

Perceptions of Undergraduate Medical Students towards health habits: A cross sectional study

¹Sameera Gire, II MBBS, NKP Salve Institute of Medical Sciences & Research Centre and Lata Mangeshkar Hospital, Digdoh Hills, Nagpur 440019, Maharashtra.

²Dr. Anne Wilkinson, Associate Professor, Department of Pathology, NKP Salve Institute of Medical Sciences & Research Centre and Lata Mangeshkar Hospital, Digdoh Hills, Nagpur 440019, Maharashtra.

Corresponding Author: Dr. Anne Wilkinson, Associate Professor, Department of Pathology, NKP Salve Institute of Medical Sciences & Research Centre and Lata Mangeshkar Hospital, Digdoh Hills, Nagpur 440019, Maharashtra.

Citation this Article: Sameera Gire, Dr. Anne Wilkinson, “Perceptions of Undergraduate Medical Students towards health habits: A cross sectional study”, IJMSIR- April - 2021, Vol – 6, Issue - 2, P. No. 223 – 228.

Type of Publication: Original Research Article

Conflicts of Interest: Nil

Abstract

Introduction: The lives of medical students is hectic. The time medical students devote to their training are extensive, and such stress has a negative impact on the students’ psychological health. Lack of management of stress, unhealthy habits, addiction, etc can cause disturbance in studies.

Objectives: To understand the health habits of Undergraduate medical students.

Results: 261 students participated in the study. Among them, 82% students performed exercise .It was found from the study that , 60.5% students studied for more than 1-3 hrs,27.2% students studied for 3-5 hrs and 12.3 % students studied for more than 5 hrs .Most of the students(71.3%) spent only 1 hour for exercise while (1.5%) spent more than 2 hours.126 students spent more than 2 hrs ,60 students spent 1 hr and 75 students spent 2 hrs on social media. 87.4% students consumed junk food thrice a week which shows unhealthy lifestyle among students .

Conclusion: Medical students should pay more attention towards their health. Proper

counselling, nutritious diet, good sleep and mental peace needs to be maintained among students. Physical fitness is essential for a more balanced and less stressful life.

Keywords: Health Habits, Medical Students.

Introduction

Medical students are known to have stressful lives due to the vast curriculum they have to cover. In such a situation managing their sleep, exercise, diet and study hours becomes vital^[1,2]. Variables that may affect their daily lifestyle are mood states, social support, spiritual or religious habits, etc.^[1] According to their academic schedules, students have to attend lectures, early morning postings, evening clinics, etc, due to which many of them feel drowsy during the day ^[2,3]. Poor sleep quality may lead to psychological distress and mental disturbance^[3].

Medical students are also addicted to cigarettes, alcoholism and other addictions due to their exam stress and other personal reasons. Such practices can affect their health adversely, resulting in poor academic performance ^[4,5]. Physical activity can help to reduce

stress and may also reduce the time spent in smoking, drinking alcohol and other addictions [6].

By studying the health habits of medical students, appropriate counseling for lifestyle and behavior change may be given, to improve the quality of their life, as well as better academic performance [5, 7, 8, 9, 10].

Objectives: To find out the health habits of undergraduate medical students.

Methodology

This cross sectional study was carried out among undergraduate medical students of nine medical colleges across Vidarbha, after approval of the Institutional Ethics Committee. A validated questionnaire was given to the students using Google forms. Their responses were analyzed statistically by using SPSS version 20 Software.

Inclusion Criteria

All undergraduate medical students who were willing to participate in the study.

Exclusion Criteria: NIL.

Results

Chart 1

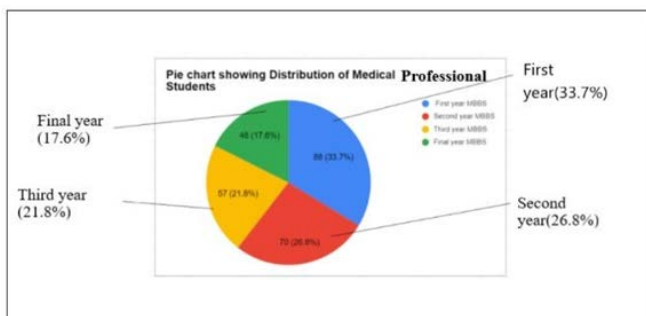


Chart 2

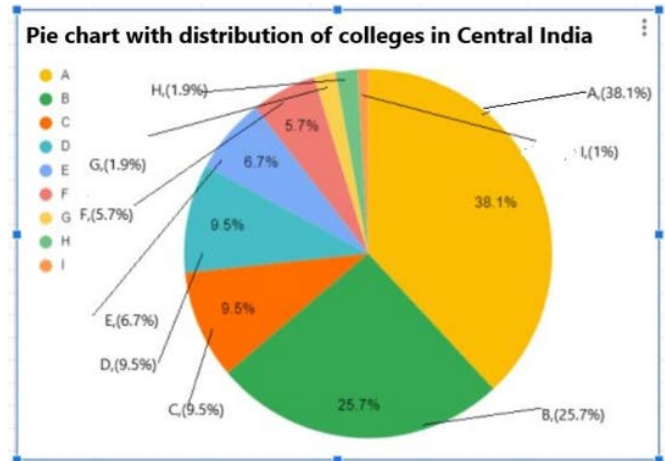
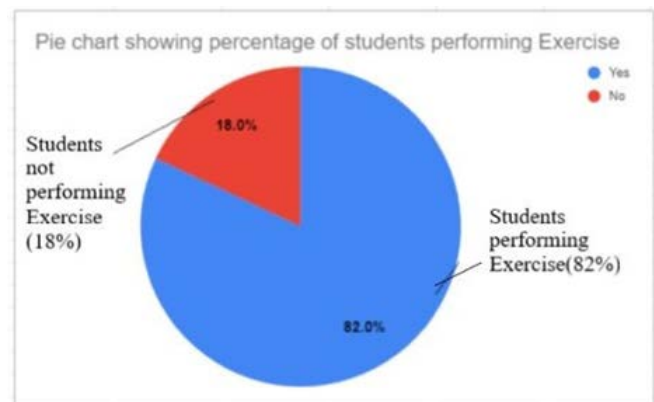


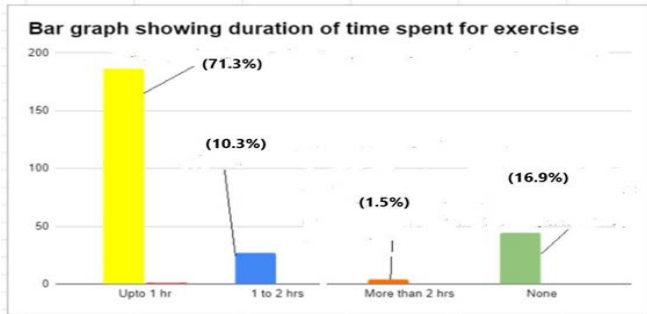
Table 1: Distribution of Residences

Residences	Numbers of Responders	Percentage
Hostel	141	54.00%
Paying Guest	6	2.30%
Home	114	43.70%
Total	261	100.00%

Chart 3



Graph 1



Graph 2

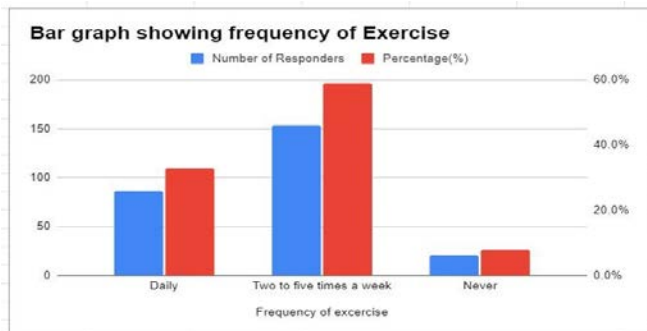


Table 2: Number of hours devoted for studying

No of hours devoted for studying	Number of Responders	Percentage
More than 5 hours	32	12.30%
3-5 hours	71	27.20%
1-3 hours	158	60.50%
Total	261	100.00%

Table 3. Students concentration time

No of hours students can concentrate on a topic	No of Responders	Percentage
Less than 1 hour	127	48.7%
1 to 2 hours	121	46.3%
More than 2 hours	13	5%
Total	261	100%

Chart 4

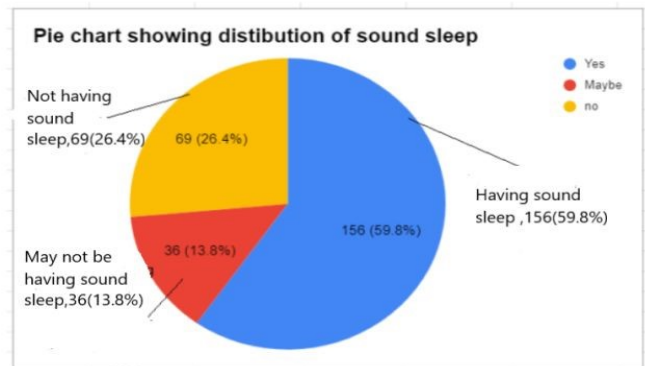


Chart 5

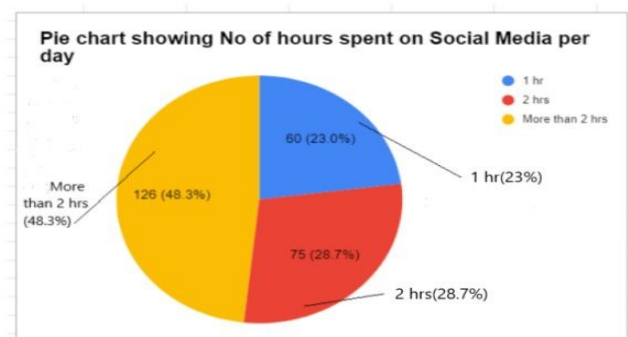


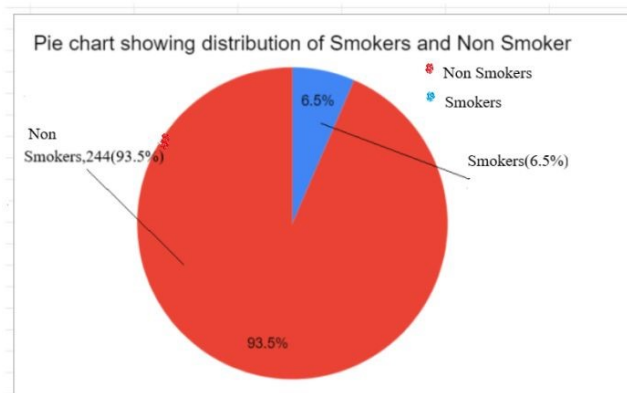
Table 4. showing frequency of meals eaten in a day

Frequency of Meals in a day	No of Responders	Percentage
Two	120	46.00%
Three	108	41.40%
More than 3	33	12.60%
Total	261	100.00%

Table 5: showing frequency of eating junk food -

Frequency of eating junk food	No of Responders	Percentage
Daily	8	3.10%
Thrice a week	228	87.40%
More than thrice a week	25	9.50%
Total	261	100.00%

Chart 6



Discussion

261 medical students from 9 different medical colleges volunteered as responders for the study.

Due to the sedentary lifestyle of students, health habits need to be maintained for a stress-free life. Adequate sleep is positively correlated with frequency of health promoting behavior^[9]. 79% of students indicated that they were healthier after completing behavior change plans (BCP) and they perceived it as valuable means^[7]. According to our survey, 89.7% of students thought that exercise played a crucial role in their lives. It improved their concentration, helped in relieving stress and anxiety and led to mental and physical fitness. Those adolescents participating in increased levels of physical activity would be less likely to engage in health risk behaviors and more likely to engage in health promoting behaviors^[6,7].

According to our study, 6.5% of students smoked cigarettes. The associations between high levels of vigorous physical activity (VPA) and smoking, dietary behaviors and stress management are particularly important, considering these are leading factors for longevity, chronic disease, prevalence and quality of life^[6]. Poor academic performance was related to low overall physical fitness^[1].

Reported rates of any chronic conditions were less than or equal to 2% except for hypertension among men, and obesity and dyslipidemia, depression in both genders^[4]. In this study, the independent predictors of excessive daytime sleepiness were: clinical training, poor sleep quality and psychological distress^[3]. By creating awareness of high prevalence and possible impact of excessive daytime sleepiness (EDS) on medical students, proactive management of sleep education and sleep hygiene can be undertaken^[3,10]. According to our survey 52.9% (138/261) students feel sleepy in college hours which lead to lack of concentration in the classroom ultimately causing educational loss for the students. A study showed that 17.3% (26/150) students had abnormal levels of daytime sleepiness and 20/150 (13.3%) were borderline^[3,10]. The findings highlight the potential impact of sleep and stress related problems among medical students^[2,3,9,10].

In another survey of Jenaro et al. (2007), the mobile phone use was associated with high anxiety and insomnia. Similar study conducted in Saudi Arabia showed that extensive mobile phone use resulted in headache most frequently, as well as sleep disorder, tension, fatigue and vertigo. Massimini and Peterson (2009) stated that a great majority of the students cannot sleep enough due to mobile phone use in at least one day of the week^[14,15,16]. In our study, 48.3% spent more than 2 hours on social media per day. The use of mobile phones for social media among students have increased a lot which may affect their health and academic performance. Various aspects of mobile phone use are associated with sleep quality^[2].

In a study where 19 students enrolled in the gym, 18 had attained the WHO recommended MET minutes/week and it was statistically significant (p value=0.006). A similar study was conducted among

health college students in Saudi Arabia which revealed that no member of a sports club was a significant predictor of physical inactivity^[17]. Similar results have been reported in Egypt, USA, and Hong^[11,12,13] because daily participation of university and community sports facilities play a crucial role in encouraging students to participate in physical activity. In our study, 39 students went to the gym and 45 students did Yoga as a part of exercise.

Most of the students (71.3%) spent only 1 hour for exercise while (1.5%) spent more than 2 hours. Through our survey, it was noticed that most of the students pay less attention to exercise and healthy food. As 54% students stayed in hostels, while 43.7% stayed at their homes, students at hostels were not offered a healthy diet which certainly leads to health issues. Some of them are addicted to alcohol (78.9%), cigarettes (6.5%), etc due to their bad company, pressure of excelling in academic performance and family background. These reasons are also responsible for the maintenance of health of Medical students.

Conclusion

Medical undergraduates should be aware of the importance of health habits which may improve their lifestyle and help them to balance their stressful academic careers. Sleep disturbances are an important issue among medical students. Sleep patterns are affected by age, gender, living conditions, doing exercise and workload. Proper counseling, better planning and support should be provided to students likely to suffer from sleep disorders. Another issue is lack of attention been given to exercise and diet. Students spend most of the time in either studies or mobile phones. They hardly pay attention to their health which needs to be improved. Being a medical student, they should be fit and healthy to build up their stamina

and to increase their concentration which would ultimately increase the overall academic performance of students. A healthy diet and inclusion of compulsory leisure time which maybe spent for healthy non academic activities like physical fitness or recreational activities will help the medical students to have a balanced and less stressful life, and improve their concentration in academics too.

References

1. Trockel MT, Barnes MD, Egget DL. Health-related variables and academic performance among first-year college students: Implications for sleep and other behaviors. *Journal of American college health*. 2000 Nov 1;49(3):125-31.
2. Ibrahim NK, Badawi FA, Mansouri YM, Ainousa AM, Jambi SK. Sleep quality among medical students at King Abdulaziz University: a cross-sectional study. *J Community Med Health Educ*. 2017;7(561):2161-711
3. Zailinawati AH, Teng, CL, Chung YC, Teow TL, Lee PN, Jagmohini KS. Daytime sleepiness and sleep quality among Malaysian medical students. *The medical journal of Malaysia*. 2009 Jun;64(2):108-10.
4. Frank E, Carrera JS, Elon L, Hertzberg VS. Basic demographics, health practices, and health status of U.S. medical students, *Am J Prev Med* 2006; 31(6):499-505.
5. Evans JM, Eades CE, Cameron DM. Health and health behaviours among a cohort of first year nursing students in Scotland: A self-report survey. *Nurse education in practice*. 2019 Mar 1;36:71-5.
6. Delisle TT, Werch CE, Wong AH, Bian H, Weiler R. Relationship between frequency and intensity of physical activity and health behaviors of

- adolescents. *Journal of School Health*. 2010 Mar;80(3):134-40.
7. Kushner RF, Kessler MS, McGaghie WC. Using behavior change plans to improve medical student self-care. *Academic medicine: journal of the Association of American medical colleges*. 2011 Jul;86(7):901.
 8. Bąk-Sosnowska M, Skrzypulec-Plinta V. Health behaviors, health definitions, sense of coherence, and general practitioners' attitudes towards obesity and diagnosing obesity in patients. *Archives of medical science: AMS*. 2017 Mar 1;13(2):433.
 9. Chen MY, Wang EK, Jeng YJ. Adequate sleep among adolescents is positively associated with health status and health-related behaviors. *BMC public health*. 2006 Dec;6(1):59.
 10. Giri PA, Baviskar MP, Phalke DB. Study of sleep habits and sleep problems among medical students of Pravara Institute of Medical Sciences Loni, Western Maharashtra, India. *Annals of medical and health sciences research*. 2013;3(1):51-4.
 11. El-Gilany AH, Badawi K, El-Khawaga G, Awadalla N. Physical activity profile of students in Mansoura University, Egypt. *East Mediterr Health J*. 2011;17(8):694-702.
 12. Awadalla NJ, Aboelyazed AE, Hassanein MA, Khalil SN, Aftab R, Gaballa I et al. Assessment of physical inactivity and perceived barriers to physical activity among health college students, south-western Saudi Arabia. *East Mediterr Health J*. 2014;20(10):596-604.
 13. Fontes ACD, Vianna RPT. Prevalence and factors related to low level physical activity among university students in a public university in the northeast region of Brazil. *Rev Bras Epidemiol*. 2009;12(1):20-29.
 14. Jenaro C, Flores N, Gomez-vela M, Gonzalez-gi, F, Caballo C. Problematic Internet and Cell-Phone Use: Psychological, Behavioral and Health Correlates. *Addiction Research and Theory*. 2007;15:309-320.
 15. Al-Khlewi T, Meo SA. Association of mobile phone radiation with fatigue, headache, dizziness, tension and sleep disturbance in Saudi population. *Saudi Med J*. 2004;25:732-736.
 16. Massimini M, Peterson M. Information and communication technology: Effects on U.S. college students. *Cyberpsychology*. 2009;3:1-15.
 17. A El-Gilany, Ragaa El-Masry. Physical inactivity among Egyptian and Saudi medical students' *Prevent. Med Bullet*. 2011;10(1):35-44.