

Yi-Hua Chen,^{a,b} PhD
Yen-Wen Hsiao,^{a,b} MS
Pei-Shiuan Lee,^b BA
Yu-Hua Liu,^{a,b} MSW

^a Center for General Education, Taipei
Medical University

^b Student Counseling Center, Taipei
Medical University

Key Words

Personality traits
Personality measures
Medical students

Personality Profiles of Medical Students at Taipei Medical University: Results from the Lai Personality Instrument

ABSTRACT

Background. It has been proposed that individuals with certain personality patterns might be more drawn to specific areas of study in correspondence to particular personal needs and specialties. The personality patterns of medical students thus are of concern in medical education.

Aim. This cross-sectional study examined whether a specific personality profile distinct from that of the general population could be identified among medical students.

Methods. A total of 759 medical students recruited from October 23 to November 9, 2001 at Taipei Medical University were assessed using the Lai Personality Instrument to depict a comprehensive picture of their personality characteristics. Descriptive exploration, regression models, and factor analyses were adopted for investigation and estimation.

Results. Although being relatively more introversive, these medical students were more socially well adapted and emotionally stable than compared to the norm. While males displayed higher scores on masculinity scales such as "general activity" and "ascendancy", females experienced more emotional disturbances. With 5 personality types specified, being male was associated with an increased odds of being classified as a Director type (odds ratio, OR 1.5; $p = 0.02$) compared to females, after holding the effects of year in school constant. Nevertheless, overall personality profiles of males and females displayed rather similar trends. For effects of year, aggressive scores were significantly higher for students in the 3rd and 6th years (both regression coefficients $\beta = 1.0$; $p = 0.04$ and 0.03 , respectively), compared to 1st year freshmen. Results from factor analyses revealed the validity of utilizing the Lai Personality Instrument for this sample.

Conclusions. A distinct personality profile was portrayed by medical students in this study. Future research may emphasize examining patterns which might predict success in medical school to save time, efforts, and resources with medical student selection as well as with future medical training and education.

(N. Taipei J. Med. 2002;4:193-204)

Received: March 1, 2002
Accepted: August 5, 2002

Correspondence: Ms. Yu-Hua Liu
Student Counseling Center, Taipei Medical University, 250 Wu Hsing
Street, Taipei 110, Taiwan, R.O.C. Tel: 886-2-2736-3266
Fax: 886-2-2736-3266; E-mail: tmcsc@tmu.edu.tw