INTRODUCTION

- Dental training is a highly stressful exercise (Pau & Croucher, 2003).
- Stress among dental students puts them at risk for psychological problems such as anxiety and depression (Gorter et al., 2008).
- Stress is result of an individual’s perceptions that they do not have resources to cope with a perceived situation from the past, present or future (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984).
- Few studies have examined stressors among diverse student populations especially in small dental schools (Polychronopoulou & Divaris, 2009).

AIM

To determine and compare levels of perceived stress and potential stressors in dental students from two small dental schools; Aberdeen (UK) and Iceland.

RESULTS

- 83 students (69% female; 32% male); mean age was 26.1 years (22-45 years).
- Reliability of all the scales was high with Cronbach’s α values above 0.8.
- Mean PSS-10 scores were similar, but relatively higher than reported population norm of 13.02 (Cohen, 1988).
- Most stress provoking factors are depicted in Figure 1.
- Aberdeen students gave examinations and grades, fear of failing course or year and completing graduation requirements the highest stress ratings of 47.8%, 39.1% and 29% respectively.
- The atmosphere created by clinical faculty (37.5%), lack of time for relaxation (31.3%), completing graduation requirements (31.3%), and inconsistency of feedback on work between different instructors (31.3%) received the highest stress ratings from Icelandic students.

CONCLUSION

- Levels of perceived stress are high in graduate from both the dental schools.
- However, Perceived stressors were different between groups.
- The most common stressors for Aberdeen students were related to students’ self-efficacy beliefs such as fear of failing course or year.
- For Icelandic students high stress was attributed to faculty and administration-related factors such as atmosphere created by clinical faculty.
- These findings suggest that the potential stressors are different for different dental environments.
- Hence, individual dental schools require tailored stress-management strategies in order to reduce the levels of stress in dental students.

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REFERENCES


Stress in dental undergraduates: A survey of two small dental schools

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