

## P02-279

### THE EFFECT OF PSYCHIATRIC CLERKSHIP ON MEDICAL STUDENTS' ATTITUDES TOWARD PSYCHIATRY AND THEIR INTENTION TO PURSUE PSYCHIATRY AS A CAREER

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**Background:** The attitudes of medical students toward psychiatry have been studied extensively in other countries. A positive attitude to psychiatry may make future doctors more responsive to the psychological needs and comorbidity of patients in all branches of medicine.

**Purpose:** The purpose of this study was to examine whether attitudes toward psychiatry improved during psychiatric attachment as well as the relationship between attitudes to psychiatry and intention to pursue psychiatry as a career.

**Methods:** On the first and last day of their psychiatric attachment 109 fifth year medical students of SBMU were asked to participate in the study. They completed a demographic form and "Attitude toward Psychiatry Questionnaire". They also responded to two questions which measured their intention to pursue psychiatry as a prospective career.

**Results:** Students had favorable attitude toward psychiatry before the attachment with mean score of 84.14 on Attitude to Psychiatry Questionnaire (neutral score 72). These attitudes become more positive after attachment. Students' intention to pursue psychiatry as a career increased during attachment ( $t=-4.85$   $df=107$   $p=0.000$ ). Improvement in attitudes was related to an increased intention to pursue psychiatry as a career ( $\rho=0.170$   $n=109$   $p=0.032$ ).

**Conclusions:** The study confirms earlier reports of a significant positive impact of undergraduate psychiatric attachment on medical students' attitudes toward psychiatry and their intention to pursue psychiatry. Thus, teaching psychiatry at an undergraduate level may well have important implications.