

Section: SOCIAL SCIENCES AND HUMANITIES

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Between challenges and learning: undergraduate research from the perspective of students and faculty

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INTRODUCTION: Undergraduate research is an important tool in medical education that promotes academic skills, critical thinking, and autonomy. However, motivations for participation, barriers encountered, and effects on training remain underexplored. **METHODOLOGY:** This cross-sectional observational study used quantitative and qualitative approaches and was conducted between November 2022 and August 2023 with students and faculty members from the medical program of a Brazilian university center. Data were collected through an electronic questionnaire. Statistical analysis was performed in STATA 18.0 using association tests and a significance threshold of $p < 0.05$. **RESULTS:** The final sample comprised 170 participants (118 students and 52 faculty members). Among students, 48% had participated in undergraduate research, primarily to strengthen their curriculum vitae. Only 12.3% had published their work, and 7% reported regret. Among faculty members, 50% served as research supervisors, although they reported workload and limited time as barriers. Most participants in both groups considered undergraduate research essential or very important to medical education. **DISCUSSION:** The data show that undergraduate research is valued despite barriers such as a heavy workload and a low publication rate. Financial motivations were associated with greater dissatisfaction and a perceived adverse academic impact. A shortage of supervisors and faculty workload undermine program effectiveness. **CONCLUSION:** Undergraduate research is widely recognized as valuable by students and faculty, but structural improvements are needed to optimize its benefits. Stronger institutional support and alignment between expectations and program objectives are essential to expand its educational impact.

KEYWORDS: Medical education; Faculty; Health research plans and programs; Undergraduate medical education.