Empathy, Burnout, and Emotional Intelligence in USF Pharmacy Students

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**Background**

- **Definitions**
  - **Empathy**: A cognitive attribute that involves an understanding of patients’ concerns, a capacity to communicate this understanding, and an intention to help.
  - **Burnout**: A syndrome characterized by a loss of enthusiasm for work (emotional exhaustion), feelings of cynicism (depersonalization), and a low sense of personal accomplishment.
  - **Emotional Intelligence**: Capacity for recognizing one’s own feelings and those of others, motivating oneself, and managing emotions effectively in oneself and others.

- More awareness of increased levels of stress associated with the long hours, high expectations, and competitive nature of medical training and careers.
- Studies examining burnout levels amongst medical students, residents, and physicians show trends of greater than 45% of individuals feeling burned out in some form.
- Empathy and emotional intelligence are important factors in the physician-patient relationship as well, leading to greater exchange of information, increased partnership, and interpersonal trust.
- Academic performance during medical school has also shown to be better for students with higher levels of emotional intelligence.
- Levels of empathy are lower for medical students in clinical years than in preclinical years of medical school demonstrating decline specifically in 3rd year.
- Few studies have looked into pharmacy students with conflicting results about the levels of empathy through training.

**Problem Statement**

Using the Jefferson Scale of Empathy (JSE), Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI), and Emotional Intelligence and Social Competency Inventory (ESCI), what are the current status of empathy, burnout, and EI of pharmacy students at USF after their first year of training compared to initial states prior to the start of training?

**Methods**

- **Validated Tools**
  - Jefferson Scale of Empathy
  - Maslach Burnout Inventory
  - Emotional Intelligence and Social Competency Inventory
- **Demographic questions**
  - Gender?
  - What is your age?
  - Current Marital Status?
  - Do you have children?
  - Anticipated Pharmacy School Graduation Year?
  - What degrees do you currently hold?
  - Year of pharmacy school?
- Surveys were disseminated to all 2nd-year pharmacy students during protected time in class.
- Anonymous, de-identified email link to a secure survey platform (Qualtrics).
- **Statistical Analyses**
  - Descriptive statistics
  - ANOVA
  - Correlational analyses

**Results**

- **Empathy**
  - Average JSE scores by domain.
  - Average JSE scores by gender.
- **Burnout**
  - Average MBI scores by domain.
  - Average MBI scores by gender.
- **Emotional Intelligence**
  - Average EI scores by domain.
  - Average EI scores by gender.

**Discussion**

- **Empathy**
  - Drop in empathy from 111 to 104.
  - Initial scores comparable to other studies (Average of 110).
  - Most prior studies conducted with 1st-year students.
  - Gender
    - Both genders saw a drop in empathy levels.
    - Male levels higher than female levels from year to year.
  - Consistent with previous studies in various disciplines.
- **Burnout**
  - Level remained high above 30 and no significant change after 1st year.
  - Two-domain method
    - Burnout increases from 9% to 28%.
  - Significant increase above threshold associated with burnout.
  - Emotional Intelligence
    - Coaching and mentoring: a positive impact on others.
    - Both fall under category of relationship management.
    - Increase: Many of the remaining competencies.
  - Change in Self-awareness.

**Conclusions**

- Leadership
  - Loss of trust in interdisciplinary team and patients.
  - ESCL: aiding students in understanding both themselves and team dynamics.
- Values Based Patient Centered Care
  - Shared-decision making model.
  - Less fulfilling healthcare experience for patients, values are cast aside.
- Health Systems
  - Curriculum modification.
  - Continue to use and share tools learned in training during practice.
- There is a decrease in empathy and EI along with an increase in burnout after 1 year of training in USF pharmacy students.
- Results comparable to those seen in medical students.
- Starting point for studying the progression of these domains—trend vs. anomaly.
- Encourage promotion of wellness within curriculum.

**REFERENCES**