AMA: avoiding distress in medical school

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(HealthDay)—Understanding the key drivers underlying medical students' distress can help address the issues and enhance student well-being, according to an article published by the American Medical Association.

Noting that students who matriculate into medical school start out with mental health profiles that are similar to or better than those of similarly aged individuals in the population, Lotte Dyrbye, M.D., from Mayo Medical School in Rochester, Minn., reports that they experience high psychological distress, which manifests in ways such as burnout, depression, and fatigue.

Understanding the drivers of distress can help create a plan of support. Drivers include an unsupportive learning environment, demonstrated by

lack of organization in clinical rotations, inadequate supervision, and lack of variety in problem solving. In addition, overemphasis on grades, especially early in medical school, contributes to burnout. Other factors include mistreatment, such as being harassed or belittled; debt, which is a major source of stress; personal life events, including positive events such as getting married and choosing to have children and negative events such as family death or illness; and an unwillingness to ask for help.

"We know that the willingness to seek help for personal medical problems is a huge issue," Dyrbye said in the article. "And it's not just [among] medical students. It's also prevalent among residents and physicians in practice."

More information: More Information

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