

Can Resilience be Taught? Do Medical Students Feel they Need it?

Study results.



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ABSTRACT

Resilience has shown to be important for academic success in different studies, however it has never been studied in osteopathic medicine. Two beta tested, IRB approved were sent out to faculty and students of COMP-NW. There was a 20% response rate for each survey. Important points to note were that 96% of students experience anxiety in relationships which has been associated with decreased resiliency in previous studies. 60% of faculty said resilience is more learned than intrinsic and all faculty though resilience is important or very important for student success. Students may benefit from short term resilience classes.

OBJECTIVE

To explore faculty and student perceptions about resilience and stress and their relation to academic success for osteopathic medical students.

INTRODUCTION

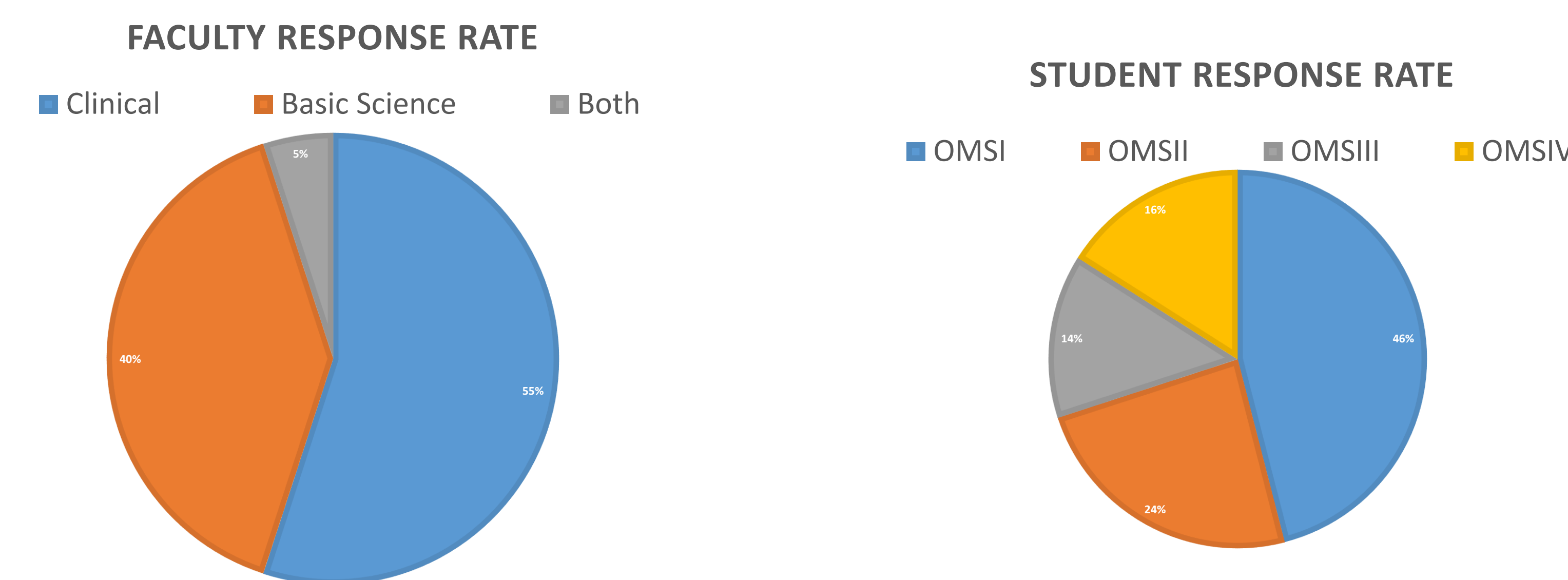
A growing literature has analyzed the importance of resilience to the well being and success of allopathic medical students. [[1]]In face of the stress imposed by the pandemic, this issue has become even more important. Given the values emphasized by osteopathic medical schools, applicants to our school are often asked indirectly about their resilience in previous challenging situations. No formal resilience training is required at Western or other osteopathic medical schools. [[2]]Why so? Students with lower resilience levels report higher levels of burn out in the 4th year of medical school. [[3]]

STUDY DESIGN

Two beta-tested, IRB-approved instruments surveyed preclinical faculty and students separately. The faculty survey asked about resilience as a learnable skill and its importance for student success. The student survey explored student stress using standardized measures. Response rates and percentage distributions were calculated.

RESULTS

The response rates were 20% for the student survey and 21% for the faculty survey.



31% of students reported lower self-esteem than the general public but only 65% would seek support. 96% of students reported anxiety in their personal or professional relationships. 75% believe that medical school has been the hardest time of their life. 57% of people with lower-than-average self-esteem were willing to ask for help when they needed it, as opposed to 75% who had higher than average self-esteem. Only 26% of individuals with low self-esteem were satisfied with their academic performance and 14% were satisfied with their general wellbeing.

All respondents of the faculty survey said resilience is very or extremely important to student success. 90% said it improves academic success. Exploring how resilience is developed, 60% said resilience is more learned than intrinsic, 34% thought it is learned through life experiences, and 34% through informal teaching in the context of individual challenge. 65% said formal student training should be added in the curriculum. 85% thought faculty would benefit from formal training.

DISCUSSION

The findings of both surveys are similar to what has been seen in the prior Australian studies. This is the first study of it's kind in a DO program, so serious consideration should be made to implement the findings. The short term resilience classes can be implemented on a trial basis to assess weather they are benefiting osteopathic medical students.

CONCLUSION

Most faculty thought that resilience is more learned than intrinsic. Most students, though optimistic, reported experiencing stress needing resilience. Providing training for students and instruction for faculty on how to teach it could be worthwhile. There are short term resiliency trainings that may benefit students.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

[[1]] Shapiro SL, Shapiro DE, Schwartz GE. Stress management in medical education: a review of the literature. Acad Med. 2000;75(7):748-59. [[2]] "Accreditation Standards." American Osteopathic Association, osteopathic.org/accreditation/standards/. https://osteopathic.org/accreditation/standards/ [[3]] Houpy JC, Lee WW, Woodruff JN, Pincavage AT. Medical student resilience and stressful clinical events during clinical training. Med Educ Online. 2017;22(1):1320187