Self-Reported Health Status and Health Behaviors of Pharmacy Students

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Introduction

Pharmacy students learn to educate patients about the practice of healthy behaviors, yet little is known about the self-reported physical and mental health of pharmacy students.

Many factors could contribute to health status, such as demands from employment, coursework, family obligations, and social connectedness.
Why Do We Care?

Student and pharmacist burnout is a major issue that relates to health behaviors and health status.

Better understanding of these factors could facilitate strategies to promote healthy behaviors in the future, as well as identify students at risk for poor health.
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Objectives

Assess the current self-reported health status of pharmacy students enrolled in the University of Iowa College of Pharmacy PharmD curriculum

Evaluate whether or not pharmacy students regularly practice the healthy behaviors they are taught in the PharmD curriculum
Objectives

Identify positive and negative predictors of self-reported health status and health related behaviors such as stress, academic workload, extracurricular involvement and education-related debt
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Methods

Following IRB approval, a cross-sectional study was conducted using an anonymous Qualtrics online survey tool.

All PharmD students enrolled in the University of Iowa College of Pharmacy during Spring 2018 were eligible to participate.
Methods

The survey was composed of the 36-Item Short Form Health Survey (SF-36) which is a measure of health status with each question corresponding to a particular health domain.

Domains of evaluation include physical functioning, physical limitations, emotional problems, energy/fatigue, emotional well-being, social functioning, pain, and general health.
Methods

Each question and domain is scored from 0 to 100 with a higher score indicating better health in that area.

Our survey also included 30 additional questions regarding health behaviors, including such things as consumption of fruits and vegetables, hours of sleep, and exercise habits.
Methods

Basic demographics such as age, gender, marital status and class year were also included in the survey.

The survey was initially sent out at the beginning of the spring semester, with two follow-up reminders, and was open through spring break, in all totaling seven weeks.
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Results

112 responses obtained from 428 eligible participants (26% response rate)

SF-36 → Pharmacy students scored high in the physical domains indicating good physical health and scored low in the emotional domains indicating higher levels of stress, fatigue, and emotional problems

The p-value for comparison was not statistically significant between classes
Bring the attention of your audience over a key concept using icons or illustrations.
Results

Reported Overall Health → 43.2% reported their overall health as excellent or very good, 47.8% reported good health and 9% reported their health as fair or poor

Health Compared to Previous Year → 19.8% of respondents reported their health as somewhat worse than one year ago
GENERAL HEALTH STATUS REPORTED BY PHARMACY STUDENTS

- Excellent
- Very Good
- Good
- Fair
- Poor
Results

Exercise Habits → 59.5% reported exercising 2 or fewer times per week

Alcohol Consumption → 31.5% reported consuming at least 1 alcoholic beverage 2 or more times per week

Healthy Eating → 87.5% reported eating less than 3 servings of fruits per day, and 79.5% reported eating less than 3 servings of vegetables per day
AVERAGE WEEKLY EXERCISE BEHAVIORS BY PHARMACY CLASS

On average, how many times per week do you exercise for 30 minutes or more?

- Class of 2021 (P1)
- Class of 2020 (P2)
- Class of 2019 (P3)
- Class of 2018 (P4)

PERCENT RESPONSE

0 1 or 2 3 or 4 5 or more
Results

Sleep Habits → 20.7% of respondents reported sleeping only 4-6 hours per night

Debt → 75.7% of respondents reported having significant education-related debt

Work → 36% of respondents reported working at least 12 hours per week
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Scores related to physical health and functioning were high among pharmacy students which is to be expected considering the general age and demographic of this sample.

Pharmacy students overall reported lower scores in the emotional health domains such as emotional well-being, emotional problems, and energy/fatigue.
Future Directions

Future analyses may explore possible predictors of poor health or health resiliency in pharmacy students.
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