



## 2. CHRONIC STRESS AND ITS INDUCING FACTORS IN A GROUP OF SECOND-YEAR MEDICAL STUDENTS

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**Introduction.** General medicine is one of the most prestigious academic fields in the Republic of Moldova. The study of general medicine is considered one of the most demanding, both in terms of the volume of information, knowledge, and skills required, and the psychological demands, competitive environment, and encounters with human suffering. All of the aforementioned factors and circumstances can lead to chronic stress among medical students. Stress is defined as a state of psychological, social, cognitive, and mental imbalance. Prolonged exposure to higher intensity stress can result in psychological problems such as fear, anxiety, panic attacks, depression, memory disorders, as well as somatic issues like insomnia, weight loss, weakness, breathing difficulties, palpitations. All the mentioned consequences contribute to a decrease in the quality of life for medical students.

**Aim of study.** Assessment of the level of chronic stress and the prevalence of its inducing factors among second-year medical students.

**Methods and materials.** Perceived chronic stress was assessed in a group of students (N = 240, age 19-22 years) in their second year of medical school (last week of the second semester). We utilized the MSSQ (Medical Stressor Questionnaire) for assessments. It measures stress factors distributed across 6 domains.

**Results.** Percentage distribution of stress levels in the analyzed group: mild - 10.4%, moderate - 25%, high - 49.6%, severe - 15%. The mild to moderate stress level is reasonable and can be well-managed, regardless of the stress factors in the six domains of the MSSQ scale. We observed that stress factors have different prevalence among subjects with high and severe stress levels: I - Academic stress factors: high stress level (47%); severe (13%); II - Intrapersonal and interpersonal stress factors: high stress level (18%); severe (3%); III - Teaching-learning process-related stress factors: high stress level (22%); severe (8%); IV - Social stress factors: high stress level (20%); severe (2%); V - Choices and desires-related stress factors: high stress level (12%); severe (4%); VI - Group activities-related stress factors: high stress level (20%); severe (3%).

**Conclusion.** The study found a high level of chronic stress among second-year medical students. There is a very high prevalence of academic stress factors and stress factors related to the teaching-learning process. The implementation of distress prevention programs and psychological counseling can serve as strategies to prevent chronic stress and its consequences: anxiety, depression, sleep disturbances, decreased attention.