

Journaling improves medical students' study habits, physical and mental health

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Journaling helped medical students improve their study habits, as well as their physical and mental health and self-confidence, according to a study from Universidad de los Andes in Colombia. Physiology educator-

researchers will present their findings this week at the American Physiological Society (APS) [Institute on Teaching and Learning](#) in Madison, Wisconsin.

The study was conducted on students attending a medical pharmacology course. In their journal, students answered four to five questions about their experience in the course and any personal challenges in a weekly survey. The questions fell into the categories of emotional and health perception, goals and commitments, study method and habits, learning perception, and teamwork. In a separate survey at the end of the semester, students made the following assessments about the usefulness of journaling:

- 85% said it helped them achieve their goals,
- 69% said it helped organize their homework and assignments,
- 57% said it improved their physical and mental health,
- 54% said it improved their communication skills, and
- 51% said it improved their self-confidence.

The findings suggest journaling is a cost-effective way to:

- promote better study habits and activity planning for [university students](#),
- promote a space for reflection about [academic life](#),
- allow professors a chance to see real-time challenges and motivations of students, and
- serves as an effective tool to guide rapid adaptations of activities and content in the curriculum of biomedical courses.

Ricardo A. Pena-Silva, MD, Ph.D., is first author of the study. He reported at the end of the study 83% of student participants said they plan to continue journaling to boost their time management skills. "This is an important achievement given the [emotional stress](#), anxiety and

burnout of many [medical students](#), especially during the pandemic," Pena-Silva said. "Journaling is an easily implementable method to promote metacognition and [mental health](#) in students of biomedical careers."

Provided by American Physiological Society

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