

FRESHMAN SYNDROME IN MEDICAL UNIVERSITIES: ADAPTATION AND PSYCHOLOGY

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Summary

The article aims to explore the essence of the freshman syndrome in medical universities, to consider the psychological aspects influencing it, and to propose practical approaches to overcoming this phenomenon. The freshman syndrome in medical universities arises from a combination of factors, such as unusual workload, knowledge and skill requirements, a new social environment, and separation from home. This syndrome can cause stress, anxiety, information overload, and fatigue.

Students starting their journey in medical universities face a high level of academic demands and a large volume of material they need to master. This situation often leads to stress and anxiety as students need to adapt to a new pace of learning and choose effective learning methods.

Additionally, the new social environment at the university can evoke feelings of isolation and loneliness, especially among those who are distant from family and old friends. This can lead to anxiety and the emergence of the syndrome of social adaptation.

Therefore, the freshman syndrome in medical universities can be a complex challenge for students and requires support and adaptation strategies to overcome these problems.

The article discusses the psychological aspects of the freshman syndrome and the impact of stress on students of medical universities. It explores how students perceive this syndrome, how to cope with stress, and what practical approaches can help facilitate adaptation.

Key words: the freshman syndrome, adaptation, medical university, stress, anxiety, learning, information overload, social adaptation.

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Introduction

The transition of students from secondary education to higher education institutions is accompanied by unique challenges and stressors that can significantly impact their academic achievements and psychological well-being. Recognizing and addressing the freshman syndrome is extremely important, as its impact on students' mental health and academic success can be significant. Understanding the psychological aspects of this syndrome and developing effective strategies for managing stress and supporting adaptation are crucial for ensuring positive and successful learning experiences for students in medical universities. Therefore, the problem statement is focused on the need to investigate the freshman syndrome in medical universities, identify its psychological factors, and develop practical solutions to support students' mental health and help them succeed in this demanding learning environment.

2. Identification of previously unresolved parts of the general problem

In the process of studying the general problem of the freshman syndrome in medical universities, some previously unresolved aspects have been identified that require further research and attention. Among these unresolved parts of the general problem, the following can be highlighted:

Impact of the freshman syndrome on academic achievements: Although it is known that stress and anxiety can affect learning, research directly determining the impact of this syndrome on students' academic results is limited. Additional research is needed to establish this connection.

Psychological adaptation strategies: There may be effective psychological methods and strategies to support students in adapting to university life that have not been researched yet. It is important to investigate which specific methods can be helpful in overcoming stress and anxiety in freshmen.

3. The Revolution in the development of information technologies

The freshman syndrome in medical universities is a common and important aspect of students' adaptation to a new stage of their education. This syndrome encompasses a range of factors that can affect the psychological state and learning of freshmen. Studying its essence, identifying psychological aspects, and proposing practical approaches to overcome this phenomenon are crucial for improving the learning process and students' adaptation. (*Androsovyeh, 2018*)

First, it is necessary to define what the freshman syndrome is. It is a set of emotional, psychological, and social challenges that students face at the beginning of their university education. In medical universities, where learning requires significant efforts, this syndrome can be particularly intense. (*Yakubovska, 2013*)

Among the psychological aspects that influence the freshman syndrome are stress, anxiety, and emotional experiences. Students, starting their path in a medical university, face an extremely high academic workload and a large volume of material they need to master. This can cause stress and anxiety, as students need to adapt to a new pace of learning and choose effective learning methods.

Additionally, the new social environment of the university can evoke feelings of isolation and loneliness, especially among those who are distant from family and old friends. This can lead to anxiety and the emergence of the social adaptation syndrome. All these aspects can significantly affect students' learning and overall psychological state. (*Dikhtievskiy, 2015*)

In order to overcome the freshman syndrome and facilitate students' adaptation, practical approaches are proposed. It is important to create a supportive learning environment where students can receive support from faculty and the community. Conducting orientation events and providing psychological support can also be beneficial.

In conclusion, researching the essence of the freshman syndrome in medical universities and identifying its psychological aspects are important for improving students' adaptation and ensuring their psychological comfort during their studies. Providing practical recommendations and support can contribute to a successful first year at the university and students' subsequent academic careers.

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To address the freshman syndrome and enhance students' adaptation, practical approaches are proposed. It is important to create a supportive learning environment where students can receive support from faculty and the community. Conducting introductory orientation events and providing psychological support can also be beneficial.

4. The adaptation of students

The adaptation of students in medical universities can be an important aspect of their education and future professional career. Considering the high level of demands and stress students face in these institutions, it is crucial to provide them with support and promote psychological comfort. Here are several recommendations that can facilitate students' adaptation and ensure their psychological well-being in this challenging medical learning environment. (*Kozhina, 2022*)

1. Organization of Psychological Support Services: Universities should establish comprehensive psychological support services to address the mental health needs of their students. This initiative should be a key component of their overall student wellness strategy. These services should be designed to provide easy access to psychological counseling and support for students experiencing stress, anxiety, and other psychological issues. A team of qualified psychologists should be available to assist students in developing coping strategies, managing their mental health, and navigating the challenges they may face during their academic journey. The university should also prioritize destigmatizing mental health issues and actively promote the use of these support services among students. Providing comprehensive psychological support services ensures that students have the necessary resources to thrive academically, emotionally, and socially.

2. Group Support and Communication: Establishing group support and communication sessions can be an effective way to enhance psychological comfort among students in a university setting, especially when dealing with academic stress and other challenges. Group sessions provide a safe and confidential environment where students can share their concerns, experiences, and emotions without fear of judgment. Group members can offer empathy, validation, and support to one another, creating a sense of community and belonging. Students may find

comfort in realizing that others are facing similar challenges, which can reduce feelings of isolation and alienation. Group discussions can provide an opportunity for students to learn and share effective coping strategies for managing stress and anxiety. Openly discussing mental health and emotional well-being in a group setting helps to break down the stigma associated with seeking help and encourages students to prioritize their mental health. Group members can offer practical advice based on their own experiences, which can be invaluable in navigating academic and personal challenges. By sharing their own stories of overcoming adversity, students can learn from one another and build resilience in the face of future challenges. Participating in group sessions can help students develop a sense of connection and belonging, which is essential for psychological well-being. Talking about emotions and struggles in a group setting can help normalize these experiences and reduce feelings of shame or inadequacy. Group sessions provide an opportunity for students to practice active listening, empathy, and effective communication, which are valuable skills in both personal and professional contexts. (Androsovych, 2018)

3. Support from Researchers and Professors: Support from researchers and professors is a crucial aspect of a student's educational journey. Here's an expanded explanation of how professors and researchers can contribute to students' well-being: Professors and researchers can provide mentorship to students, offering guidance and advice on academic and career matters. A supportive mentor can be a valuable resource for students, helping them navigate the challenges of their field and providing insights based on their own experiences. Professors and researchers can encourage students to pursue their interests and explore new opportunities. By fostering a supportive and encouraging environment, they can help students build confidence in their abilities and pursue their goals. Professors and researchers often have access to a wide range of resources, including research opportunities, internships, and academic conferences. They can help students access these resources and provide guidance on how to make the most of them. Professors and researchers often have extensive professional networks. By connecting students with professionals in their field, they can help students build valuable connections that can be beneficial for their academic and professional development. Professors and researchers can provide constructive feedback on students' work, helping them improve their skills and knowledge. They can also offer guidance on how to approach research projects, navigate academic challenges, and develop critical thinking skills. Professors and researchers can advocate for students' interests and needs within the academic institution. They can help students navigate administrative processes, address concerns, and access support services. Professors and researchers can serve as positive role models for students, demonstrating professionalism, dedication, and a passion for their field. By setting a good example, they can inspire students to excel in their studies and pursue their academic and professional goals.

4. Promoting a Healthy Lifestyle: Promoting a healthy lifestyle among students is essential for their overall well-being and psychological comfort. Here's an expanded explanation of how universities can support students' physical health: Universities should provide students with access to sports facilities, such as gyms, swimming pools, and sports fields, where they can engage in physical activities. Regular exercise can help students manage stress, improve their mood, and boost their overall health. Offering fitness classes, such as yoga, aerobics, and dance, can provide students with structured physical activities and opportunities to socialize with others who share their interests. (Kozhina, 2022)

These classes can also help students learn new skills and develop healthy habits. Encouraging students to walk, bike, or use public transportation can help them incorporate physical activity into their daily routines. Providing bike racks and pedestrian-friendly paths can make it

easier for students to choose active transportation options. Universities should promote healthy eating habits by offering a variety of nutritious food options in campus dining facilities, vending machines, and student organizations. Providing nutrition education and cooking classes can also help students make informed food choices. Encouraging students to prioritize sleep is crucial for their physical and mental well-being. Universities can promote good sleep hygiene by providing comfortable and quiet sleeping accommodations, offering relaxation techniques, and educating students about the importance of sleep. Regular physical activity and healthy eating habits can have positive effects on mental health, such as reducing symptoms of depression and anxiety. By promoting a healthy lifestyle, universities can contribute to students' overall psychological comfort and well-being.

5. Coping with Academic Stress: Universities can offer tutoring services, study groups, or one-on-one consultations with teaching assistants or professors. These resources can help students better understand challenging material, improve their study skills, and feel more confident in their academic abilities. Providing workshops or seminars on effective learning strategies, such as time management, note-taking, and exam preparation techniques, can help students optimize their study habits and reduce feelings of overwhelm. Universities can encourage professors to be mindful of students' workload by staggering assignments and exams, providing clear guidelines and expectations, and offering flexibility when possible. This can help students manage their time more effectively and reduce stress associated with competing deadlines. In addition to academic support, universities should provide access to mental health services, such as counseling or therapy, for students experiencing academic stress.

Addressing mental health concerns can significantly impact a student's ability to cope with academic challenges. Creating opportunities for peer support, such as study groups or mentoring programs, can help students feel less isolated and more supported in their academic journey. Peers can offer practical advice, share resources, and provide emotional support during stressful times. Universities should promote open communication between students and faculty. Encouraging students to express their concerns and providing mechanisms for feedback can help universities better understand and address students' needs. Encouraging students to prioritize self-care, engage in extracurricular activities, and maintain a balanced lifestyle can help them manage academic stress more effectively. Encouraging students to take breaks, practice mindfulness, and engage in hobbies can help reduce feelings of burnout and fatigue.

6. Mentorship Support: Mentorship is a valuable resource in academic settings, especially for new students navigating the challenges of university life. Here's an expanded explanation of how mentorship can support freshmen: Mentors can offer guidance and advice on various aspects of university life, such as selecting courses, managing academic workload, and balancing extracurricular activities. They can also provide insights into the academic and research opportunities available within their field of study. Mentors can help freshmen navigate the university's resources, such as libraries, research facilities, and academic support services. They can also introduce them to faculty members and professionals in their field. Mentors can support freshmen in their personal and professional development by helping them set goals, develop study habits, and build their professional network. Mentors can help freshmen integrate into the university community by introducing them to other students, clubs, and organizations. They can also offer advice on how to navigate social situations and build lasting friendships. Mentors can serve as positive role models for freshmen, demonstrating professionalism, dedication, and a passion for their field. By setting a good example, they can inspire freshmen to excel in their studies and pursue their academic and professional goals.

7. Self-observation and Psychological Development: Incorporating tools for self-observation and psychological resilience development into the curriculum can be highly beneficial for students' emotional well-being and overall personal growth. Here's how such tools can be integrated: Teach students various self-observation techniques, such as mindfulness meditation, journaling, or self-reflection exercises. These tools can help students become more aware of their thoughts, emotions, and behaviors, allowing them to identify patterns and areas for personal growth. Incorporate modules on emotional intelligence into the curriculum, focusing on skills such as self-awareness, self-regulation, empathy, and social skills. These skills are essential for managing emotions, building resilience, and maintaining healthy relationships. Introduce students to stress management strategies, such as relaxation techniques, time management skills, and healthy coping mechanisms. These tools can help students navigate academic and personal challenges more effectively. Encourage students to adopt a growth mindset, emphasizing the importance of effort, perseverance, and learning from setbacks. This mindset can foster resilience and a positive attitude toward personal development. Offer psychoeducational workshops on topics such as stress management, emotional regulation, assertive communication, and conflict resolution. These workshops can provide students with practical skills and strategies for managing their emotions and relationships. Facilitate peer support groups where students can come together to discuss their experiences, share coping strategies, and provide emotional support to one another. These groups can create a sense of community and belonging, which is important for emotional well-being. Encourage students to regularly reflect on their experiences and seek feedback from peers and instructors. This feedback can help students gain insights into their strengths and areas for improvement, fostering personal growth and self-awareness.

5. Suggestions to students of how to cope with freshman syndrome

Freshman syndrome, also known as "freshman adjustment syndrome," refers to the psychological stress and emotional challenges faced by first-year students as they transition into college or university. Here are some suggestions for students on how to cope with freshman syndrome, particularly in medical universities:

1. **Set Realistic Expectations:** Understand that it's normal to feel overwhelmed or anxious when starting a new chapter in your life. Be realistic about the challenges you may face and don't expect everything to be perfect from the start.

2. **Seek Support:** Don't be afraid to seek help from friends, family, or university resources. Many medical universities have counseling services or peer support programs specifically designed to help students manage stress and adjust to university life.

3. **Prioritize Self-Care:** Make time for self-care activities such as exercise, hobbies, and relaxation. Taking care of your physical and emotional well-being is crucial for managing stress.

4. **Establish a Routine:** Try to establish a regular routine for studying, sleeping, and socializing. Having a predictable schedule can help reduce feelings of anxiety and uncertainty.

5. **Set Goals:** Set realistic goals for yourself, both academically and personally. Break larger goals into smaller, manageable tasks and celebrate your achievements along the way.

6. **Stay Organized:** Keep track of assignments, deadlines, and important dates using a planner or digital calendar. Staying organized can help reduce stress and ensure you're meeting your academic obligations.

7. **Stay Connected:** Stay connected with your peers and instructors. Join study groups, participate in class discussions, and reach out to classmates for support.

8. Practice Mindfulness: Practice mindfulness techniques such as deep breathing, meditation, or yoga to help reduce stress and increase self-awareness.

9. Get Involved: Consider getting involved in extracurricular activities or clubs that interest you. This can help you meet new people, develop new skills, and build a sense of community.

10. Reach Out for Help: If you're struggling, don't hesitate to reach out for professional help. Your university likely has counseling services or mental health resources available to students.

Remember that it's normal to feel overwhelmed when starting university, especially in a demanding field like medicine. With time and support, you'll be able to adjust and thrive in your new environment.

6. Conclusions

The article explores the essence of the freshman syndrome in medical universities, identifies the psychological aspects affecting it, and suggests practical approaches to overcoming this phenomenon. The freshman syndrome is a common phenomenon that accompanies new students in their first year of study at medical universities. This phenomenon can cause stress, anxiety, information overload, and fatigue.

The proposed practical approaches to overcoming the freshman syndrome include organizing psychological support services, group support, supporting researchers and teachers, promoting a healthy lifestyle, coping with academic stress, mentor support, and self-observation and psychological development. It is important to understand and manage the freshman syndrome to improve student adaptation, increase their psychological comfort, and support successful learning in this important medical environment.

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