Effect of Burnout Associated with External Employment on Pharmacy Student Engagement

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Background

- Burnout can negatively affect the well-being, engagement, and academic performance of students.[1-3]
- Research has explored potential contributors to burnout and engagement, but the effect of students' external employment on these important measures is notably absent.[4-5]
- National attention has been placed on pharmacy workplace conditions with pharmacists citing workload and lack of adequate staffing as threats to patient safety.[6-7]
- Staffing challenges have the potential to increase workload and stress for pharmacy staff, including pharmacy student interns.
- Alternatively, student pharmacist employment can provide valuable opportunities to apply knowledge and skills learned in the curriculum, improve academic performance, and enhance networking, research, and leadership skills.

Objectives

Aim 1: Examine the relationship between burnout in employment and academic engagement

Aim 2: Examine how level of burnout and engagement changes through the academic semester

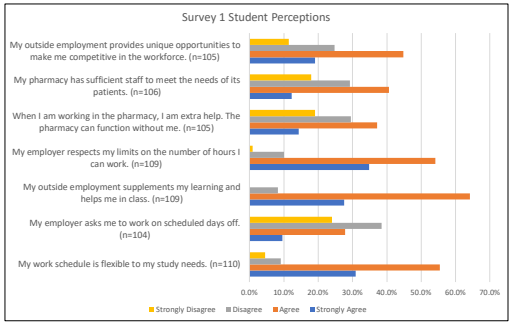
Aim 3: Examine factors correlated with higher levels of burnout and engagement

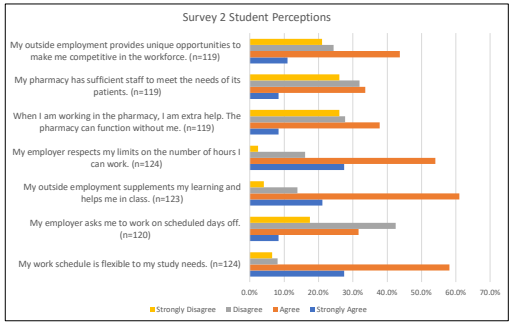
Methods

- In the Fall of 2022, two surveys were distributed via Qualtrics to enrolled P1-P3 pharmacy students at a public, three-campus school of pharmacy during weeks 3-5 and weeks 12-15 of the semester.
- Surveys collected demographic data, burnout related to external employment, academic engagement, confounding variables, and qualitative questions to gauge student perceptions of the work environment.
- The surveys utilized validated instruments to measure burnout and engagement, Oldenburg Burnout Inventory (OLBI) and Utrecht Work Engagement Scale for students (UWES-S).
- Descriptive statistics were used to evaluate burnout and engagement.
- Survey scores were analyzed using paired t-tests and Pearson correlation.
- Participants were entered into a drawing for a cash incentive.

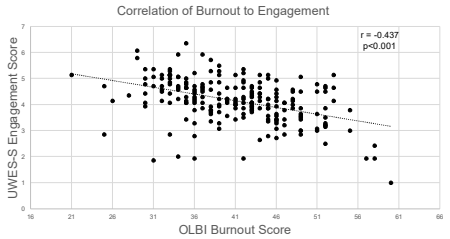
Results

- A total of 125 students completed survey 1 and 142 students completed survey 2. (Response rate 41% and 47%)
- Both surveys were completed by 79 students. Of those, 65 were actively employed and completed both OLBI surveys.
- The average age was 23.3 years. The majority of participants were male (77%) and Caucasian (83%).
- OLBI scores were 39.8±6.2 (survey 1) and 41.9±7.5 (survey 2), indicating a medium level of burnout with an increase later in the semester ($p<0.001$).
- UWES-S scores were 4.3±0.8 (survey 1) and 4.0±0.9 (survey 2), indicating average engagement with a late semester decrease ($p<0.001$).





Results



Conclusions

- Student level of burnout and academic engagement worsened over the course of the semester.
- Burnout from external employment correlates with decreased engagement in academic studies.
- Sources of burnout from external employment were not related to number of hours worked or type of employment site.

Future Considerations

- Future studies should look more holistically to identify what additional factors (e.g., employment culture, management, social and economic factors, GPAs) contribute to burnout and ultimately decreased engagement in academic studies.
- Schools and colleges should utilize data to inform strategies for lowering burnout and maximizing engagement.

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