

Should Doctors be Psychologically Healthier than the General Population?

Sir,

Lingeswaran's study (IJPM, 2010, 32, 119-27)^[1] probably unwittingly exposes a very interesting and potentially anxiety-provoking scenario in the form of the score results of the medical undergraduates on General Health Questionnaire-12 (GHQ-12). He would have done well to have cross-validated the GHQ scores with a full psychiatric assessment of a small representative sample of the subjects.

However, an increase by five points in the GHQ score from 13.52 for the freshers to 18.2 for the interns invites serious questions:

- a) How does the freshers' score of 13.52 compare with the general student population of the same age? How does the interns' score of 18.2 compare with general student population of same age?
- b) In any society should the doctors be psychologically healthier than the general population? Is our society manufacturing unhealthy doctors?
- c) Is the undergraduate medical course more stressful than other courses?
- d) Why should education be stressful at all? Are not the students expected to have some degree of coping-skills (life-skills) of their own? Should our undergraduate medical curricula, or any educational course include training in coping skills?

I consider that finding answers to these questions are of paramount importance and our psychiatric profession should, in earnest, rise to the occasion to start finding the answers.

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1. Lingeswaran A. Psychiatric curriculum and its impact on the attitude of Indian undergraduate medical students and interns. *Indian J Psychol Med* 2010;32:119-27.

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