

Re: “Investigating the experiences of medical students quarantined due to COVID-19 exposure”

Ré : « Vécu des étudiants en médecine mis en quarantaine à la suite d'une exposition à la COVID-19 »

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Dear Editor, we would like to share our ideas on the publication “Investigating the experiences of medical students quarantined due to COVID-19 exposure.”¹ In the study by Han et al., the experiences of clerkship students who were placed in quarantine because of COVID-19 exposure were investigated using a qualitative descriptive methodology. Audio-recorded interviews and an online survey were the methods employed. The study received a response rate of 20.7% and contained five interviews. The findings highlighted a range of participant concerns, including financial stress, racial tensions, academic expectations, COVID-19 status confidentiality, and illness uncertainty. Support was provided by the MD program management as well as friends and family. Based on the findings, the study made recommendations for academics, confidentiality/privacy, support systems, administration, equity issues, and communication.

One of the study's weaknesses would be the low response rate to the survey, which could restrict how far the results can be applied. Furthermore, there may be concerns regarding the representativeness of the experiences recorded due to the small number of interviews. There is a high possibility of bias in the sample since individuals who opted to participate might have had different experiences than those who opted not to reply.

A more thorough understanding of the experiences of clerkship students in quarantine could be obtained by conducting a larger-scale survey with incentives to boost response rates. Important findings can also come from investigating the experiences of students from other health professions or from different areas altogether like engineering or fine arts. Furthermore, a longer-term study that tracks the students throughout and after their clerkship could have provided a more comprehensive examination of the long-term effects of quarantine on their personal and academic lives. In conclusion, Han et al.'s study of medical students quarantined due to COVID-19 exposure provides useful insights and recommendations, but it could benefit from addressing limitations such as low response rates and sample representativeness, implying the need for future research with larger-scale surveys and a multi-professional approach.

Conflicts of Interest: Authors declare no conflict of interest

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Reference

1. Han S, Kim I, Rojas D, Young JN. Investigating the experiences of medical students quarantined due to COVID-19 exposure. *Can Med Educ J.* 2023 Dec 30;14(6):92-101. <https://doi.org/10.36834/cmej.75571>