

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF MEDICAL STUDENT WELL-BEING WORKSHOP TO IMPROVE MEDICAL STUDENTS' PSYCHOLOGICAL DISTRESS SYMPTOMS

M.S.B. Yusoff¹, A.R. Esa², S.H. Noor³, M.J. Yaacob⁴

¹Medical Education Department, University Sains Malaysia, Kelantan, ²Faculty of Medical and Health Sciences, University Sultan Zainal Abidin, Terengganu, ³Biostatistics and Research Methodology Unit, ⁴Psychiatry Department, University Sains Malaysia, Kelantan, Malaysia

Introduction: Many researchers have emphasized the importance of teaching stress management and self-care skills to medical students as they are vulnerable to develop psychological health problems.

Aims: To explore potential effects of a 4-hour stress management intervention on medical students' psychological health.

Objective: To determine changes of psychological distress symptoms between the intervention and control groups.

Method: A randomized controlled trial study was conducted in a medical school. Out of 500 medical students who were randomly invited to participate in this study, 171 medical students consented. They were randomly assigned into the study groups. Their psychological distress symptoms were measured by the DASS-21 at five different intervals. The Repeated Measure ANCOVA was performed to determine the effects of intervention.

Results: A total of 153 medical students (intervention = 73 and control = 80) completed this study. There was a significant reduction of the symptoms among the intervention group at different intervals ($p = 0.007$). The intervention group experienced significantly lower psychological distress symptoms than the control group ($p = 0.011$). The effect size was -0.43 , indicating the symptoms were significantly improved by 43% of a standard deviation as a result of the intervention. The effects were sustained for duration of 32 weeks post intervention.

Conclusion: The results support the effectiveness of the brief intervention to improve psychological health of medical students. It is a promising intervention to be adopted by medical schools as it consumes minimal amount of time, money and man power as well as simple to be implemented.