ORIGINAL RESEARCH

58. Emotional Well-Being, Anxiety, Depression, and Burnout Among First-Year Hospital Medical Students in Guatemala: A Pilot Study
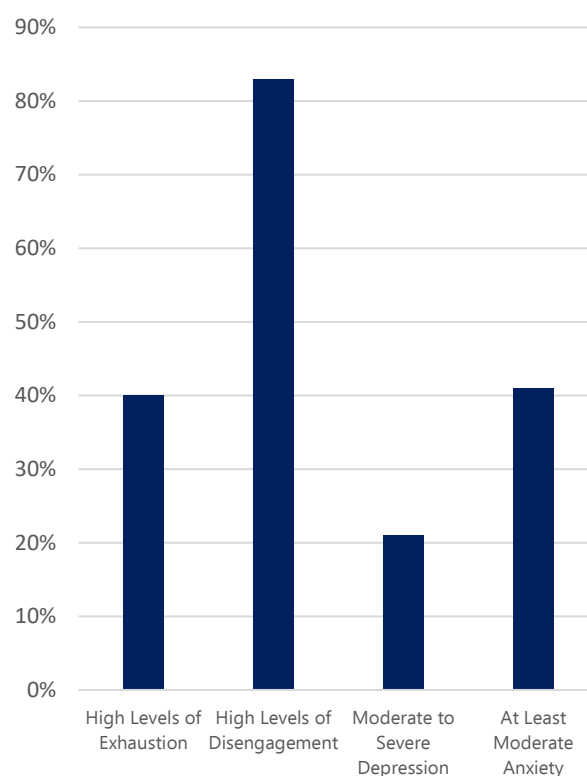
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Background: The transition into the first hospital year is a critical period in medical education, exposing students to new responsibilities, academic demands, and emotional stressors that increase vulnerability to anxiety, depression, and burnout. In Guatemala, evidence on students' mental health at this stage is scarce. This pilot study examined emotional well-being, anxiety, depression, and burnout among Guatemalan medical students.

Methods: A cross-sectional survey was conducted among 50 first-year hospital medical students from public and private universities in Guatemala using non-probabilistic convenience sampling. Data collection employed a Google Forms questionnaire with validated instruments: Patient Health Questionnaire (PHQ-9) for depression, Generalized Anxiety Disorder scale (GAD-7) for anxiety, and Oldenburg Burnout Inventory (OLBI) for exhaustion and disengagement. Sociodemographic data were also obtained. Descriptive statistics, Pearson correlations, and chi-square tests were performed with significance set at $p < 0.05$.

Results: Mean OLBI scores were 16.3 ± 4.2 for exhaustion and 19.5 ± 2.9 for disengagement, with high levels in 40% and 84% of students, respectively. The mean PHQ-9 score was 6.0 ± 3.9, with 22% meeting criteria for moderate-to-severe depression. The mean GAD-7 score was 9.4 ± 5.5, with 42% screening positive for moderate or higher anxiety. Depression and anxiety were strongly correlated ($r = 0.71$, $p < 0.001$). Burnout was not significantly associated with depression or anxiety ($p > 0.5$).

Conclusions: This pilot study revealed high rates of anxiety, depression, and burnout among Guatemalan medical students, underscoring the urgent need for institutional interventions to protect mental health.

Figure 1. Prevalence of Mental Health Symptoms Among Participants