsahanie, Jude Walker

Presenter: Jude Walker

Co-Presenter: Kusai Alsahanie

Time: 1:00 – 1:15pm

Crisis can result in a flexible medical pedagogy. Under Syria's civil war, MD students from universities closed due to conflict were hosted at safer schools, private hospitals began to take in students for clinical rotations (Wdams, 2019). Worldwide, COVID-19 has led to MMIs via Zoom, daily learning sessions offered cross-institutionally, online cognitive apprenticeships, cancelling of exams, and fast-tracking of final year students (Cleland et al, 2020; Klasen et al, 2020; Rose, 2020; Sia et al, 2020; Zuo et al, 2020).

While such changes may expose existing weaknesses and belie a lack of consideration for medical students (Brand, 2020), they can sometimes be understood as part of a more "compassionate [medical] pedagogy," an ethic of "caring for" (Gibbs, 2017; Hodgson & Hagan, 2020) and reflection of the exhortation to "be kind."

Canada's current relationship with Syria is often couched as one of compassion (e.g., UNHCR, 2016), though most Canadians know little about the country. We argue that there are lessons to be learned from what has occurred in Syria's Med Schools. By drawing on institutional and government documents as well as personal stories from Canada and Syria, we engage in theoretical and practical reflections on a medical pedagogy of compassion. Uncertainty is scary, whether during a pandemic or war; and, compassion from one's institution and instructors can be literally lifesaving. Further, with continuing complaints of doctors' lack of compassionate care in Canada (e.g., Koh, 2018), it is incumbent on us to explore how we might enact a more compassionate medical pedagogy.

Keywords: Compassionate pedagogy; Syria; Canada