

# MODIFIABLE FACTORS INFLUENCING EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE AMONG MEDICAL INTERNS



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## BACKGROUND & OBJECTIVES

- Emotional intelligence is crucial for medical professionals.
- Medical interns are expected to have a high degree of emotional intelligence (EI) to face their professional career challenges.
- Emotional intelligence (EI)/ emotional quotient (EQ): **capacity to recognize and regulate emotion in oneself.**
- enables one to monitor own feelings and emotions and others
- guide decisions and actions
- crucial to ensure a successful outcome or good performance.
- Medical internship is known to exert physical, mental, and emotional challenges. The potentially challenging period during the internship emphasizes the importance of EQ among medical interns during this time.<sup>3</sup>
- A higher EQ enhances physician and patient well-being, increases patient safety and augments healthcare teamwork.<sup>4</sup> However, studies about EQ among medical interns are lacking.
- Objective:** to determine the level of EQ among medical interns and its associated factors.



## RESULTS & DISCUSSION

- 524 from 619 medical interns responded. The mean (SD) EI score: 3.08(0.58).

Factors	Simple Linear Regression		Multiple Linear Regression		
	Crude b (95% CI)	P-value	Adj. b (95% CI)	t-stat	P-value
Resilience	0.91 (0.84, 0.99)	<0.001	0.65 (0.58, 0.72)	17.76	<0.001
Preparedness	0.22 (0.20, 0.25)	<0.001	0.11 (0.09, 0.13)	10.17	<0.001
Approach Coping	0.38 (0.28, 0.47)	<0.001	0.17 (0.11, 0.24)	5.11	<0.001
Avoidant Coping	-0.38 (-0.50, -0.25)	<0.001	-0.19 (-0.28, -0.11)	-4.69	<0.001
Religiosity	0.23 (0.10, 0.37)	0.003	0.09 (0.01, 0.17)	2.17	0.001

Adjusted regression coefficient,  $R^2 = 67.6\%$ .

Table 2: The associated factors for EI among respondents

- A few significant modifiable factors influenced EI among medical interns; namely resilience, coping style, preparedness for internship, and religiosity.
- Coping: positive association between EI and approach coping style, and a negative relationship with avoidant coping.
- Approach coping encapsulates constructive responses to stress such as positive reframing, acceptance, seeking helpful information, and reaching for emotional support,
- Avoidant coping includes self-distraction, denial, venting, substance abuse, behavioural disengagement, and self-blame.<sup>5</sup>

## CONCLUSION

- The significant factors influencing EI in this study such as coping and resilience can be learnt and taught as a skill.
- Programs or inputs in medical education can be organized to improve EI by improving coping mechanisms, religiosity and resilience.

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## METHODOLOGY

- Type of study:** Cross-sectional, nationwide study
- Ethical approval:** National Medical Research Register (NMRR) 21st January 2020(KKM/NIHSEC/P20-65 ( 6 ))
- Sample population:** Inclusion criteria: newly reported medical interns in selected Malaysian hospitals accredited for medical intern training  
Exclusion: refused, no access to internet
- Sample size** using PS software (doubled + 20%)= 619
- Sampling:** multistage- simple random sampling to choose 17 hospitals, all medical interns who reported from January to April 2020 included & invited to answer an online questionnaire.
- Data analysis:** SPSS ver25- simple and multiple linear regression
- Dependent variable:** mean of **emotional intelligence level** as measured by USM emotional intelligence inventory (USMEQ-i)
- Independent Variable: age, gender, religion, race, medical school type, failure in clinical, involvement in student activities, additional intern courses, religiosity, Preparedness for Hospital Practice questionnaire (PHPQ), Connor-Davidson Resilience scale 10 (CD-RISC 10), Duke University Religion Index (DUREL) and Brief-COPE inventory.

## TOOLS

Name of questionnaire	Purpose (to assess)	Validity
PHPQ	Internship preparedness	Cronbach's alpha value of 0.86.
USMEQ-i	Level of Emotional Intelligence (EI)	Cronbach's alpha -0.96
DUREL	Religiosity level	Cronbach's alpha: 0.78 -0.91
CD-RISC 10	Resilience level	Cronbach Alpha:0.90
Brief-COPE inventory	Coping skills- Avoidant Coping, Approach Coping	Cronbach Alpha:0.83

Table 1: Tools used to measure the internship preparedness, EI, religiosity, resilience and coping skills of the medical interns