



The Affects of Medical Student Mistreatment by Patients

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INTRODUCTION

- It is well known that medical students often experience mistreatment by faculty, residents, and other individuals directly involved in their clinical education¹.
- These experiences are known to adversely impact students both personally and professionally and may lead to negative consequences associated with burnout, depression, and career dropout^{2,3}.
- Very few studies have specifically investigated the prevalence of mistreatment towards medical students by patients and fewer have explored the impact these experiences have on mistreated individuals and on patient care^{3,4}.
- This study aims to assess what impact medical student mistreatment by patients has on the mistreated individual and on patient care.

METHODS

- The study analyzed data from an anonymous Qualtrics survey that was made available to currently enrolled medical students at Wayne State University School of Medicine (WSUSOM) between April and June of 2020.
- The main focus was to investigate the prevalence of mistreatment behaviors by patients toward medical students, excluding patient behavior attributed to neuropsychiatric symptoms.
- The survey was modeled from the "Behaviors Experienced During Medical School" section of the Association of American Medical Colleges (AAMC) Graduation Questionnaire (GQ) to allow for comparison of prevalence of mistreatment behaviors toward medical students performed by individuals in different roles.
- The survey inquired about the types of mistreatment behaviors experienced, the setting and presence of medical professionals or school faculty at the time of the experiences, student attitudes regarding these incidents, and the reporting of these behaviors.

FIGURES

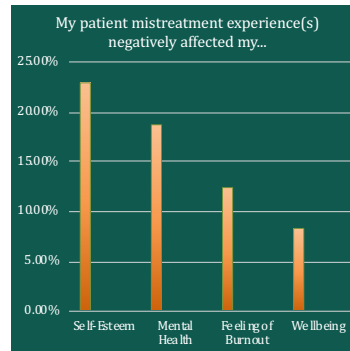


Figure 1. Results showed that mistreatment by patients had the largest affect on self-esteem (22.9%) and mental health (18.7%). Students also reported that the experiences negatively affected their feelings of burnout (12.4%) and wellbeing (8.3%).

Figure 2. Results showed that mistreatment experiences made students most commonly feel disrespected and embarrassed. Feeling angry, belittled, anxious, discouraged, and unconfident were also some commonly reported feelings.

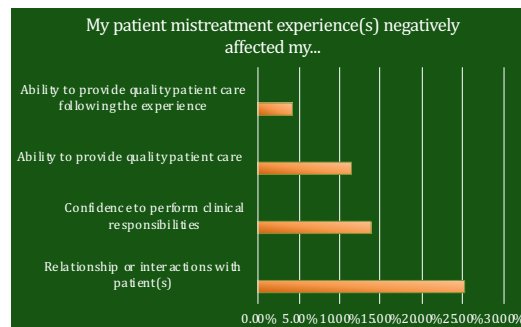
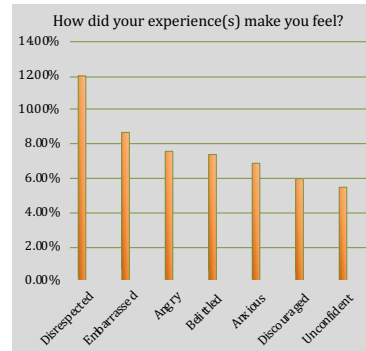


Figure 3. Students reported that their mistreatment experience(s) negatively affected their relationship or interactions with patient(s) (25.2%), confidence to perform clinical responsibilities (13.8%), ability to provide quality care to the patient(s) (11.4%), and ability to provide future quality care (4.2%).

RESULTS

- A total of 483 student surveys were collected. Samples included: 134 M1 students (27.7%), 127 M2 students (26.3%), 110 M3 students (22.8%), and 112 M4 students (23.2%). 207 were male (42.9%), and 275 were female (57.1%).
- The survey evaluated mistreatment behaviors perpetrated by only patients. Results showed medical students experienced mistreatment from patients significantly more so than from non-patient individuals.
- Mistreatment experience(s) negatively affected students in terms of: self-esteem (22.9%), mental health (18.7%), feelings of burnout (12.4%), and wellbeing (8.3%).
- Students reported that the experience(s) caused them to feel: disrespected (12.0%), embarrassed (8.7%), angry (7.6%), belittled (7.4%), anxious (6.9%), discouraged (6.0%), and unconfident (5.5%).
- Students reported that their mistreatment experience(s) negatively affected their: relationship or interactions with patient(s) (25.2%), confidence to perform clinical responsibilities (13.8%), ability to provide quality care to the patient(s) (11.4%), and ability to provide quality care to patients following the experience(s) (4.2%).

CONCLUSIONS

- Few studies attempt to identify the prevalence of medical student mistreatment by patients and the consequences these experiences have on mistreated individuals and patient care.
- Our survey aimed to collect data on this topic and our results showed that medical students most commonly experience mistreatment from patients and that the experiences have several negative affects.
- Results showed that mistreatment experiences most commonly affected self-esteem and mental health. Mistreated individuals also reported that their experiences made them feel disrespected, embarrassed, angry, belittled, and discouraged.
- Our results provide potential evidence to support that mistreatment by patients may have a negative affect on patient care and the overall student physician-patient relationship.

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