

# Prof, I'm tired and stressed!!!

## Objectives

The study was done at the Medical School of the University of Pretoria, South Africa to determine (1) the prevalence of depression and burnout amongst medical students and (2) to identify their perceived reasons for this.

## Methodology

**Phase 1:** two focus group discussions (clinical and pre-clinical cohorts) were held to determine students' perceived reasons for burnout and depression. A questionnaire was developed from these results.

**Phase 2:** a voluntary anonymous questionnaire was administered to all medical students in the school. It contained the following:

- a demographic section,
- the Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI),
- the Beck's Depression Inventory (BDI) and
- the developed stressor questionnaire,

## Data Analysis

Response rate: 38.2% (480 / 1255)

## Burnout

Most significant stressors identified by students:

- Difficulty retaining knowledge over the longer term,
- Performing sufficiently well to be exempted from the semester exams in every block.
- An expectation they have from themselves to perform well

Other regular stressors identified:-

- the heavy theoretical workload throughout the course,
- long working hours in clinical rotations with little time to sleep,
- little time for socializing and recreation
- feelings of guilt when not studying

Year of study	Burnout present	95% KI	Depression (mild, moderate or severe) present	95% KI
1	22% (9 / 41)	.11 - .38	41.7% (15/36)	.26 - .59
2	41.5% (27 / 65)	.29 - .54	47.5% (29/61)	.35 - .61
3	48.6% (36 / 74)	.37 - .61	47.1% (33/70)	.35 - .59
4	61.4% (51 / 83)	.50 - .72	60.1% (48/79)	.49 - .72
5	67% (67 / 100)	.57 - .76	41.5% (39/65)	.31 - .52
6	77% (50 / 65)	.65 - .87	50.1% (33/65)	.38 - .63
TOTAL	56% (240 / 428)		48.6% (197/405)	.44 - .53

## Recommendations

The undergraduate program committee will be asked to:

- implement teaching and assessment strategies that encourage deep learning
- review the exam exemption policy
- improve student support and counseling services