

## **Sports, Burnout, and Medical School: Lessons Learned and Why It Matters**

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Evidence shows that students entering medical school have lower burnout, less depression, and higher quality of life than college graduates pursuing other fields. Yet, that pattern is reversed by the second year of medical school, and burnout rates peak during medical residency. Why is this happening? What are these unforeseen pressures leading to increasing rates of burnout never before reported in medical education? If we can't set a pattern of wellness in the student years, there's little hope for improving the burnout problem in the profession as a whole. Patients have a right to expect physicians who are fully engaged, empathetic, and compassionate in their care. Medical education will always be demanding, and a certain degree of stress is inevitable. The key is that we must halt the progression of this stress from morphing into burnout. We need to begin asking ourselves what is unique about medical student burnout when compared to residency and the professional field. Thinking a solution to this problem will arise if we continue to treat all forms of burnout the same is a disingenuous expectation. I will begin the session by drawing on my own experiences in dealing with burnout as a Division I athlete. From here, I will show comparisons between elite athletes and medical students, share ideas based on my experiences in each realm, and encourage participants to begin reflecting on their own unique experiences in order to suggest proposed solutions to burnout. What factors make medical school burnout unique? Are there factors we are not considering? Are there other institutions implementing preventative measures to burnout not seen elsewhere? Are there other professions and experiences we can learn from? It is my hope that an open discussion will ensue identifying factors that make medical student burnout different from elsewhere in the medical field.