

"You can't exactly eat the future for dinner": A mixed methods exploration of perceptions of flourishing and social determinants of health among medical, physician assistant, and nurse practitioner students

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BACKGROUND

KEY TAKE AWAYS

MD, PA, and NP students:

- Feel burnout at higher rates than the general population
- Experience food insecurity (linked to poor health & academic outcomes

Gap: Limited data on wellness efforts shows varied efficacy based on student demographics.

Flourishing domains¹: Happiness and Life Satisfaction, Meaning and Purpose, Character and Virtue, Mental and Physical Health, Close Social Relationships, Financial Security

Absence of ill-being ≠ well-being ≠ flourishing METHODS

Sample: MD, PA, and NP students from two institutions

Quantitative: Secure Flourish Index (SFI) and the WellRx (social determinants of health).

- A novel self-weighted SFI score (swSFI) was calculated based on weighted percentages (0-100%) of established flourishing domains.
- Students were divided into three Well Rx score risk groups

Qualitative: Purposive sampling of students with high and low flourishing scores across all three groups for 1:1 interviews.

• Thematic analysis

Flourishing highly influenced by social determinants of health and living experiences.

Theme 1: Defining Flourishing Multi-faceted thriving Personal growth Balancing happiness and success **Theme 2: Relative Domain Contribution to Flourishing** Domain interaction Domain security Current domain priority and impact Consideration for others **Theme 3: Social Determinants** of Health Health Care Access and Quality **Economic Stability** Neighborhood and Built Environment Social and Community Context **Education Access and Quality**

"I think in my head, flourishing is **both happiness and success,** like it's contingent on there being both."

"Which ones did I think would **make more of a difference** if they were added in to increase my bang for their buck, I guess."

"You know you'll eventually get a paycheck or things are going to be okay in the future, you're living in the now, which is really, really hard because **you can't exactly eat the future for dinner if you don't really know what it's going to be today.**"

"If it's, like, if this is just something that you do to get a paycheck...it takes too much emotionally, mentally, and probably even physically to just do that."

RESULTS

280/1820 (15.4%) students completed the survey and 34 were interviewed.

Low SDOH risk students had average SFI scores over 15 points greater than high SDOH risk students (M 88.0(SD \pm 14.4) versus M 72.7(SD \pm 13.5); p<.001).

Over 60.0% of students (22/34, 64.7%) across all three SDOH risk groups shared the benefits of seeing a mental health professional, but 18.2% of those surveyed (51/280) have difficulty accessing the help they need.

Participant definitions of flourishing included elements of personal growth and a balance of happiness and success.

Perceived relative domain importance to flourishing significantly varied by SDOH risk level for multiple domains.

Interviews revealed students in all SDOH risk levels are experiencing financial strain that negatively impacts flourishing across SFI domains.

FUNDING/SUPPORT

This project was funded in part by a grant award from the Physician Assistant Education Association, Washington, DC. Funding of this project does not necessarily constitute an endorsement of the findings of this research report by the PA Education Association. Additional funding was provided in part by each the Yale University General Internal Medicine Educational Research Grant and the PA Foundation Breitman-Dorn Research Fellowship. This project was also supported, in part, by the National Center for Advancing Translational Sciences of the National Institutes of Health under Grant Number UL1 TR001450. The content is solely the responsibility of the authors and does not necessarily represent the official views of the National Institutes of Health.

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