



The Good Student or the Good Patient? The Barriers Encountered by Undergraduate Medical Students with Disabilities at the Northern Ontario School of Medicine

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ABSTRACT:

In an age where we place great focus on inclusive education, more research is required on the inclusion of students with disabilities in undergraduate medical education. A lack of knowledge about disabilities leads to the formation of negative attitudes and stigmatization, potential reasons for why there is underreporting of disabilities from medical students, along with the effect that it may have on their self-esteem and the high-stakes environment of medical school. The American Association of Medical College's (AAMC) Lived Experience report was released in March 2018 with hopes of broadening the diversity of medical students to include those with disabilities (Meeks & Jain, 2018). The authors hoped to generate discussion and study the lived experiences of current medical students, residents and practicing physicians with disabilities to learn about the barriers and supports they encounter throughout their journeys in medicine. In response to Meeks & Jain's (2018) publication, I will replicate this study with the research question "What are the barriers encountered by undergraduate medical students with disabilities at the Northern Ontario School of Medicine?". In doing so, I will explore the climate and culture at NOSM and how this affects the treatment and education of students with disabilities, illustrating the barriers they face in the academic accommodation process, medical environments and throughout medical school as a whole. Findings will help establish how we can better include students with disabilities in medical education and may be transferred to other students and professionals with disabilities working in diverse areas of health care.