




COVID'in Türkiye'deki Tıp Eğitimi ve Tıp Öğrencilerine Etkisi: Editöre Mektup

Impact of COVID on Medical Education and Medical Students in Turkey: Letter to the Editor

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ÖZET

Mevcut pandemi, hem tıp eğitimi hem de dünyadaki tıp öğrencileri üzerinde büyük bir etki yarattı. Buna cevaben, daha fazla öğrenci ruh sağlığı üzerinde psikolojik etkiler yaşıyor ve tıp eğitimi uzaktan eğitime kaydırılıyor. Bu nedenle, COVID-19 pandemisi sırasında Türkiye'de bu konularla ilgili çalışmalarını araştırıyor ve tartışıyoruz.

Anahtar Kelimeler: COVID-19, pandemi, tıp öğrencileri, tıp eğitimi, Türkiye.

ABSTRACT

The current pandemic has had a great impact on both the medical education and medical students around the world. In response to this, more students get to experience psychological effects on their mental health and medical education shifted to distant learning. Thus, we investigate and discuss the work concerning these issues in Turkey amid COVID-19 pandemic.

Keywords: COVID-19, pandemic, medical students, medical education, Turkey.

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Dear Editor,

In this letter, we would like to highlight the impact that the pandemic COVID-19 has played on the medical education and medical students in Turkey.

According to the John Hopkins Coronavirus Network site the number of cases for SARS-COVID-19 has reached to a number of 153 million and the mortality is estimated to be above 3 million [1]. The RNA virus that causes severe acute respiratory distress syndrome (SARS) coronavirus-2 (SARS-CoV-2) was first identified in December 2019 in the city of Wuhan, China and was declared a pandemic in March 2020 by the World Health Organization (WHO), being the same day of the first case detection in Turkey [2,3].

Being fresh medical graduates, we can relate to the points addressed in the study by Aker S. et al., as COVID-19 has disrupted almost everything that was deemed normal [3]. Although we agree with the author that students may bring more harm to themselves during the COVID-19 pandemic if asked to participate in managing patients, we also believe that students can play a vital role in dealing with the crisis. Medical students in the final year of training have a lot to offer in the healthcare sector. Nonetheless, students must be trained to participate productively in the provision of healthcare and to act in a capacity that serves a greater purpose than purely education interests. With the likelihood of further future pandemics, it is more befitting for medical instructors to make certain that all future healthcare personnel are prepared.

The disruption of daily life routines caused by the COVID-19 pandemic has had an effect on medical education in many ways, lowering the standard of medical education considerably [4]. It can be said that the method of online teaching/learning can be a safer alternative during the time of pandemic that may not be as effective as the experience prior to pandemic but it has definitely bridged the gap in medical education to continue.

With the situation of pandemic spiraling out of control, we considered how mental wellbeing has been affected for medical students. In a cross-sectional study at Bezmialem Vakif University, Turkey, focusing on the quantitative mental health among medical students, concluded males experiencing more suicidal thoughts than females [5]. Their study included with significant results of

participants experiencing severe-moderate anxiety and severe/moderately-severe depression. We believe that further research should be conducted in this field with a larger sample size considering the equal number of male and female medical students. In addition, we appreciate the authors suggesting cognitive mental therapy as a way to counter anxiety and depression in medical students during the pandemic.

We suggest the following for further research:

- Research combining more than one medical school in Turkey needs to be involved.
- Strategies need to be developed and implemented on the medical students for tackling stress, anxiety and depression and work needs to be done on analyzing its effectiveness in medical schools in Turkey.
- Analysis of the effectiveness of existing changes during COVID-19 pandemic with medical students to identify the evolution of new educational concepts and practices.

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