

11th International Conference on Depression, Anxiety and Stress Management

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Webinar

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Improvement of medical students' clinical interactions with patients with autism spectrum disorder

Kelly Mourtzanakis

Hackensack Meridian School of Medicine, USA

Statement of the Problem: Medical students often lack the knowledge and practical experience necessary to confidently care for patients with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD). With ASD prevalence rising to 1 in 54 children in the U.S., gaps in medical education leave future physicians unprepared for the unique challenges these patients present, particularly in social communication and sensory sensitivity. This study aims to develop and assess the effectiveness of an ASD training program at Hackensack Meridian School of Medicine, aimed at improving student preparedness in interacting with ASD patients.

Methodology & Theoretical Orientation: This study follows a pre- and post-training survey design. Before their clerkships, medical students will complete a pre-training survey to assess their current experience and confidence in working with ASD patients. The training program includes a presentation on ASD, strategies for history-taking, physical exams, and patient interaction, followed by role-play scenarios to practice these skills. Post-training surveys will evaluate changes in students' confidence and preparedness, with data analyzed to assess the training's effectiveness.

Findings: Initial results suggest that medical students report feeling unprepared to interact with ASD patients, particularly when addressing communication barriers and sensory sensitivities. Post-training data is expected to show increased confidence and improved understanding of clinical approaches tailored to ASD patients.

Conclusion & Significance: The ASD training program offers a solution to current gaps in medical education, equipping students with the necessary skills to care for ASD patients. By better preparing future physicians, this training has the potential to improve clinical outcomes and patient experiences, addressing a critical need as ASD diagnoses become more common. The results will provide insights for further improving ASD-specific education in medical curricula.

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Biography

Kelly Mourtzanakis are dedicated medical students with a deep passion for improving the health and well-being of children. Their commitment lie in pediatric and psychiatric care, respectively, focusing on underserved and vulnerable populations. Mourtzanakis is driven by a desire to enhance the mental health support available to children, drawing on her psychiatry training and commitment to addressing neurodevelopmental disorders. Mukherjee, with a focus on pediatrics, aims to provide comprehensive and compassionate care to children, ensuring their physical health and development are prioritized. Mourtzanakis and are committed to developing innovative care models that are responsive to the needs of their patient populations. With years of academic training, clinical experience, and research, they are building pathways for a multidisciplinary approach to child healthcare. Their work is rooted in evidence-based practices, informed by cutting-edge research and a patient-centered approach that values the individuality and unique needs of each child. Their joint commitment to fostering long-term health outcomes for children serves as a foundation for their professional goals.

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