

Peace Test: Is War Sometimes a Better Solution? Survey of Students of Zagreb and Mostar Schools of Medicine

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Aim. To investigate the differences among medical students from two medical schools, one in Zagreb, Croatia, and the other in Mostar, Bosnia and Herzegovina, in their affinity towards peaceful vs violent way of solving conflicts.

Methods. A total of 733 students from the Zagreb and 102 medical students from the Mostar University School of Medicine filled out an anonymous questionnaire during their enrollment into the next academic year. The questionnaire consisted of 10 Likert-type questions with 1-5 answer scale, which were designed to give an illustration of students' attitude towards war. The test score was calculated as the sum of all answers $\times 2 + 20$. The total score ranged from minimum 40 to maximum 120 points, with a higher score indicating stronger inclination toward peaceful way of solving conflicts.

Results. There was no difference between the mean total scores of Zagreb and Mostar students (66 ± 17 and 67 ± 18 , respectively; $p=0.744$). The mean score of female students was higher than that of male students (71 ± 19 vs 63 ± 16 ; $p<0.001$) for the whole sample as well as for Zagreb and Mostar samples separately ($p<0.001$ for both). The average score of 2.3 ± 0.9 per question indicated that the students' choice was mostly undecided on war-prone activities. Younger students were more war-prone than older ones ($p=0.008$ for age, and $p=0.024$ and 0.013 for comparisons between students in earlier and later academic years). Students from cities that were affected by war but not severely damaged seemed less war-prone than students from cities that were either seriously damaged or not directly affected by war ($p=0.032$).

Conclusion. Women, older students, and students from cities that were under war threat but not seriously damaged showed to be more morally engaged towards peace.

Key words: attitude; Bosnia and Herzegovina; Croatia; data collection; peace; students, medical; war