

An evaluation of the coping strategies of medical residents in Kenya

Introduction

Worldwide, coping has been demonstrated as the key determinant between good and poor mental health among medical residents. Nevertheless, no study has assessed the coping strategies of medical residents in Kenya.

Objective

To evaluate the coping strategies of medical residents in Kenya.

Methodology

This was a quantitative, cross-sectional survey among medical residents in Kenya. The BRIEF Cope was used to collect data which was analyzed using excel into means and association was demonstrated using student t-test.

Results

A total of 139 respondents filled the questionnaire. Adaptive (mean 61.59, SD 15.33) as opposed to maladaptive coping strategies (mean 48.10, SD 12.70) were more commonly used. The most commonly used adaptive coping strategies were acceptance (mean 69.96, SD 22.41), planning (mean 69.15, SD 22.84), positive reframing (mean 67.81, SD 22.42) and religion (mean 62.40, SD 26.96). The most commonly used maladaptive coping strategies were self distraction (mean 61.33, SD 21.38), venting (mean 55.04, SD 19.25) and self-blame (mean 52.52, SD 21.82). Overall, females had significantly higher scores for both adaptive (females, mean 41.19, SD 10.02; males, mean 37.63, SD 9.31; p-value = 0.011) and maladaptive (females, mean 24.50, SD 6.68; males, mean 22.07, SD 5.45; p-value = 0.020) coping strategies compared to males.

Conclusion(s)

Medical residents in Kenya utilized adaptive than maladaptive coping strategies more commonly. The most commonly used adaptive coping strategies were acceptance, planning, positive reframing and religion while the most commonly used maladaptive coping strategies were self distraction, venting and self-blame. Females utilized both coping strategies significantly more than male medical residents.

Recommendation(s)

Postgraduate training institutions should encourage medical residents in Kenya towards adaptive coping strategies. Further qualitative studies are needed to explain how medical residents in Kenya cope to the stresses they face.

Key words

Coping strategies, Medical residents Postgraduate training Kenya, Burnout, Mental health

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