

Burnout and psychiatric morbidity in new medical graduates

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Abstract

Objective:

To determine the prevalence of psychiatric morbidity and burnout in final-year medical students, and changes in these measures during the intern year.

Design:

Prospective longitudinal cohort study over 18 months, with assessment of psychiatric morbidity and burnout on six occasions.

Participants:

All 117 students in the first graduating cohort of the University of Sydney Graduate Medical Program were invited to participate in the study; 110 consented.

Outcome measures:

Psychiatric morbidity assessed with the 28-item General Health Questionnaire and burnout assessed with the Maslach Burnout Inventory.

Results:

The point prevalence of participants meeting criteria for psychiatric morbidity and burnout rose steadily throughout the study period.

Conclusions:

Internship remains a stressful time for medical graduates, despite initiatives to better support them during this period. The implications for the doctors themselves and for the communities they serve warrant further attention, including programs specifically aimed at reducing the rate of psychological morbidity and burnout during internship.