

UNDERSTANDING ISOLATION OF AFFECT & HOW IT DEVELOPS IN MEDICAL STUDENTS

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INTRODUCTION

- Isolation of affect is the ability of an individual to mask their emotional state in an emotionally charged situation [1-3].
- Comparable to a physician delivering a terminal diagnosis to an emotional patient.
- Isolation of affect is a skill is taught to future physicians throughout medical school [1-5].
- Quantifying the degree of isolation and relevant factors has not been studied in this context [1-8].

Hypotheses:

- H1: Isolation of affect in a patient context will increase between 1st and 4th year medical students.
- H2: Trait crying proneness will decrease as medical students progress in their education.

OBJECTIVE

Through a mixed methods analysis, this research aims to investigate:

- (1) Factors that impact the ability to isolate one's emotional state
- (2) Key personality traits including communal narcissism, crying proneness, and empathy



METHODOLOGY

Mixed Methods

- Interviews with 4th-year medical students (N=5).
- Qualtrics survey administered via Amazon's Mechanical Turk platform (N=102).

- Virtual Interviews
- Qualtrics Surveys



— A two-tailed bivariate correlation analysis was performed between all variables using SPSS.

— Pearson coefficients are presented in this project.

— Qualitative interview data analyzed via theme coding and thematic mapping.

ANALYSIS

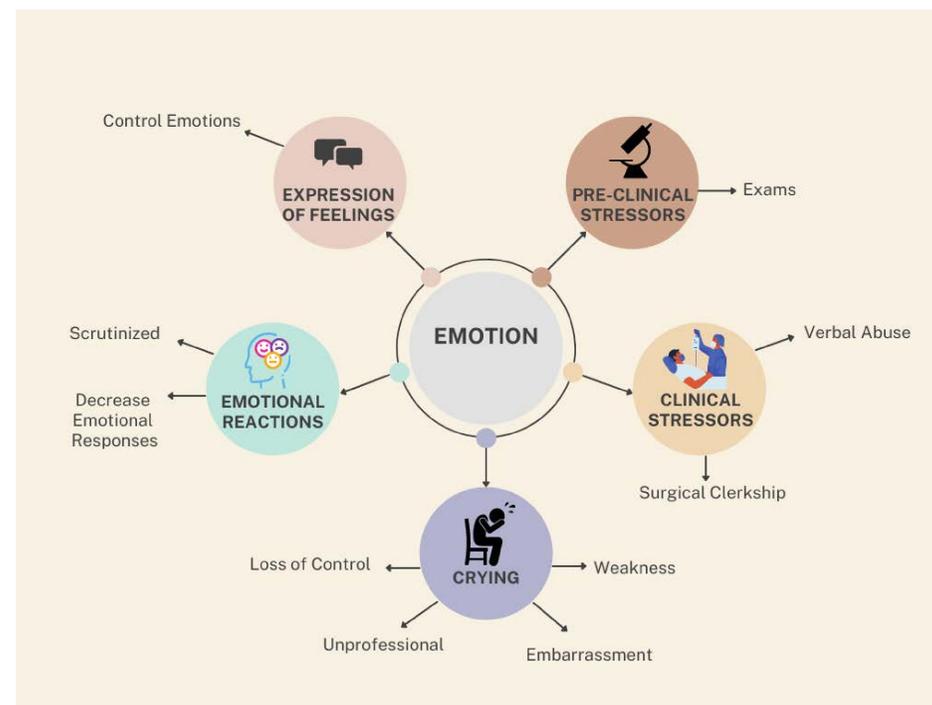


Fig. 1 Thematic Mapping of Medical Student Interview Data.

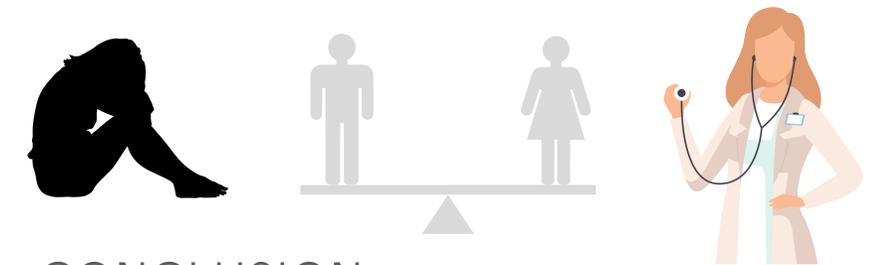
RESULTS/FINDINGS

4th-year Medical Student Interview Quotes

- "My emotional reaction internally has lessened over time. I don't react as much to death and dying."
- "Being in the operating room is a particularly stressful experience, because your presence can either be a complete shadow or you could be yelled at just for existing there, especially if you're scrubbed in."
- "[Crying] is just a moment of vulnerability that in this day and age in medicine just isn't acceptable"
- "I would feel weak if other people witnessed me begin to cry."
- "I would feel others are judging me and thinking that I am not adept at being a clinician because I am unable to handle the situation."
- "I am more mild-mannered and less reactive than I was when I started medical school."

	Pearson Correlation	Sig. (2-tailed)	Gender	Pearson Correlation	Sig. (2-tailed)
Gender					
Isolation of Affect (IOA)	-0.166	0.096	IOA		
Ideal Physician (IP)	-0.064	0.524	IP		
Communal Narcissism (CON)	0.174	0.081	CON		
Crying Attachment (CAT)	0.334**	0.001	CAT		
Crying Societal (CSO)	0.262**	0.008	CSO		
Crying Sentimental (CSE)	0.161	0.106	CSE		
Crying Compassion (CCO)	0.393**	0.000	CCO		
Empathy	-0.069	0.494			

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed). *Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed). N=102
Fig. 2 Correlation Matrix



CONCLUSION

Future Research

- Compare 1st-year medical students to 4th-year medical students in their subjective level of isolation of affect.
- Survey medical students to quantify difference in affect between 1st and 4th year students.



RELATED LITERATURE

- Sources
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