
THE INFLUENCE OF MEDICAL STUDENT GENDER AND DRUG USE ON THE DETECTION OF ADDICTION IN PATIENTS

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Introduction: Little is known about medical students' interest in their training on drug addiction, their personal experience of consumption and whether these aspects influence the detection of addiction in patients.

Objectives: To study the interest of medical students enrolled on the psychiatry course in the area of addictions, and evaluate the influence of such interest, a history of personal consumption and gender on the detection of addiction in patients.

Aims&Methods: Voluntary participation was offered to all students from academic years 2008-2009 to 2012-2013. Of the 505 potential students, 336 questionnaires were collected, of which 71.13% were female.

Results: Of the respondents, 88.5% considered that drug dependence issues are important to their professional future and 63% that the approach to drug-related diseases is important. A total of 34% of the students had already assessed addicted patients in their previous clinical training. The students report consuming alcohol (69%), cigarettes (19.5%) and illegal drugs (15.8%). The female students consumed fewer illegal drugs than the men ($p=0.022$) and more frequently considered that the list of topics to be covered was appropriate ($p=0.021$). The male students consumed more illegal drugs more frequently ($p=0.005$), knew more consumers ($p=0.023$), and those who drink alcohol consumed more illegal drugs than women ($p<0.005$). However, the men seemed to have assessed fewer addicted patients in their previous clinical experience ($p=0.094$).

Conclusions: Consumption among medical students may have a normalizing role on consumption and prevent the detection of addicts. It is important to educate and raise awareness on drugs, as this may influence detection. The focus should be particularly on the male group.