



The

HORIZON

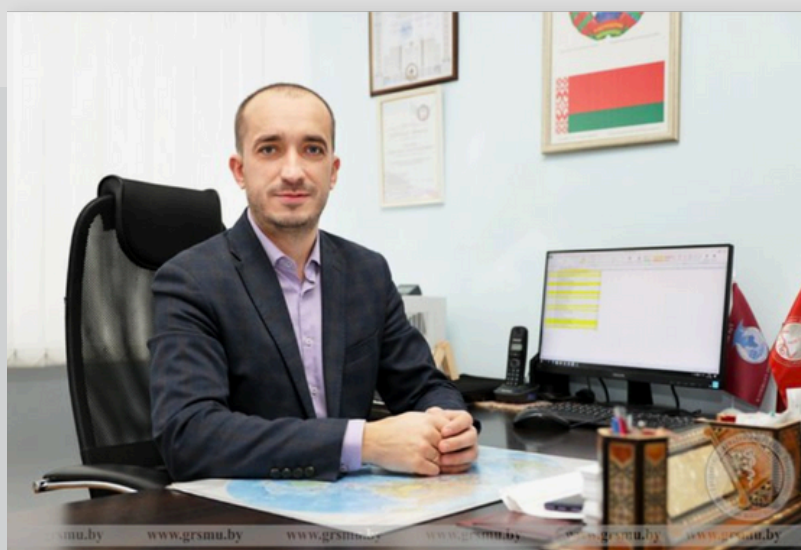
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- AN INTROVERT'S GUIDE THROUGH MEDICAL SCHOOL
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DEAN'S DESK



Dear students, we at Grodno State Medical University strive to provide students with top-quality education, but that's not it. GRSMU is also a hub for Scientific, Cultural, and Sports related activities. We wholeheartedly acknowledge that International students are an integral part of our university, and we take immense pride in that. Grodno State Medical University is glad to work with students from different countries and provide them with a stage to represent their nation and culture.



**DEAN OF FACULTY OF INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS
DR. ALEKSANDER ALEKSANDEROVICH STENKO**

GRSMU celebrates its uniqueness in diversity, for in its true essence our university is a junction where students from various backgrounds and cultures come together as one big family. GRSMU has always encouraged students to explore further and beyond in every field they try their hands at. I hope that you like the novel concept of 'The Horizon' - a magazine that serves as a platform for the students to voice their opinions, share their takes and present their points of view.

'**The Horizon**' is a medium of extended communication where we can learn a lot from one another. I highly appreciate this initiative and personally support it. I look forward to reading the interesting blogs written by you.

WELCOME TO THE HORIZON



“We all have fascinating stories to share!” For the longest time, I have had this idea of starting a magazine. But not just any conventional magazine, one that shall serve as a platform for the students and alumni of International faculty at Grodno State Medical University to share their stories. A platform that enables students to share their takes on various curricular and extracurricular aspects of medicine. Thus, the idea of **‘The Horizon’**, came to life.



**DR. MEHUL H. SADADIWALA, FOUNDER,
CLASS OF 2023**

‘The Horizon’ will be a creative intersection where students can freely give commentaries about Lifestyle, Culture, Productivity tips, and more. Throughout the years, many individuals at GrSMU have inculcated valuable skills and gained experience with a fair share of success in various disciplines. Maybe you run a successful YouTube channel or an educational website, or maybe you are a successful student-researcher or an educator, and so much more. 'The Horizon' enables students to share their personal experiences. The insights that you share will encourage other students to take further strides and explore future possibilities.

‘The Horizon’ is supported directly by the Dean of the International Faculty, and it will operate under the supervision of the International Students' Scientific Committee. Students from 1st to 6th year, and even graduates, can submit their blogs to this magazine. The articles should directly or indirectly revolve around student life to share knowledge and the collective growth of students.

For inquiries and submissions.

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EDITOR'S DESK



“ I'm a sixth-year student at Grodno State Medical University, and I am passionate about curating captivating content that resonates with readers across diverse interests, especially in lifestyle medical blogs. With my keen sense of trends and attention to detail, I collaborate closely with writers and creatives to produce vibrant, informative pieces that inspire and inform. My editorial approach combines creativity with precision to ensure each story is visually appealing and thoughtfully composed. I am dedicated to delivering fresh, relevant content.

As an editor-in-chief, I thrive on bringing lifestyle topics to life in ways that deeply connect with audiences. I am truly grateful to the ISSS for this incredible opportunity. ”



L.R. SATHISHA DESHAN LIYANAGE
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF (OCT-DEC, 2024)



MARYAM ANOOSHA
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF (OCT-DEC, 2024)

“ I have always had a keen interest in a variety of medical disciplines and writings outside of medical training. My journey into this field has afforded me the chance to expand my expertise in writing and research.

As the editor-in-chief, my goal is to assist all of my fellow students and work with them to push the boundaries of knowledge. I'm excited to share fascinating insights and concepts! ”

And a message to our dearest readers, we would like to invite you all, students and alumni, to share with us the blogs that directly or indirectly revolve around student life, to share knowledge and experiences that has had an impact on your growth within and outside the bounds of our university.

Concluding, let us alter the limitations of our individual efforts and collectively explore limitless Horizons.

AN INTROVERT'S GUIDE THROUGH MEDICAL SCHOOL

This blog is about the problems introverts may face during their time in medical school and how it affects their performance as well as some tips on how to overcome or deal with the problems better.

WRITTEN BY
KHADHEEJA
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SHAREEF
CLASS OF 2025

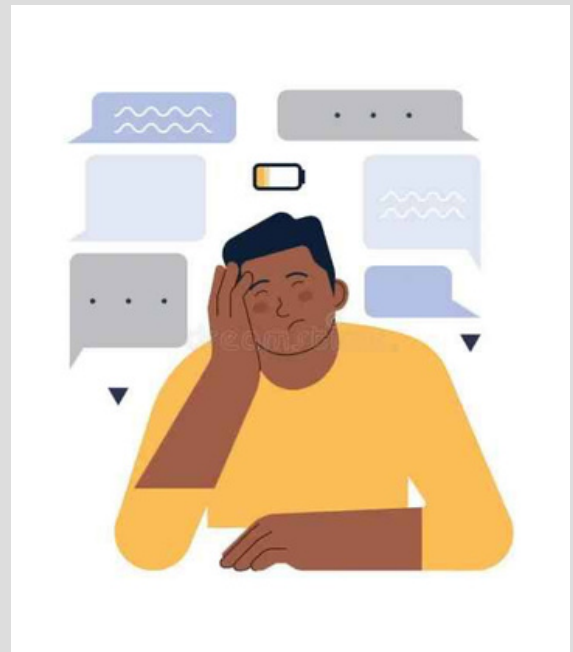
INTRODUCTION

When most think of how medical school will go, they think their time will be spent mainly on studying, going from class, to lectures, to prepping for the next class, followed by never ending exams. Although this is true, there is more to medical school than just studying from books. Whether it is Q&A sessions with teachers in class, sharing information and ideas with your peers or the patient interviews you must do during rounds, most of your time is filled with social interactions. If you are someone like me, who struggles daily in social settings, this situation can be quite daunting.

THE STRUGGLES OF AN INTROVERT

As an introvert, we tend to like to fade into the background, more a listener than an active participant. This would be fine in any other social settings but as a medical student this can be a huge setback to working yourself up to be a better medical professional. . During rotations, you have to actively try to be “social”, ask more questions, engage in informative debates with your peers, build

rapport with those you work with and the most important of all, be able to interact with your patients both professionally and confidently, ask questions, make them comfortable in your presence and build their trust in you. These all can be equally frightening and draining for introverts.



Another point to take into consideration is exams. As our university mainly follows the oral questioning format, this can come as one of the biggest struggles to maintain our grades throughout medical school. I know I spent majority of my first 3 years struggling through exams, as I would freeze up when I am asked a question, and struggle to form proper coherent answers. I was more stressed about the idea of the oral questioning than I was of studying for the exams itself. This led to fluctuating results and a sense of self-doubt of whether I belonged in medical school or not.



These constant struggles might make you doubt if this profession has a place for you as an introvert and whether you have any potential to be a good doctor when you are already struggling as a student.

YOU CAN SUCCEED EVEN AS AN INTROVERT

As I finish my journey as a medical student, I realized there many ways to build yourself up and overcome the problems I faced with social interactions, and best of all it didn't require forcing yourself to be an extrovert.

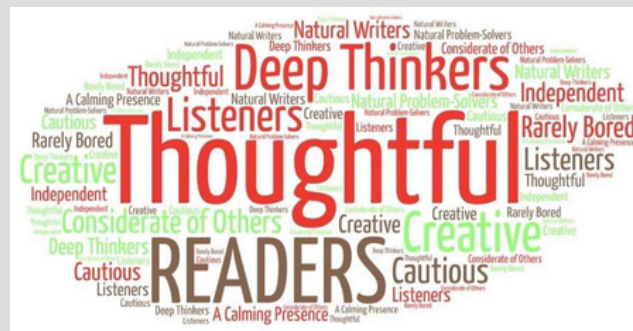
1) Preparation and practice. Always be one step ahead. If you have a clinical round with patient interactions, prepare yourself in advance. Have a short note of the structure of the questions to ask. Practice your questions in front of the mirror or asking a friend you are comfortable with to practice your questions. The more practice the more it will feel like a routine and this helps to reduce the anxiety and panic when you are in front of the patient.

2) Set a goal. As introverts, we tend to follow the thought of, "Better to remain silent and be thought a fool than to speak and remove all doubts", but one of the best qualities to have as a medical student is always to question and doubt, so it is very important to actively engage during classes. If you struggle with active engagement during class and rotations, take time every morning to set a goal for yourself. For example, answering a certain number of questions that day. Having a goal will help you focus and will act as a way to mentally prepare yourself for the day.

3) Observe and integrate. One of the best qualities as an introvert is the ability to be a good listener, and this can be used to your advantage during clinical rotations. Patient interviews doesn't only need to be active questioning. Ask questions to your patient and let them speak. Listen to them and their problems, and show that you are actively listening. This helps the patient to feel more comfortable and best of all you don't need to actively speak too much. If the patient is steering off from the main point you can just steer them back with another question. This can work with peers too. As medical professionals, it is very important to build rapport with your peers. You don't need to actively participate in conversations and activities with your peers, just be present, listen well and just add in your input once in a while.

4) Smile. A lot of times due to an introvert's quiet disposition, you may come off as cold and reticent. Peers and patients alike may find you less approachable. A smile goes a mile to make your peers as well as your patients feel comfortable around you.

5) Recharge. The most important advice to give is always take time for yourself. Take a weekend to recharge your social battery. Do what makes you more comfortable, away from people and social gatherings. make a nice dinner, snuggle into bed with a good movie or book. Let yourself relax from a whole week of constant social interactions and allow yourself time to prep yourself up for another week to come.



CONCLUSION

The medical profession may be a profession build for extroverts, but always remember that you can make a place for yourself even as an introvert. It may require a bit more work but, in the end, always remember the reason for choosing medicine in the first place. Focus on your end goal and work hard to be the best doctor you can. Whether you are an introvert or an extrovert, there is no substitute for hard work, and all the efforts you put in will eventually pay off.

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A PAINTING OF A STORMY SEA

This blog explores how anxiety and depression mirror the chaos of a stormy sea, reflecting deep emotional struggles often hidden from view. It also highlights how traumatic experiences, such as natural disasters, can deeply affect mental health through personal reflections emphasizing the importance of creating supportive environments, utilizing therapeutic practices, and fostering community connections to promote healing.

WRITTEN BY
AYSHA HAFEEL
CLASS OF 2026

INTRODUCTION

It's not just a depiction of nature changes. It's a mirror reflection of a human hidden story of anxiety and depression. The vast sea with choppy waves mirrored the anxious thought and the dark, oppressive sky, mirroring the suffocating weight of despair. The lone fragile rowboat far away represents the individual struggling to talk about the overwhelming forces of their mental health challenges.



ANXIETY AND DEPRESSION

Anxiety and depression, are two intertwined shadows of the mind, commonly known as mood disorders.

Together, they weave a complex tapestry of internalizing disorders, where emotions spiral inward, often concealed from the outside world. In this hidden realm, feelings swell and recede like the tide, leaving those caught in their currents searching for a glimmer of light amidst the darkness.

Anxiety is a complex and multifaceted mental health condition characterized by excessive worry, fear, and apprehension. It's a normal human emotion, but when it becomes persistent, intense, and interferes with daily life, it becomes a disorder.

Depression (major depressive disorder) is a common and serious medical illness that negatively affects how you feel, the way you think, and how you act. It is a common but serious mood disorder. Depression (major depressive disorder) is a common and serious medical illness that negatively affects how you feel, the way you think, and how you act. It is a common but serious mood disorder.

Anxiety may occur as a symptom of clinical (major) depression. It's also common to have depression that's triggered by an anxiety disorder. Mixed anxiety-depressive disorder (MADD) is a new diagnostic category defining patients who suffer from both anxiety and depressive symptoms of limited and equal intensity accompanied by at least some autonomic features.

WHO CAN BE AFFECTED IN GENERAL

This kind of mental disorder can happen to anyone. People who have lived through abuse, severe losses, or other stressful events, University students, patients who have chronic illnesses like cancer, etc. This situation is more common in women than in men.

Studies have shown that university students not only face challenges related to independent living but also academic challenges. This predisposes them to depression, anxiety, and stress, which are fairly common.

Studies have shown that university students not only face challenges related to independent living but also academic challenges. This predisposes them to depression, anxiety, and stress, which are fairly common.

Research has highlighted sources of magnified stress and trauma for people with disabilities during the COVID-19 pandemic, as compared to others in the general population. It's because the people were isolated from society for a long time, disturbing their homeliness. Long-term cancer survivors are another special category who face these mental instabilities, as they feel sad thinking about how things have changed, and about the things that they can't do anymore.

LIFE EXPERIENCE

Life is a series of experiences. Let me open a window into my childhood, a window that reveals the scars of a tsunami, but also the strength I found within.

I would like to share one of my scary childhood experiences with you as I hope it will add a different view to this topic of mine.

The salty air still clings to my memory, which constantly reminds me of the day the ocean roared and stole our world. At that time I was a small kid, which was a time when most people did not know



what a tsunami wave was like. Some have not even heard the word until they saw it.

It was a gloomy day, where the water in the sea started to move behind. Which made the people curious and amazed. This giant wave which hit our small island destroyed not only the buildings and vehicles but also devastated innocent people's lives in all aspects.

AFTER EFFECTS

As an after-effect, unfortunately, many people face physical disabilities as well as mental instabilities. Among those we could see the people and children who were depressed were living in fear and sorrow. The children couldn't focus on their studies, and they had poor memory recalling things, and forgetfulness, the children couldn't sleep as they were awakening with nightmares, and bedwetting. They were afraid to engage in social activities, they also didn't like to share their thoughts with others and were silent most of the time.



During school classroom activities when the students were asked to draw pictures they preferred, the children who were the victims of this disaster mostly tended to draw unusual drawings that depicted their lifestyle and hope within them. These drawings not only serve as a therapeutic outlet for children but also provide valuable insights for caregivers and mental health professionals into their emotional states and needs. Understanding these expressions can help in providing the necessary support. The drawings showed us how much fear and sadness they had, with an innocent hope of help for them to come back to their normal life.

These children were really living in fear. Children, in particular, displayed heightened anxiety, often reacting with panic at the sound of the word 'Tsunami'; they might cry, cling to their parents, or seek shelter, their small bodies trembling with fear. Some would cover their ears, as if trying to block out the haunting memories, while others might run away to find safety, embodying the instinctual response to a threat.

These mental issues like anxiety, fear, and depression, also affect individuals, families, and society as a whole. Family members were feeling helpless, frustrated, and sad which led to conflicts and strained relationships.

The responsibility of caretaking may shift, as some family members sometimes the elder child even if he or she is small has to take more responsibilities on behalf of the family, this develops a more stressful condition for everyone. Mental health issues most probably hinder communication, making it difficult for families to express feelings and seek support. The cost of the treatments, and other expenses are very hard to manage because the income of the family is stopped or very low. This too exacerbates stress within the family.

Even the future of the country looms like a stormy sky, heavy with uncertainty and foreboding. A mentally unhealthy population can result in lower workforce participation, affecting the country's economic growth. Mental issues also contribute to higher crime rates, homelessness, and social unrest which are a threat to society.



Research has stated that Exposure to natural disasters can leave profound psychological scars, particularly among adolescents, who are often more vulnerable to the emotional turmoil that follows such traumatic events. The chaos and unpredictability of disasters can shatter their sense of safety and stability, leading to heightened anxiety and fear.

This anxiety may manifest as persistent worries about future disasters, difficulties in social interactions, or struggles with concentration in school. As these young individuals navigate the complexities of adolescence, the lingering effects of their experiences can shape not only their mental health but also their overall outlook on life, potentially impacting their relationships and academic performance for years to come.

Addressing anxiety, and depression after a natural disaster requires a comprehensive approach that combines immediate emotional support, community building, and long-term mental health care.

MANAGING THE SITUATION

First of all, we must create a safe space where individuals can share their experiences without judgment.

Counseling and therapy help people express their feelings and experiences.

Relaxation techniques, like music, meditation, yoga, and breathing exercises are very useful to help manage stress and anxiety. Encouraging people in drawing arts, music, or dancing therapy as a means of healing.

As technology has developed tele therapy which means online counseling is important for people who find it difficult to access traditional therapy, also mental health apps offer guided meditations, mood tracking, and coping strategies.

Sufficient nutrition and exercise enhance mental well-being. Nature therapy also reduces stress levels. Spending time with animals, and watching beautiful sceneries also relaxes a person's mind.

The thing that should be taken into account is that even if we have faced a disaster or not, or unfortunately will, we should never let the storm destroy us. As the storm begins to fade, rays of sunlight peak through the clouds, symbolizing hope and healing. Just as the sea eventually settles, so too can our hearts find peace, guiding us toward brighter days and a renewed sense of strength. Never give up on your hopes, be strong, and face the world bravely in whatever situation you are in.

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ACADEMIC COMPETITION: A DOUBLE-EDGED SWORD

This blog focuses on the types of competitive attitudes and the pros and cons of academic competition among medical students.

WRITTEN BY
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INTRODUCTION

Medicine is a highly competitive and sought-after field, with only select individuals being admitted into medical schools. This is also true for postgraduate applications and residency programs in which the admission process is primarily merit-based. Healthy academic competition allows students to recognize their respective strengths and weaknesses, encourages self-improvement, and thereby boosts performance. However, studies have shown that academic competition among university students is associated with an increased risk of depression and anxiety. Let's delve deeper into the types of competitive behavior and the possible benefits and downsides of academic competition.



TYPES OF COMPETITIVE BEHAVIOR

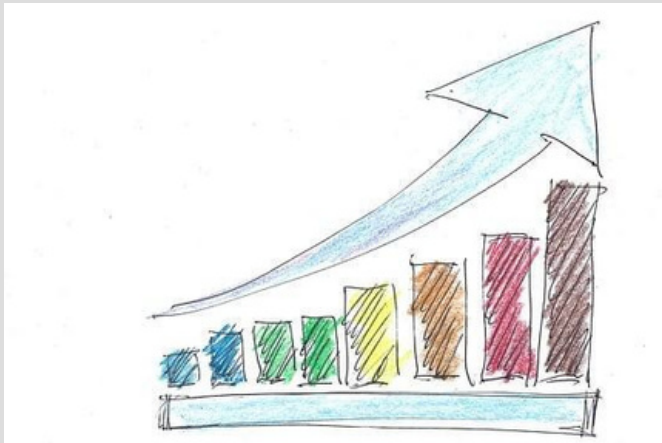
There are two main types of competitive attitudes: personal development competitive attitude (PDCA) and hypercompetitive attitude (HCA).

Students with PDCA focus more on self-improvement and personal growth. Such students do not view others as obstacles to achievement but rather as a means of learning and self-discovery. On the contrary, students with HCA prioritize winning above all else, and this drive to succeed is accompanied by a hostile, manipulative, exploitative, and dismissive mindset. HCA is associated with numerous pathological behaviors, including lower levels of self-esteem and higher levels of neuroticism, which essentially means that they are at a higher risk of mental health disorders.

PROS OF ACADEMIC COMPETITION

- One of the more obvious benefits is that competition enhances learning. It encourages students to do in-depth research and gain novel insights that they might otherwise not have encountered. In other words, it sparks curiosity and facilitates independent learning.
- Enhance critical and strategic thinking and problem-solving skills.
- Equip students for future academic and professional challenges by providing them with the experience they need to succeed in a competitive society.
- Competition can motivate students to step out of their comfort zones and take risks. They're not discouraged by failure but rather see it as an opportunity to learn and simply try again. This promotes resilience and growth on an intellectual and emotional level.
- Learning how to balance university work, extracurriculars, and personal life. A good study-life balance is important to avoid burnout.

- Competitive students are more likely to take on leadership roles. Such roles teach communication skills, confidence, humility, empathy, and integrity. It is important to hone these qualities as future doctors!



CONS OF ACADEMIC COMPETITION

The constant pressure to be the best can have devastating consequences if not navigated through properly. Let's take a look at the cons of unhealthy competition among peers.

- Chronic stress and burnout: Burnout can negatively impact your academic performance, mental and physical health.
- Anxiety and sleep disturbances: Excessive competitiveness can strain interpersonal relationships, which can lead to feelings of isolation and anxiety. Generalized anxiety disorders result in poor sleep quality, which can manifest as initial insomnia, maintenance insomnia, or early morning awakening. The worsening sleep quality can in turn lead to impaired cognitive, emotional, as well as immunological functions.
- Depression is prevalent among university students, especially medical students. Not all students adapt well to the transition from school to university life. It can be difficult to adjust to life away from parents and relatives and cope with academic pressure. While some studies have shown that depression is seen mostly in undergraduates with lower grades, other studies show that the incidence is higher in seniors.

Multiple stressors, including academic performance, pressure to succeed, and uncertainty surrounding life after graduation, can be responsible. Depression and anxiety can significantly impact medical students education and social and emotional well-being and potentially jeopardize their career.

- Self-doubt and loss of confidence: It might be draining to continuously strive for the top and compare yourself to your peers. You may start questioning your capabilities and find it difficult to accept failure. Your confidence can be gradually undermined by setting unreasonable expectations for yourself and holding yourself to a higher standard.



CONCLUSION

Academic competition to some degrees can be helpful. It allows students to discover their maximum potential and produce exceptional results. It also enables students to acquire skills such as leadership that cannot be taught in a classroom. On the other hand, excessive competition can negatively impact a student's physical and mental well-being in the long term. Anxiety, depression, sleep disturbances, and chronic stress are widespread, especially among medical students. Therefore, academic competition is often a double-edged sword. While academic performance should be prioritized, it should not be at the expense of your emotional well-being!

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EXPLORING VACCINE HESITANCY: TO DO OR NOT TO DO

A major obstacle in public health is vaccine hesitancy, which is defined as a reluctance or refusal to participate in immunisation campaigns despite the availability of vaccines.

This blog outlines some important points that demonstrate the prevalence of vaccination hesitancy among students, its effects with examples, and strategies for addressing the issue.

WRITTEN BY
F. A. SAMIDON
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INTRODUCTION

Preventable illnesses may resurface as a result of this trend, underscoring the need for a comprehensive understanding of its causes and effects. In the field of public health, this presents a major obstacle, especially for students. In order to achieve herd immunity and slow the spread of infectious diseases, this group which includes high school and college students is essential.



EPIDEMIOLOGY OF VACCINATION HESITANCY

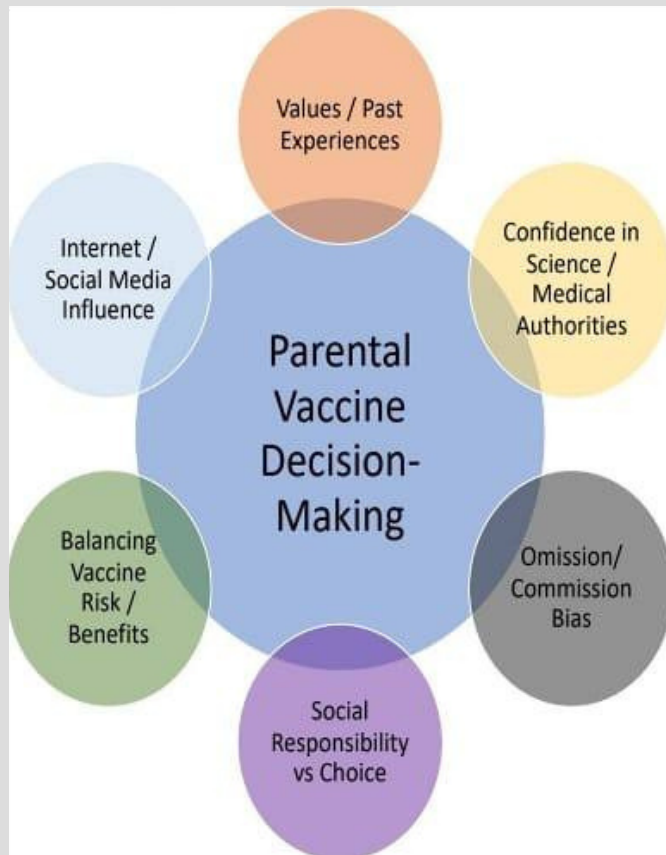
The panorama of records,

- Navigating misinformation in the current digital era, false information regarding vaccines travels quickly. False information that is frequently disseminated on social media platforms might increase mistrust and doubt about the efficacy and safety of vaccines. For example, myths that vaccines cause autism were widely spread, even though they were refuted by medical research and were more common among parents and students.
- Some college students expressed worries about the COVID-19 vaccination, mainly because of the speed at which it was created and the known adverse effects. According to survey results some pupils were also

allegedly impacted by misleading material that was accessible online.

- Establishing trust with the healthcare professionals and systems; is crucial to fostering consideration in the field. People who have had negative experiences with healthcare may be reluctant to look for immunizations because they believe the technology is unreliable. One example might be someone who had a severe allergy to a medication in the past and is now afraid of negative vaccine reactions.
- Peer Pressure: Teenagers' social networks are very important. Specific views regarding vaccination that are held by a clique may be reinforced in specific situations. According to studies, students are highly inclined to adopt the opinions of their classmates, and this includes their vaccination status. This can either increase or decrease haphazardness towards vaccination. According to a study done at a university during flu season, many people decided against getting vaccinated because they believed it could cause the illness or that they didn't need it because they were well.
- Cultural Context and Vaccination Attitudes - Cultural ideals significantly have an impact on vaccine attitudes. In communities with a history of clinical mistreatment, which includes the Tuskegee Syphilis examine, there can be deep-rooted hesitancy in the direction of vaccines. For example, some Indigenous communities may additionally distrust Western medicine because of historical injustices.
- The electricity of personal Narratives - non-public stories, especially those recounting bad vaccine experiences, can sway public opinion. Anecdotes of excessive aspect results, although uncommon, may have a widespread

effect. For an example, a viral social media which has published, approximately an infant experiencing a severe allergic reaction after vaccination can instill fear in others.



RESULTS ON PUBLIC HEALTH

Dangers of illness Eradication – Measles and whooping cough epidemics have been linked to vaccine reluctance. 2019 saw the most measles cases in the United States in 25 years, primarily due to unvaccinated individuals. Healthcare system for the public's health is seriously at risk because of the strain in the systems' finances. The financial consequences of vaccination reluctance are significant. Outbreaks put a strain on public health resources and need higher healthcare costs. For example, a network-wide measles outbreak may lead to massive contact tracing and vaccination programs, which would cost a lot of money.

EFFECTIVE STRATEGIES TO COMBAT HESITANCY

• Network-focused education and training programs must emphasize evidence-based communication in order to debunk myths. For instance, network workshops facilitated by medical professionals can address common vaccine myths and provide reliable records.

- Peer-Led Engagement: Using trained student leaders to harness peer influence can be a successful tactic. Peer education initiatives can help children voice their concerns in a safe space by promoting candid conversations regarding vaccinations.
- Education for Healthcare Professionals: Healthcare organizations ought to obtain training on how to have productive conversations with patients about vaccines. Function-playing scenarios at training sessions can assist experts in expanding their abilities to handle problems and provide accurate documentation.
- Culturally sensitive messaging: It's crucial to craft vaccine messages that speak to people from a variety of cultural backgrounds. For instance, organising vaccination records sessions in culturally relevant venues in collaboration with local community leaders might enhance acceptance of the information.
- Leveraging Digital Innovation: Using social media platforms to ensure data accuracy is essential. Creating captivating films or infographics that dispel common vaccine myths can reach a wide audience. For instance, a TikTok marketing campaign that features medical professionals discussing vaccine-related concerns can effectively combat false information. To sum up Vaccine hesitancy is a complex problem that is influenced by a variety of circumstances. Public health initiatives can move closer to raising vaccination rates and ensuring network well-being by using comprehensive measures that address false information, foster belief, and acknowledge cultural beliefs.



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