Today’s clinical students have witnessed how the pandemic has stretched healthcare systems worldwide, and while devoted to a career in health, they’re rethinking their future options as clinicians.

The Clinician of the Future 2023 Education Edition from Elsevier Health is a global study of over 2,200 medical and nursing students from 91 countries. The report provides the latest insights on future trends in healthcare and education and complements the Clinician of the Future 2023 report, which focuses on the perspectives of doctors and nurses to spotlight the opportunities and challenges facing all current and future healthcare professionals.

A future beyond direct patient care

Staff shortages, burnout and pay are making many students re-think their career paths to go beyond treating patients.

Students are devoted to becoming clinicians despite mounting pressures

Students feel confident they can make a positive impact in healthcare, but they face real challenges as students.

- 89% devoted to becoming a clinician and improving patients’ lives
- 64% believe COVID has reinforced their desire to be clinicians
- 75% concerned about misinformation in science and healthcare
- 60% worried about their mental health

69% worried about how shortages will impact them as clinicians
62% worried they will suffer clinician burnout
60% worried about their income as clinicians
58% see their studies as a stepping stone towards a broader career in healthcare that will not involve directly treating patients

“I will use current studies to broaden my horizons and look for other possibilities where I don’t directly treat patients.”

– Medical student

Students are considering quitting their current studies

Medical students 12%
Nursing students 21%
Learning in a world of artificial intelligence

With more and more information to retain, clinical students are eager to lean on AI to manage their learning, but they are still cautious about it.

72% overwhelmed with the amount of information they need to learn

Students' feelings about the use of AI in their studies

62% Excited
51% Worried

“[AI] is here and it’s going to stay. Some have said that we should slow down until the frameworks and the guardrails for ethics and appropriate use are in place, and I think that’s wise. But I think we need to accelerate that, because as technology outpaces our organization of the space, there are risks.”

– Educator and practicing clinician

The future is digit-AI

Students project a future where AI tools are used for clinical purposes by both clinicians and patients, and where scientific knowledge is embedded into practice. This is aligned with the view of clinicians from our sister report, Clinician of the Future 2023.

61% predict patients will use AI to help manage their treatment

56% estimate clinical decisions will be made with the assistance of AI tools

81% think scientific research will be much better integrated into clinical practice

of medical and nursing students have used Generative AI tools for their studies

View the full report
Clinician of the Future 2023 Education Edition

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