



UWI  
ST. AUGUSTINE  
CAMPUS

FACULTY OF  
MEDICAL SCIENCES

# THE IMPACT OF COVID-19 AND ONLINE SCHOOLING ON MEDICAL STUDENTS' ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE AND MENTAL HEALTH

**A Abdul-Hamid<sup>1</sup>, C Buckradee<sup>1</sup>, V Burrows<sup>1</sup>, J Chan<sup>1</sup>, J Mohammed<sup>1</sup>, M Singh<sup>1</sup>, S Singh<sup>1</sup>, K Shukla<sup>1</sup>, S Nayak<sup>1</sup>**

<sup>1</sup>Department of the Supervisor(s), Faculty of Medical Sciences, The UWI

e: [shivan.singh2@my.uwi.edu](mailto:shivan.singh2@my.uwi.edu) e: [shivananda.nayak@sta.uwi.edu](mailto:shivananda.nayak@sta.uwi.edu)



## Introduction

- The pandemic-induced disruptions significantly affected individuals' academic-performance and mental-health due to the implementation of online-schooling. Our study aimed to assess the challenges specifically faced by medical-students and the implications these factors pose to their future career as physicians.
- Existing literature lacks focus on medical students, either concentrating on other degree fields or examining academic performance without considering mental health.
- Our research evaluates whether these factors were compromised, offering valuable information to educators and health-care institutions to provide solutions and account for any shortcomings by the online-

## Objective

- To assess and compare the impact of online-schooling on mental-health and its advantages and disadvantages on the academic-performance of medical-students across the year groups 2, 3 and 4.

## Methodology

### Study Setting

- This study was conducted online, by sending participants a link to access a questionnaire through the 'Google Forms' platform.

### Study Population

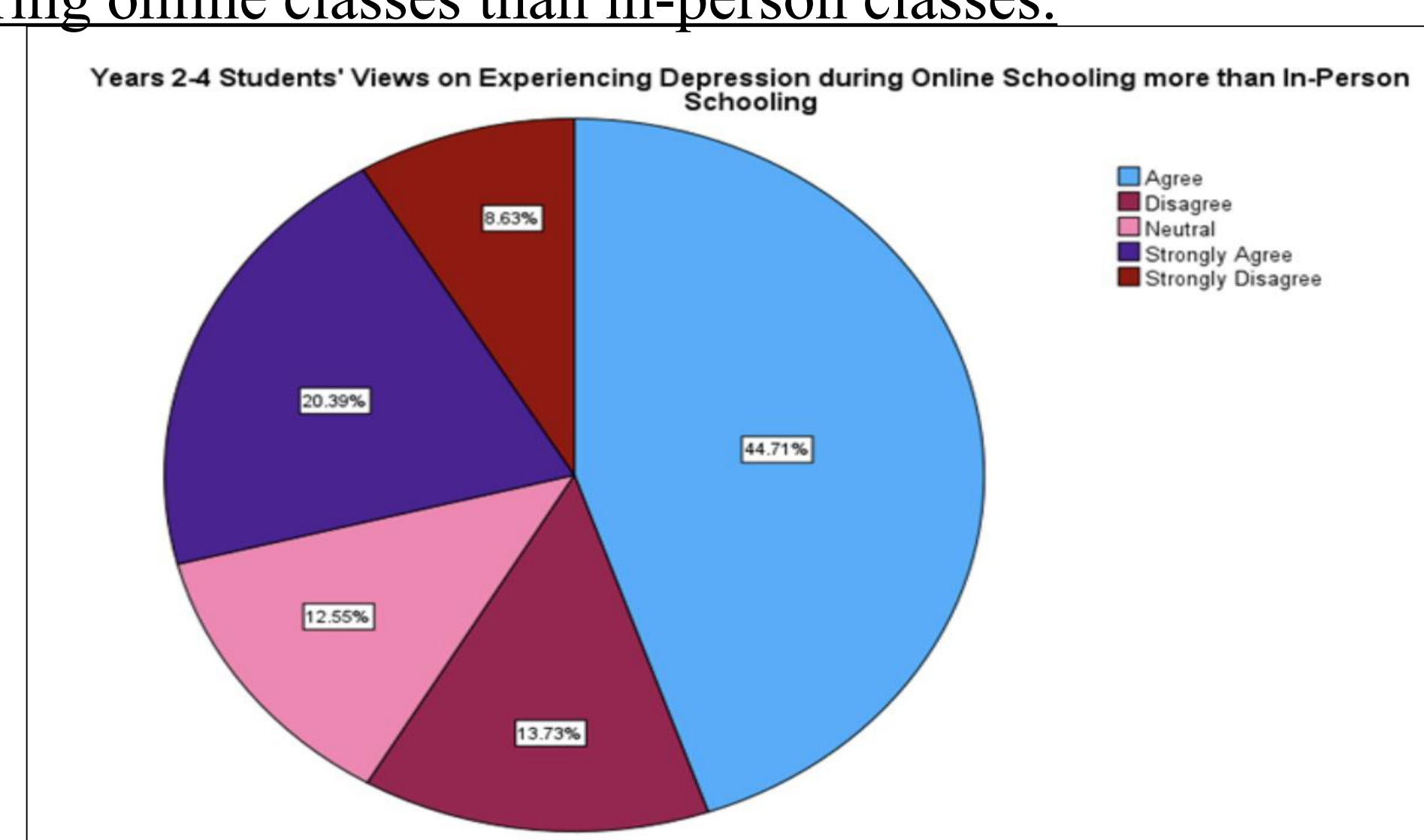
- The study population consisted of second to fourth year medical students from the University of the West Indies. The target population was estimated to be around 760 medical students.

### Study Sample

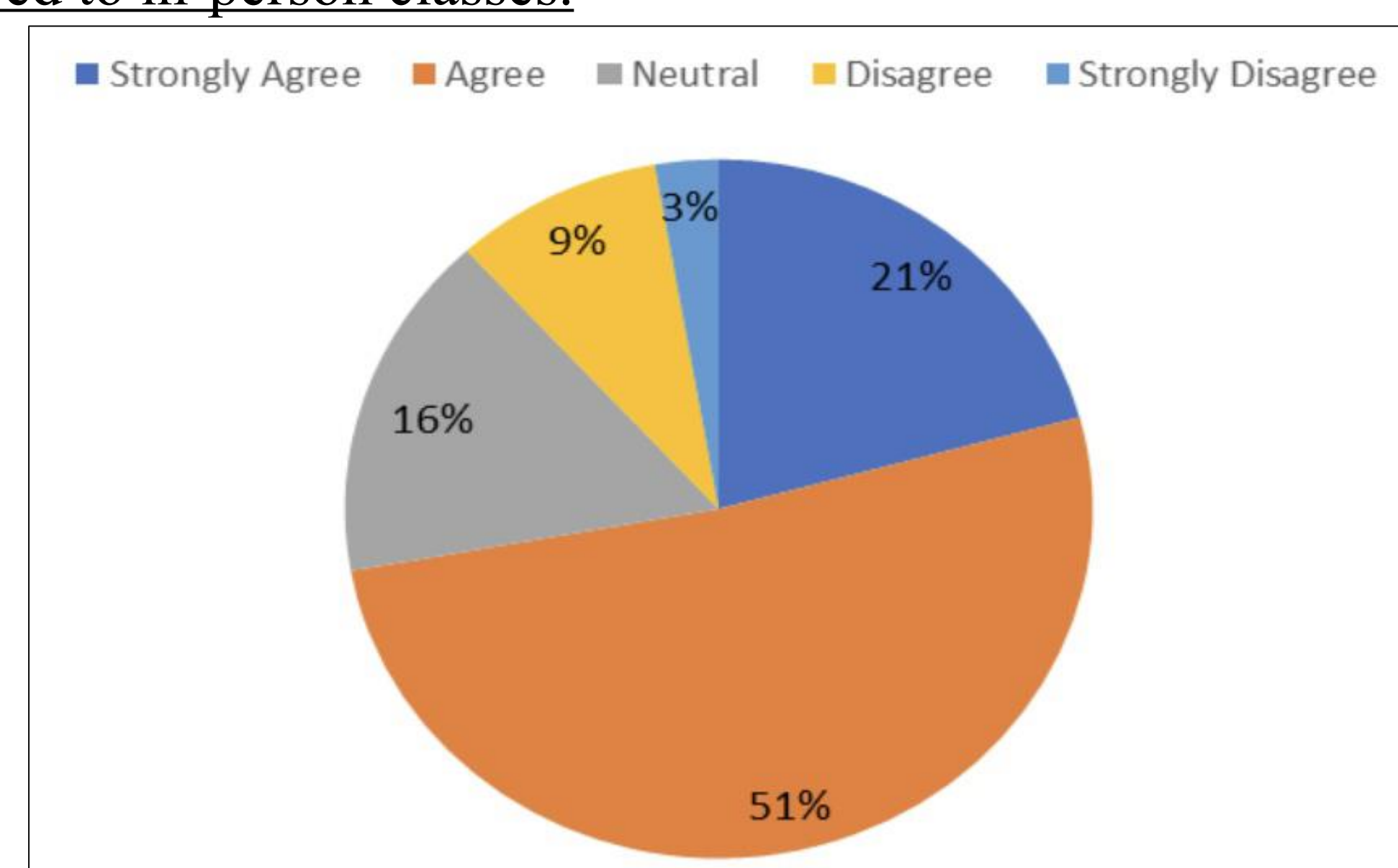
- Using convenience sampling, MBBS students from the years two through four who have experienced a minimum of one academic year of online schooling, will be selected from the University of the West Indies, St. Augustine Campus. The target population is estimated to be roughly 760 students. The appropriate sample size for the research population was calculated to be 255 students.

## Results

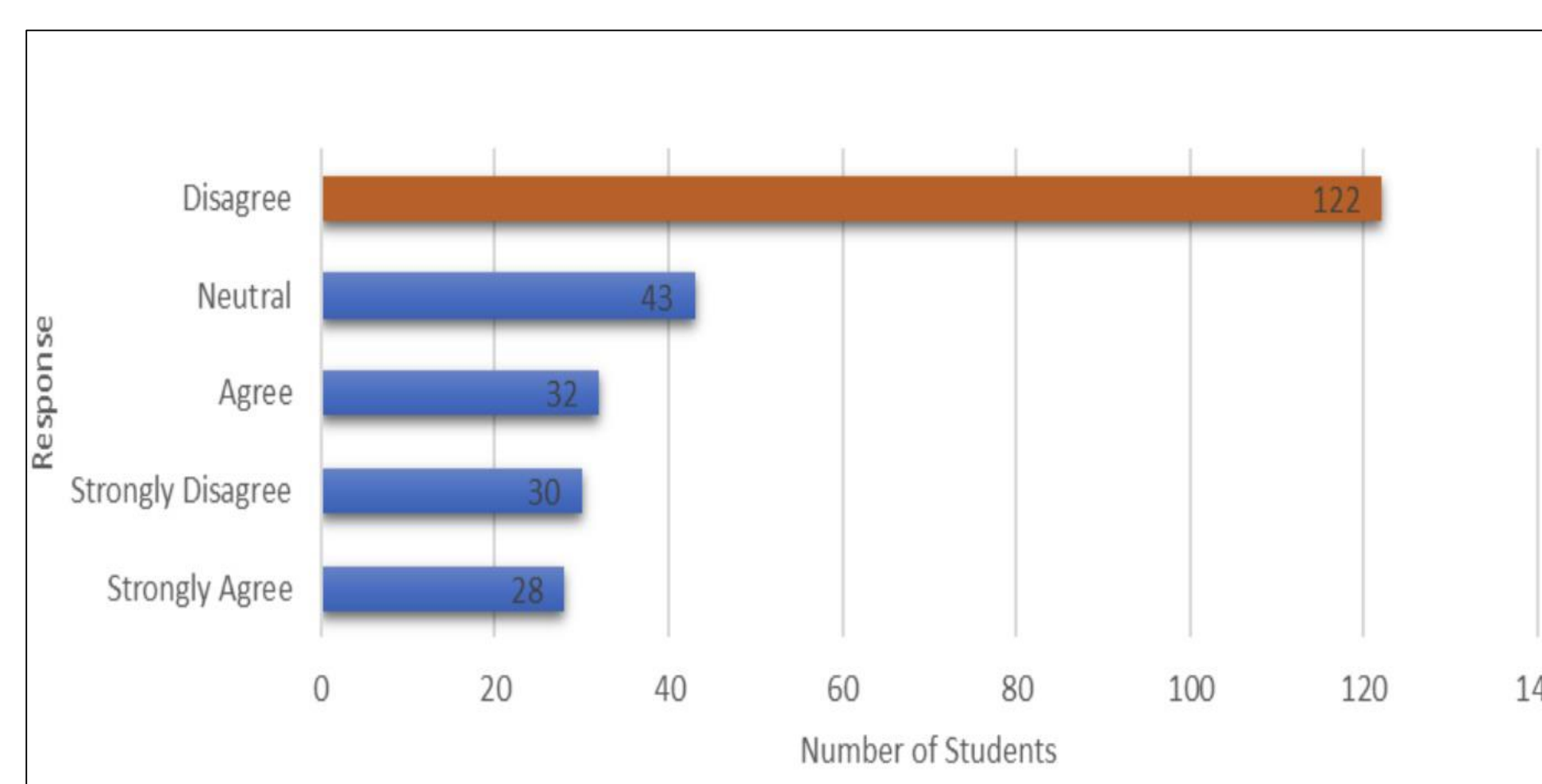
Graph #1 Showing the results of the questionnaire in which 255 participants in years 2-4 at The University of the West Indies St. Augustine Mount Hope during January- April when asked about whether they experienced depression more during online classes than in-person classes.



Graph # 2 showing the responses of medical students in Year 2-4 at The University of The West Indies St Augustine Mount Hope during January-April when asked whether their grades improved during online classes compared to in-person classes.



Graph #3 showing the responses of medical students from year 2-4 at The University of The West Indies St Augustine Mount Hope during January-April, when whether they believe the overall experience of online school was more positive than negative.



## Discussion

- The results showed 59.6% of 255 students (approximately 153) preferred in person schooling.
- Distractions at home, Wi-Fi connectivity issues and an inability to socialize were common causes of psychological distress amongst students.
- 77.5% of students reported higher levels of procrastination and distractions in online schooling as compared to in person.
- Online schooling produced negative effects on mental health amongst students resulting in high levels of anxiety, depression and loneliness. 65.1% of 255 students (166) experienced depression during the pandemic online school environment with Year 3's (the current year 4s) having the highest proportion of dissatisfied students (78%).
- Year groups that spent more time online reported higher stress levels showing a direct proportionality between time spent in online learning and increased stress.

## Conclusion

The overall perception of online education was generally unfavourable in comparison to traditional in-person instruction. The study suggests that while a significant number of participants reported a positive impact on their academic performance with online schooling, majority found it to be a more negative experience with notable impacts on mental health. The variation in experiences among different year groups underscores the importance of considering individual circumstances when assessing the impact of online education.

## References

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