

## **Depression and burnout among physicians as a risk to health care - Analysis and promotion of self-regulation and well-being in medical students as preventive factors**

Initiative: Hochschule der Zukunft

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Laufzeit:

Increased propensity for poor well-being and symptoms of burnout and depression have been widely described among physicians. This issue has implications for patient safety as well as health care quality. Based on these facts, attention to physicians' health was included in the most recent revision of the medical profession's vow (Declaration of Geneva). Additionally, medical students already show an increasing incidence of burnout and depression during their studies. For the research project, we postulate that the promotion of protective factors against lack of well-being, burnout, and depressiveness is of high importance during studies to preventively counteract risk factors of physicians' mental health. In a multicenter questionnaire survey including seven model medical study programs in Germany, we will investigate the effects of interindividual differences on the mental health of medical students at the beginning and throughout the course of their studies. In addition, in allegedly stressful phases (i.e., exam preparation), we will apply smartphone-based experience sampling for the medical students in Augsburg. We aim to identify timing and needs requiring preventive activities to maintain and strengthen students' mental health in the university setting. These elements will first be proposed and implemented in the Augsburg model study program, scientifically evaluated, and then prepared for dissemination to other locations. Anticipated advancements include 1) Adjustments to the study program development in a participatory process with teachers and students 2) Support of students' longitudinal professional identity formation and their development into a mature physician personality 3) The creation of a student peer coaching system 4) The establishment and implementation of a specifically designed online offering for behavioral health promotion. Model study programs play an important role for testing, researching, and adapting ongoing reform processes and, therefore, the further development of medical studies in Germany. In the context of medical licensing regulation amendments, curricular addressing of physicians' health will become mandatory at all German medical schools. Based on this research project's findings, a catalog of measures is recommended, which should be highly transferable to other medical schools. The project is carried out in cooperation with representatives of the Faculty of Philosophical and Social Science of the University of Augsburg (JProf. Ulrike Nett, Prof. Ingo Kollar and Prof. Markus Dresel) and is supported by the Medical Faculty Day of the Federal Republic of Germany.

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