ABSTRACT

Background: Stress affects medical students negatively. Psychosocial and academic factors may modify the stress effects. Research is needed to determine the relative influence of psychosocial and academic factors on stress, so that factors found impactful may be addressed in intervention. Aim: The study aimed to examine the differences among students enrolled in medical education on stress categories, psychosocial and academic factors and determination of stress by psychosocial and academic factors. Mediating effects of certain psychosocial and academic factors on stress were also examined. Methods: The study was cross-sectional in nature and adapted purposive sampling method. Sample consisted of 143, 161, 127 and 117 students respectively from first, second, third, and fourth year of medicine belonging to KMC, Manipal. Tools measuring stress, coping, optimism, social support, resilience, academic motivation and perceived academic control were administered. Results: All participants experienced moderate amount of stress. Differences emerged between study years in various stress areas, psychosocial and academic factors. Avoidance coping and several emotional coping strategies predicted higher stress in various stress areas. Optimism predicted less overall stress and lesser stress in two stress areas. Intrinsic motivation predicted lesser stress in some stress areas, while a motivation predicted high stress in most stress areas. Mediation analyses indicated interrelations among psychosocial and academic factors in impacting stress. Implications: Findings provide a multi-factorial framework to formulate interventions addressing medical students’ stress.

Key words: Medical students, stress, psychosocial factors, academic factors.