

INTERNATIONAL DOCTORS' HEALTH CONFERENCE

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**May I Long Experience the Joy of Healing:
Professional and Personal Well-Being Among Canadian Physicians
and Surgeons**

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Study background

Research undertaken in a province of Canada in the fall of 2006

Open-ended questions were part of a larger self-report survey examining physician well-being

Surveys were sent by the provincial medical association to its members, and a direct mail-out by the researchers to members of the provincial College of Physicians and Surgeons

The participants wrote their answers to these two questions:

- (1) What are some of the factors that cause stress in your life that have not been covered in this survey?
- (2) What would you recommend to the [provincial College of Physicians and Surgeons] or the [provincial medical association] to help its members better cope with the challenges of their profession?



Sample and Method

There were 279 who took part in our survey study. The number of physicians who answered the open-ended questions was 165

Breakdown of the open-ended responses

Family medicine	71	Residents	11
Internal medicine	39	Psychiatry	11
Surgical disciplines	16	Ob/gyn	3
Pediatric disciplines	12	Lab medicine	1
		Public health/admin	1

Mean years in practice 15

Practice location

Urban 132

Rural 33

Physician gender

Male 96

Female 69

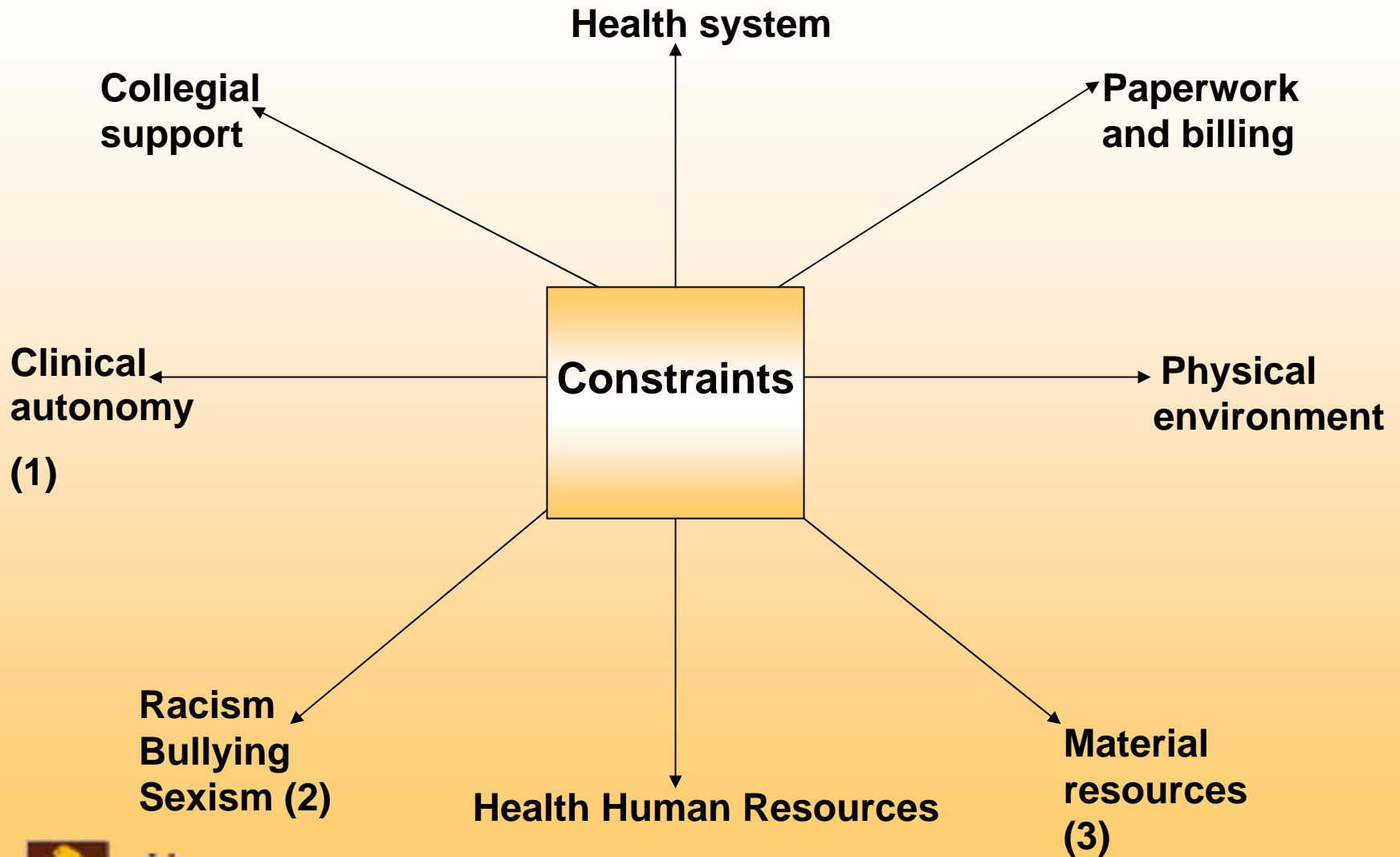
The responses were typed , coded and sorted using Microsoft Excel and an inductive approach to analyze the data was utilized, resulting in the creation of four major themes: a) external constraints b) institutions c) practice issues d) work/life balance. Within each major theme responses were then sorted into sub-categories using an inductive approach.



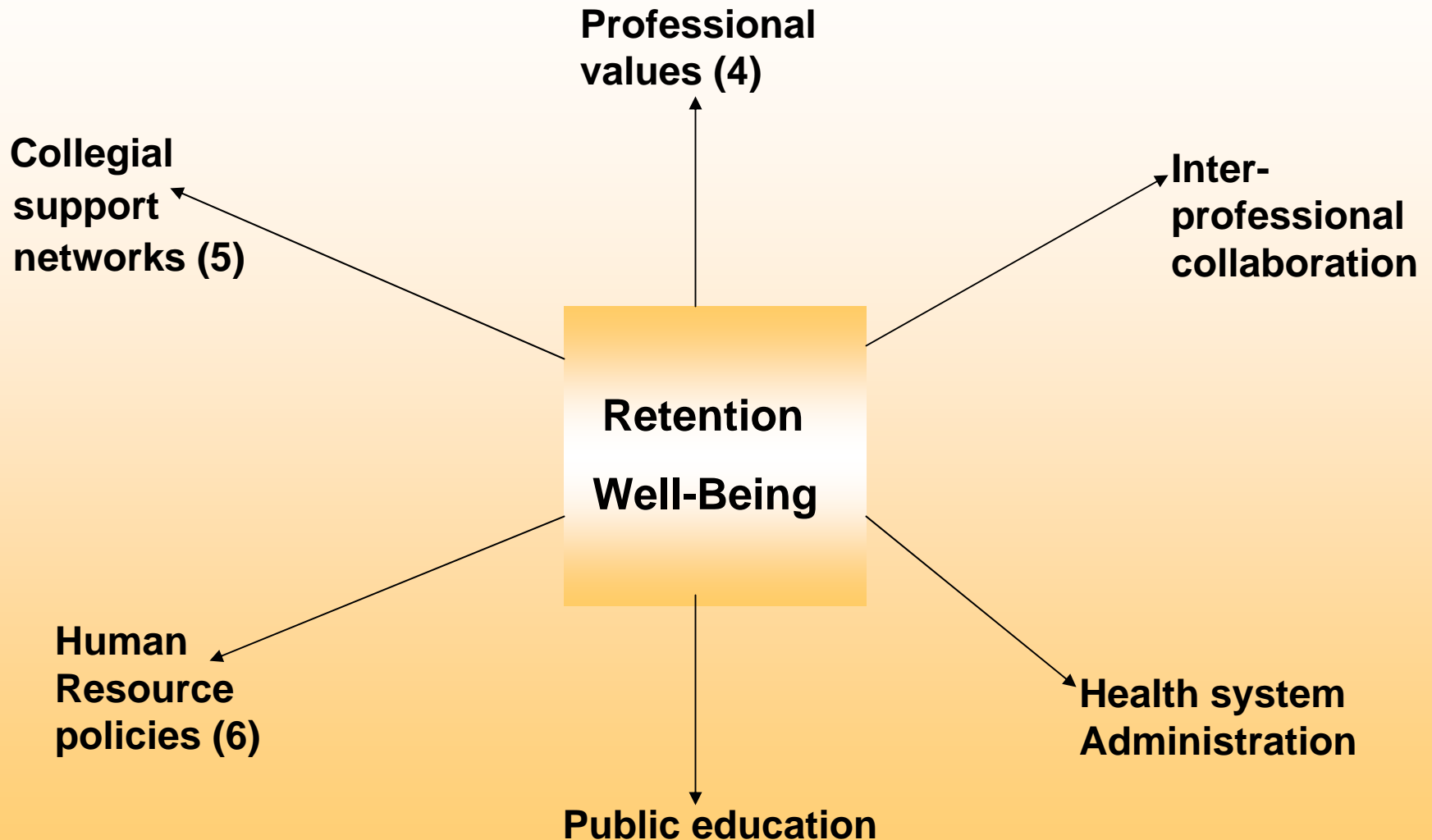
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Theme One (Macro Level) responses 85

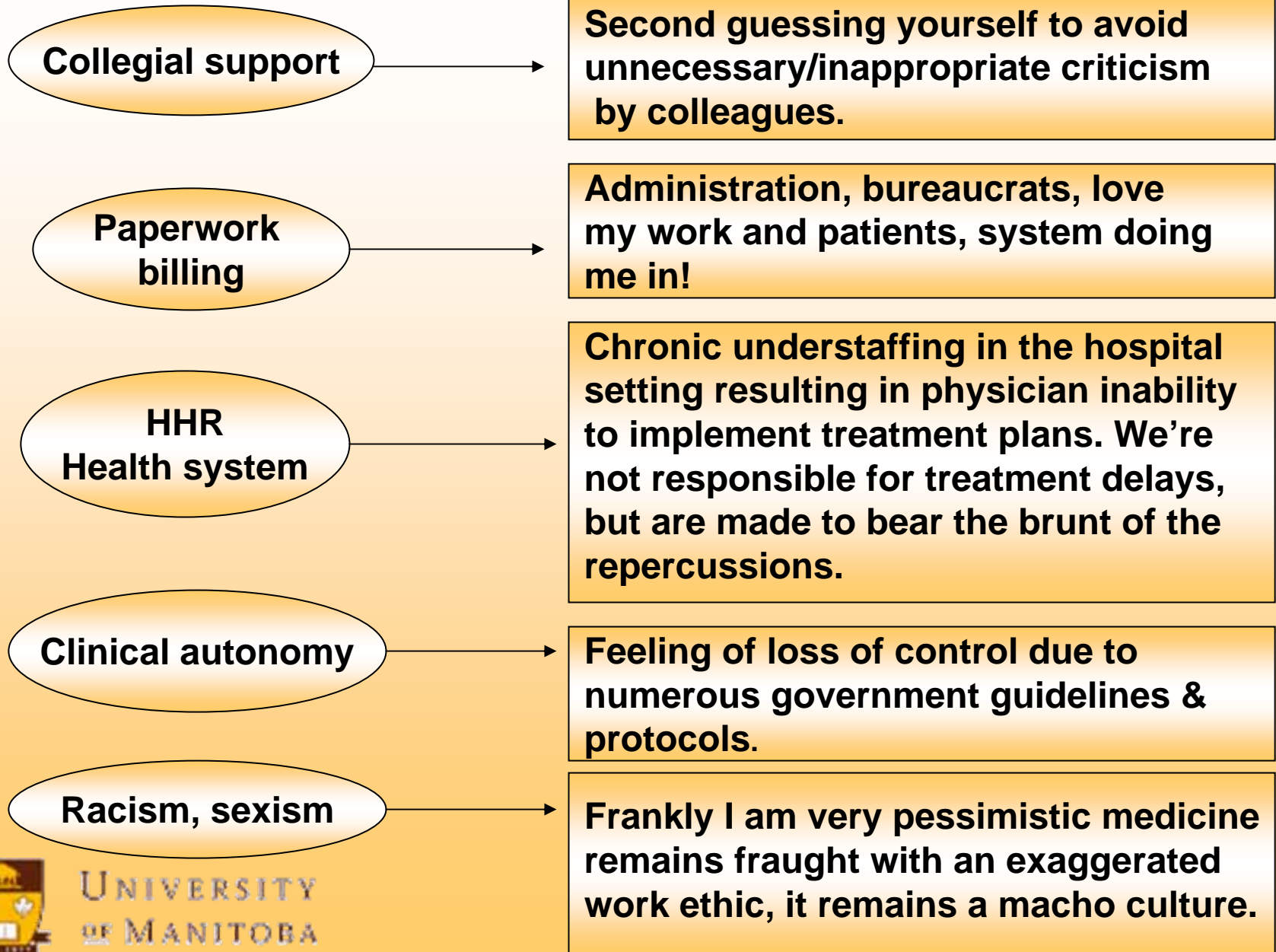
External Constraints On Practice Of Medicine



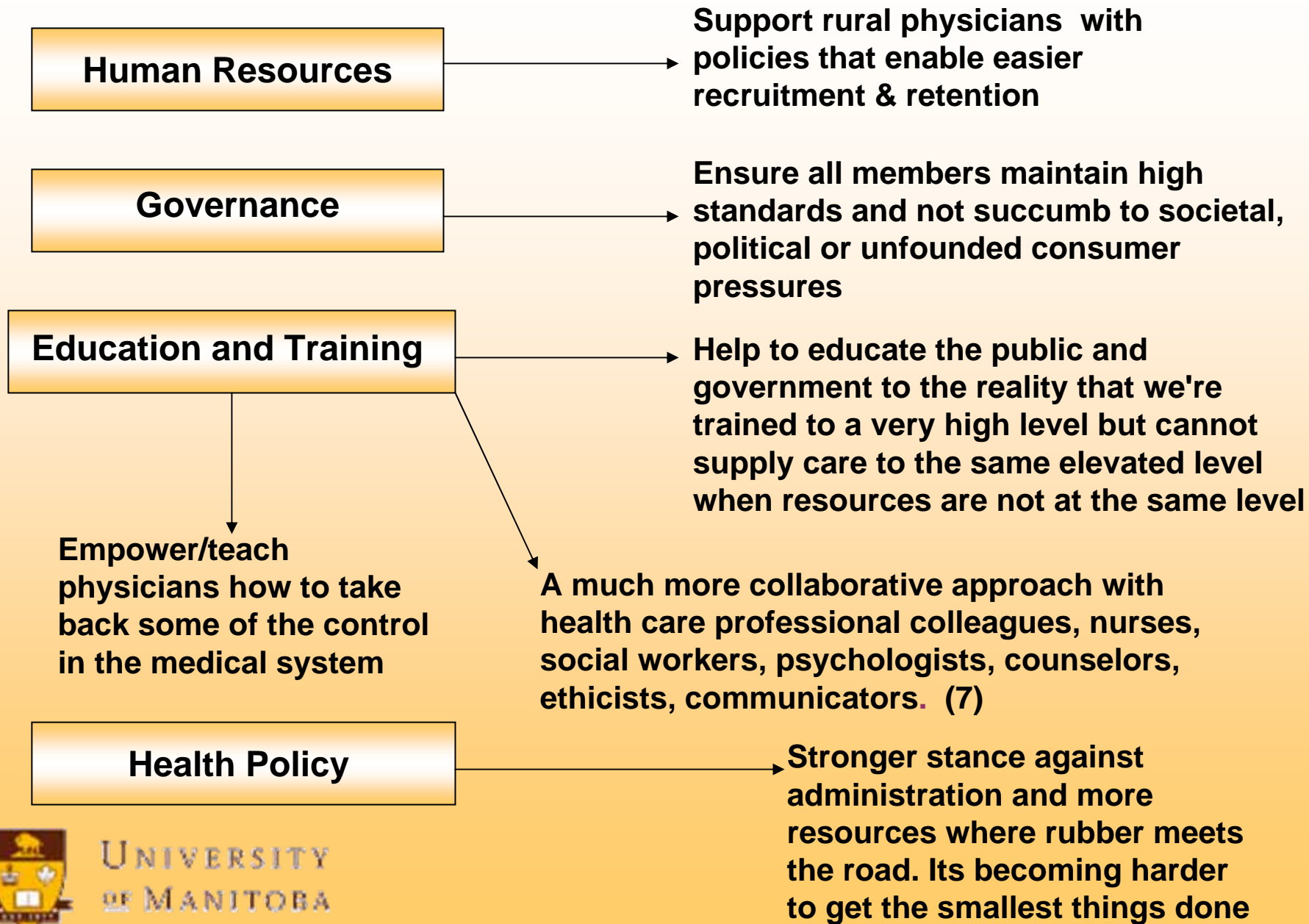
Overcoming external constraints practice of medicine



Physician comments external constraints

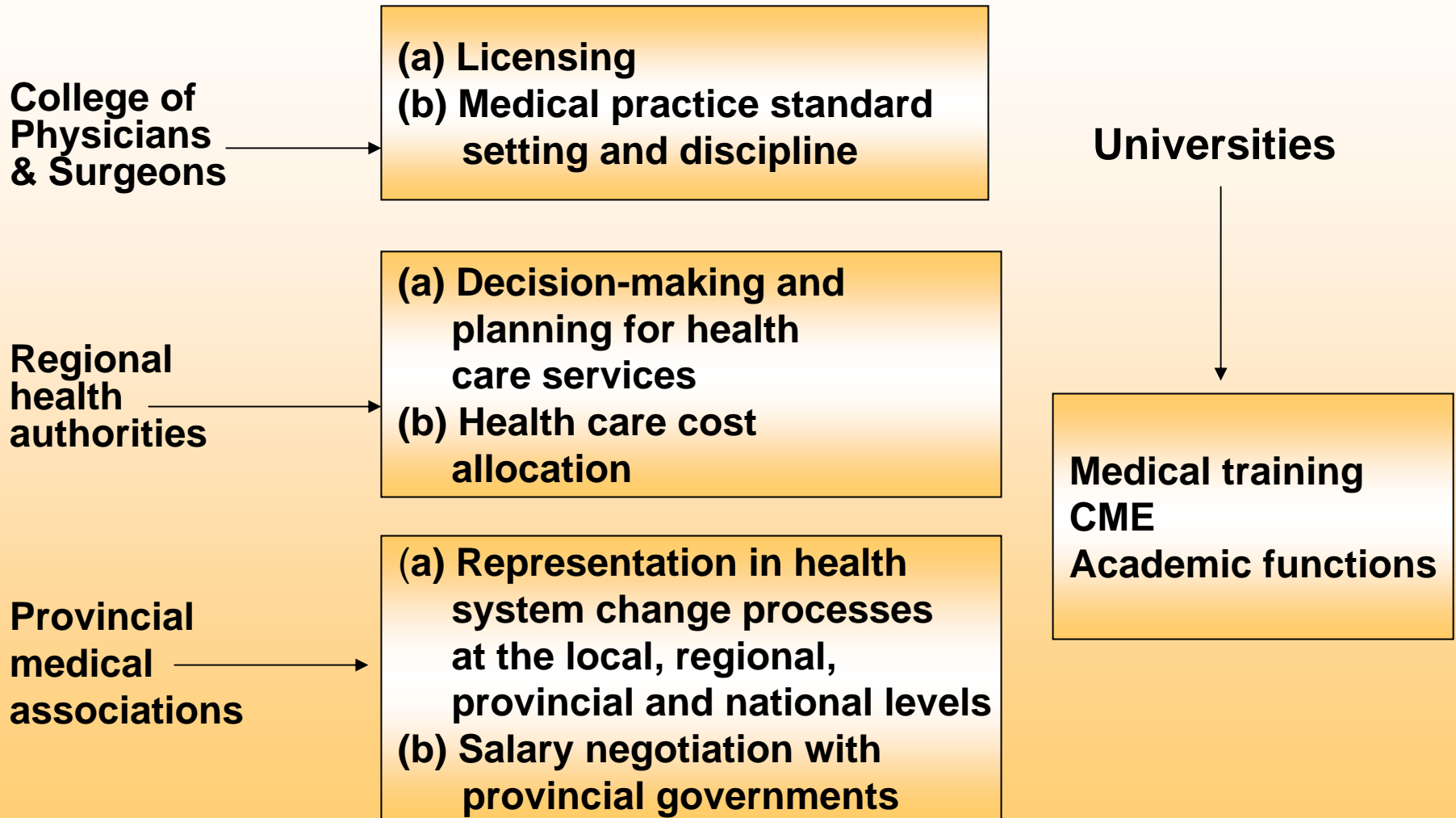


Implications for external constraints and physician comments



Theme Two(Macro level) responses 42

Issues at the professional & institutional levels



Physician comments at the professional and institutional levels

The feeling that "big brother" is watching you, frustration at not having skills recognized by the authorities.

Intense scrutiny & unproductive criticism from bosses

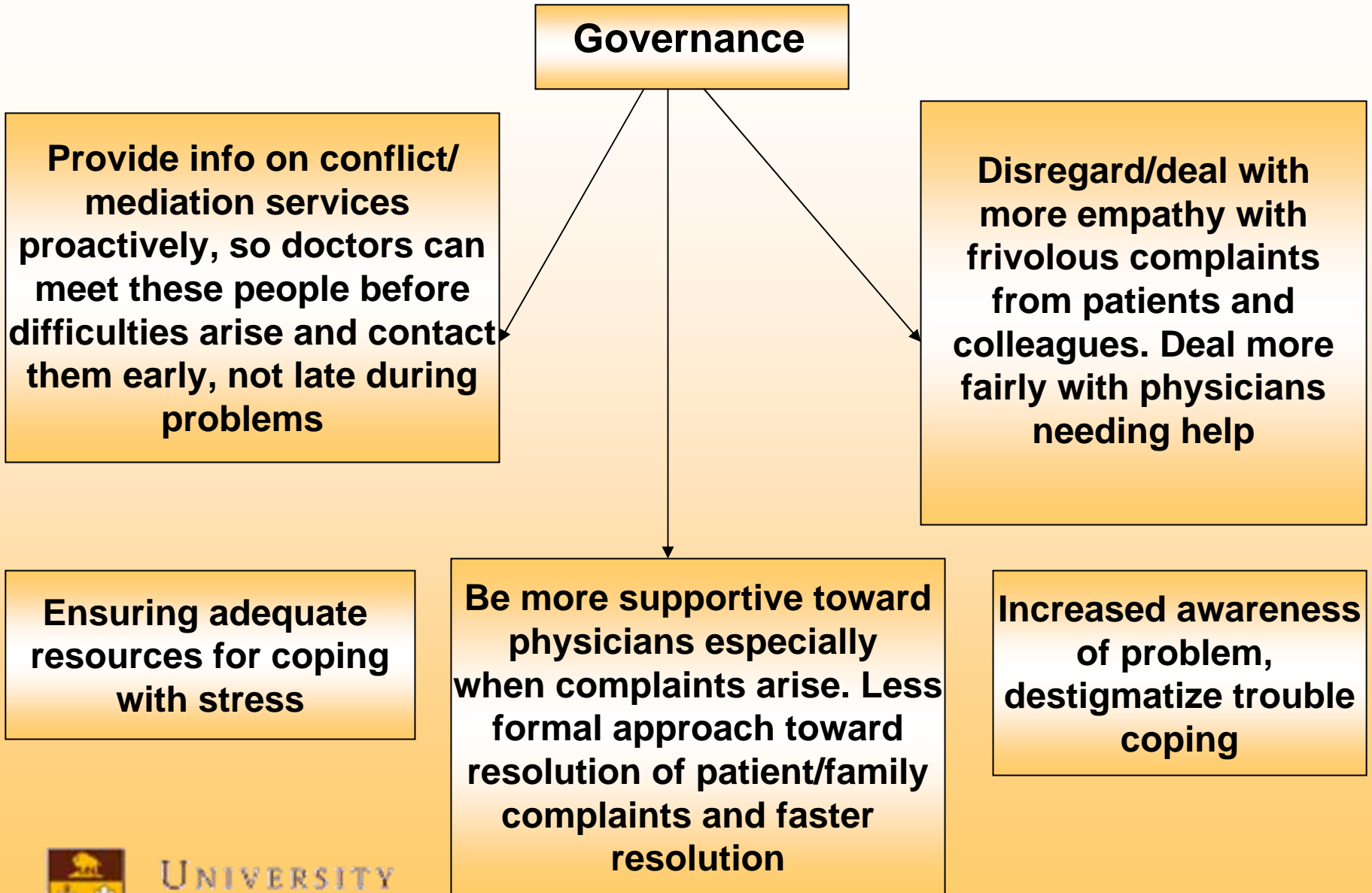
I feel strongly that skills to "cope with the challenges of the profession" needs to be addressed at the medical student level more effectively (8)

Do not threaten us make us feel like humans, and not sheep. Respect us as we do respect you. Make room for our real talents and skills and not treating us like a piece of paperwork. South Africans feel negative in general. Can we give them more to feel wanted?

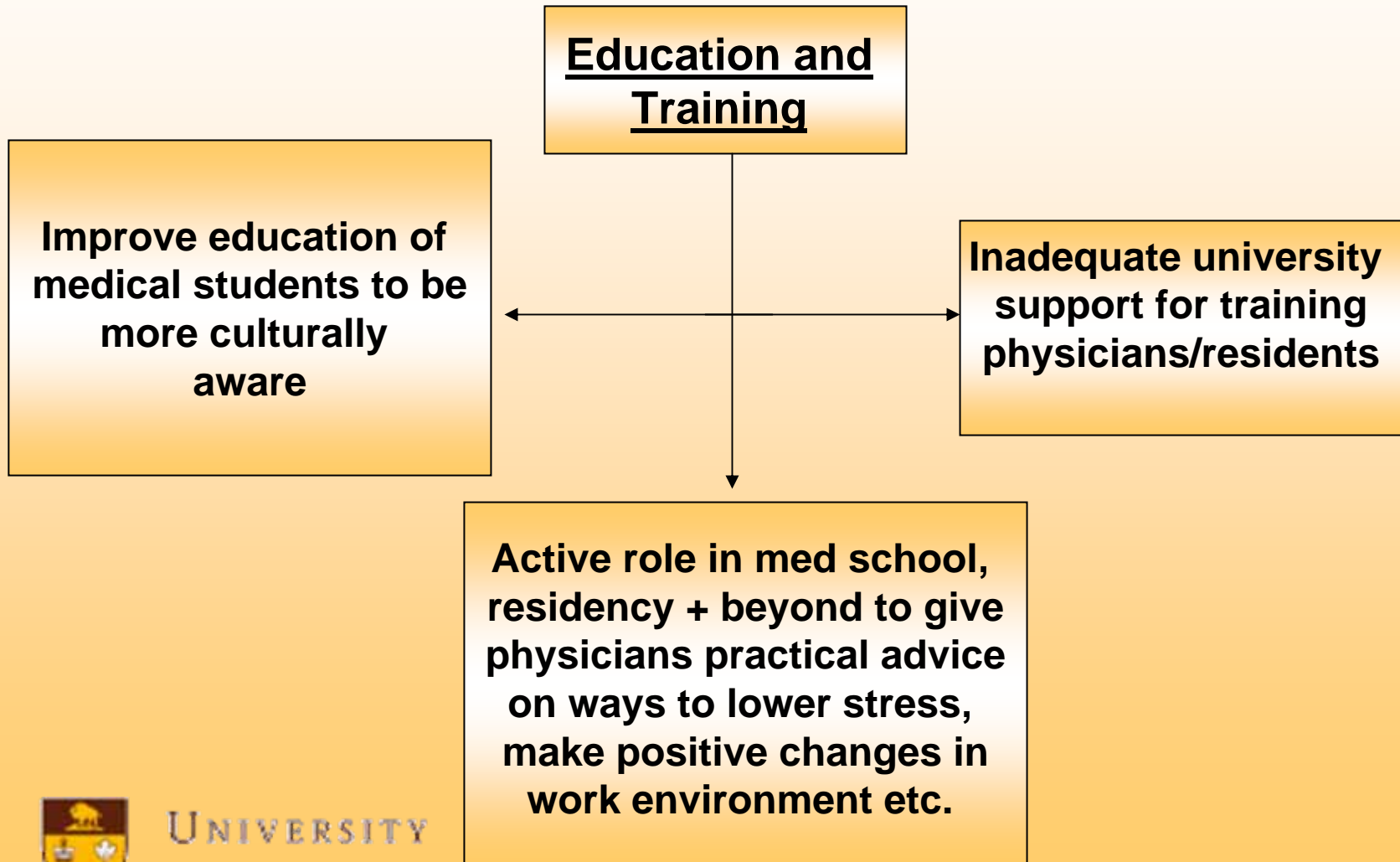
Patient complaints and how they are dealt with. It seems that doctors are put on the defensive with little or no support from any complaints - trivial or otherwise. (9)



Implications for institutions and physician comments



Implications for institutions and physician comments



Implications for institutions and physician comments

Health policy

Reinstate clinical practice guidelines so individuals do not have to keep up with the literature in all areas- can depend on guidelines in some practice areas (10)

Find a way to be paid for multiple problems in one visit i.e. be able to bill for the four or five problems patients bring in rather than one “diagnosis” per visit with payment for that one “diagnosis”



Theme Three (Micro level) responses 46 Issues at the individual practice level

**Continuing
Professional
Development**

Trying to keep up to date

Fear of failure

**Concerns about lack of
knowledge and
expertise**

**Patients
Patient Care**

**Patients very
confrontational (11)**

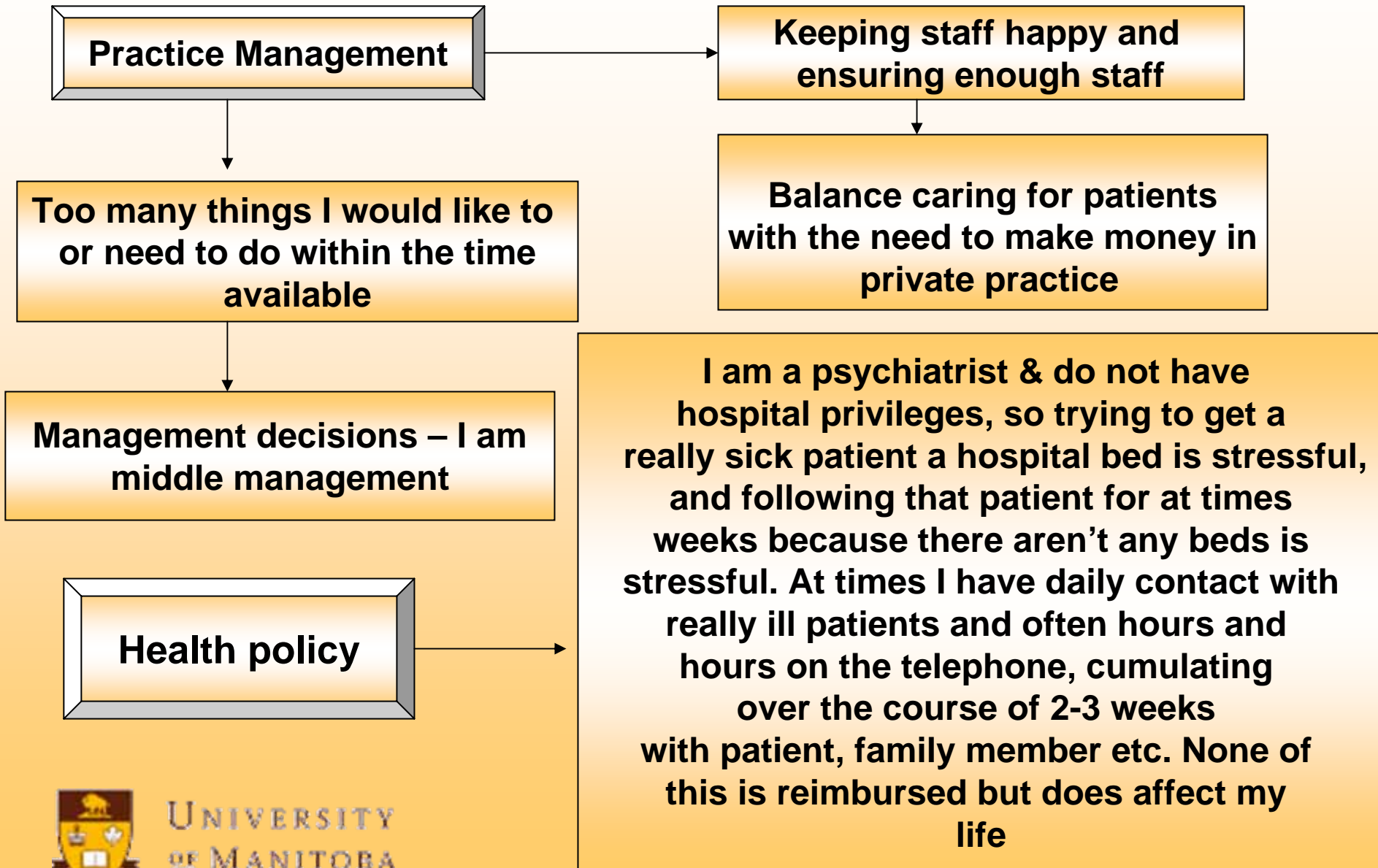
Angry patients (12)

Medico-legal worries

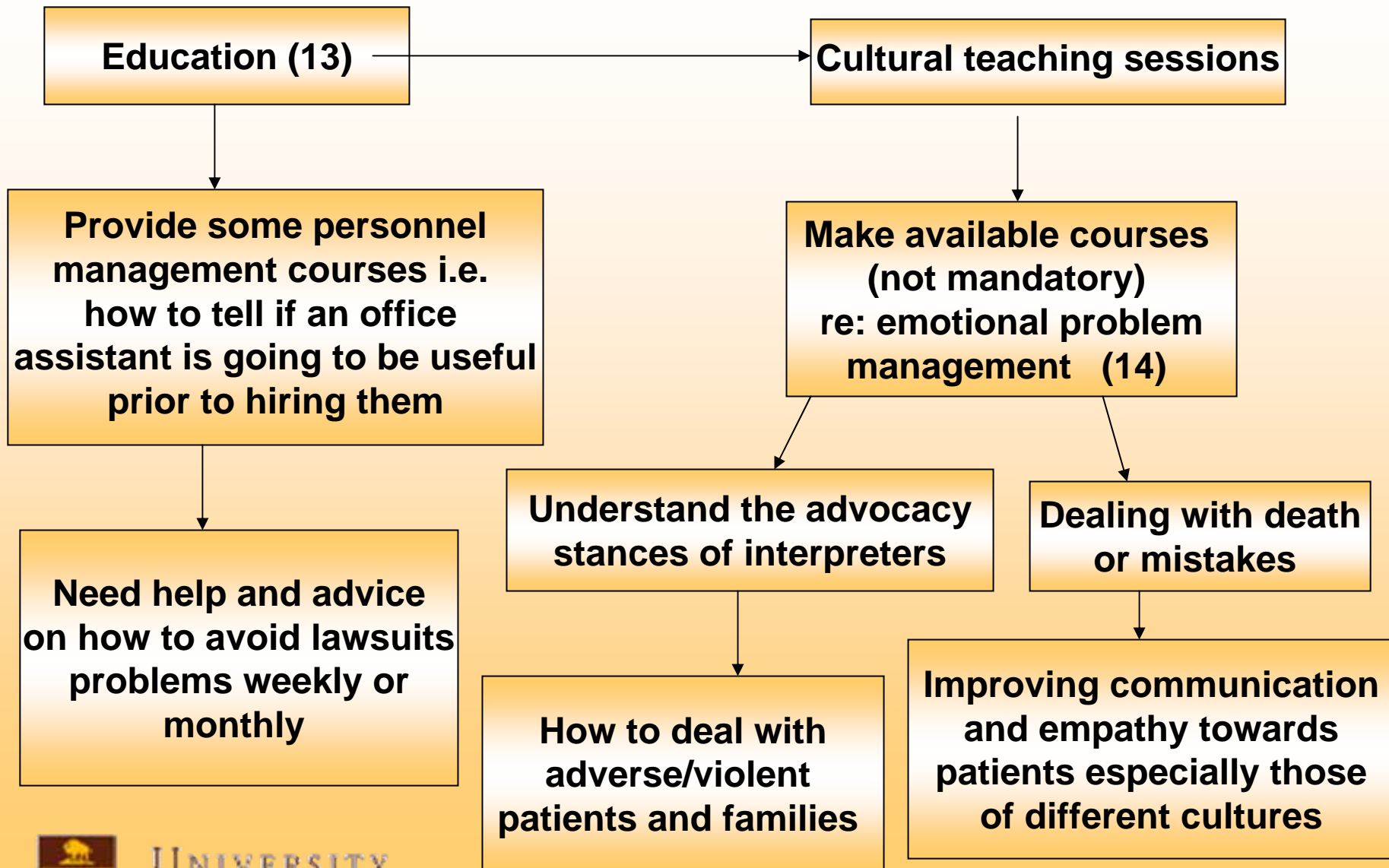
**We're not meant to be
doormats. The increasingly
and aggressive demanding
attitude of patients.**



Continued issues at the individual practice level



Implications individual practice level and physician comments



Implications individual practice level

Health Policy

Other practice management ideas

Increase support for office based practice (management training, management tools)

Encourage and help fund more CME

More established and experienced bank of interpreters

Blend work life. I do part time clinical practice, health research and health admin. The mix provides a good balance in achieving short, medium & long term goals respectively. I work at three different sites.

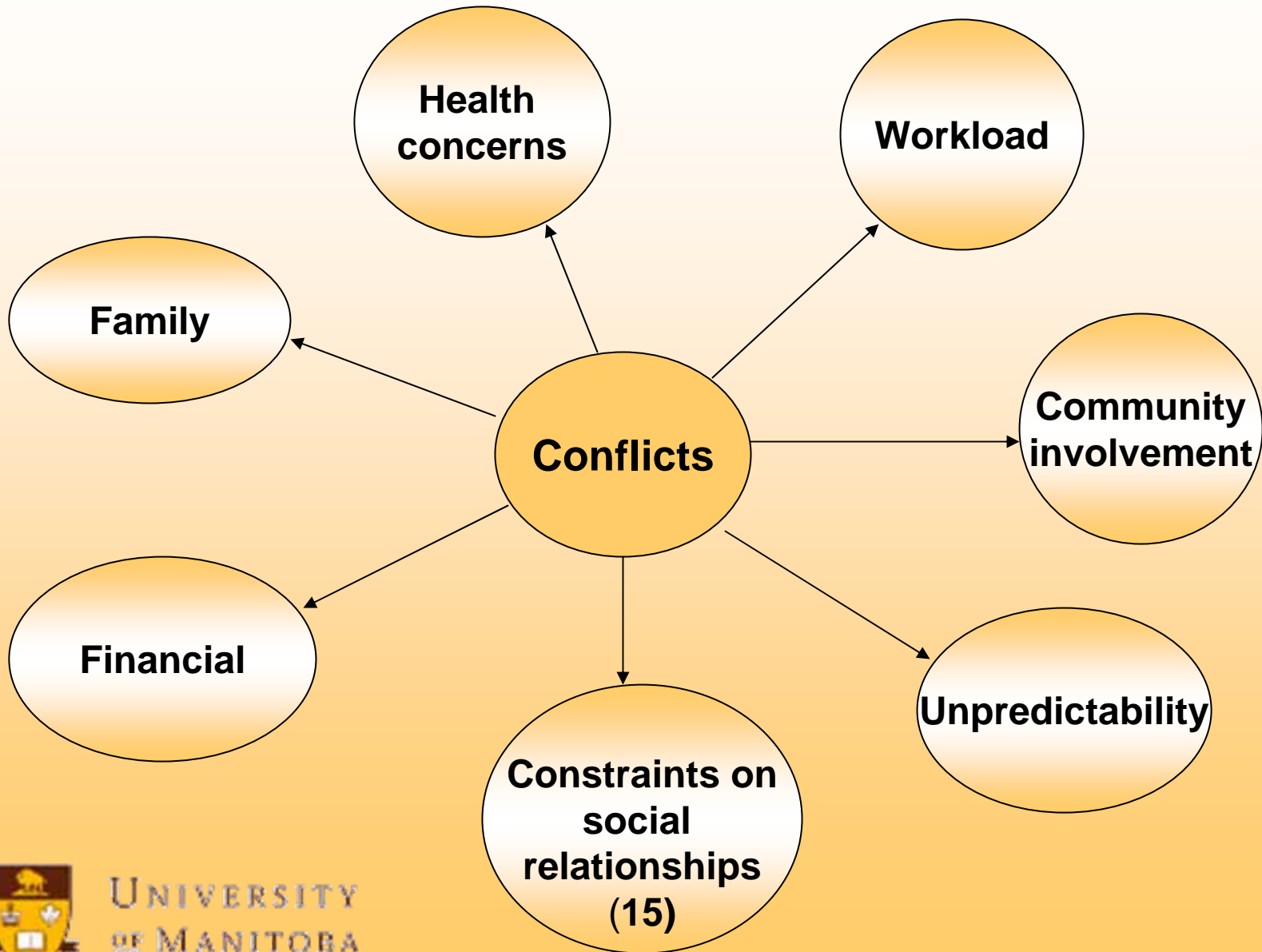
I am of an ethnic minority and speak another language, this helps me understand ethnic groups. Have worked in foreign countries 21 different times, 3-7 weeks at a time, so I am familiar with all kinds of cultural variations and expectations and build them into my attitude in dealing with different cultural and socioeconomic backgrounds.



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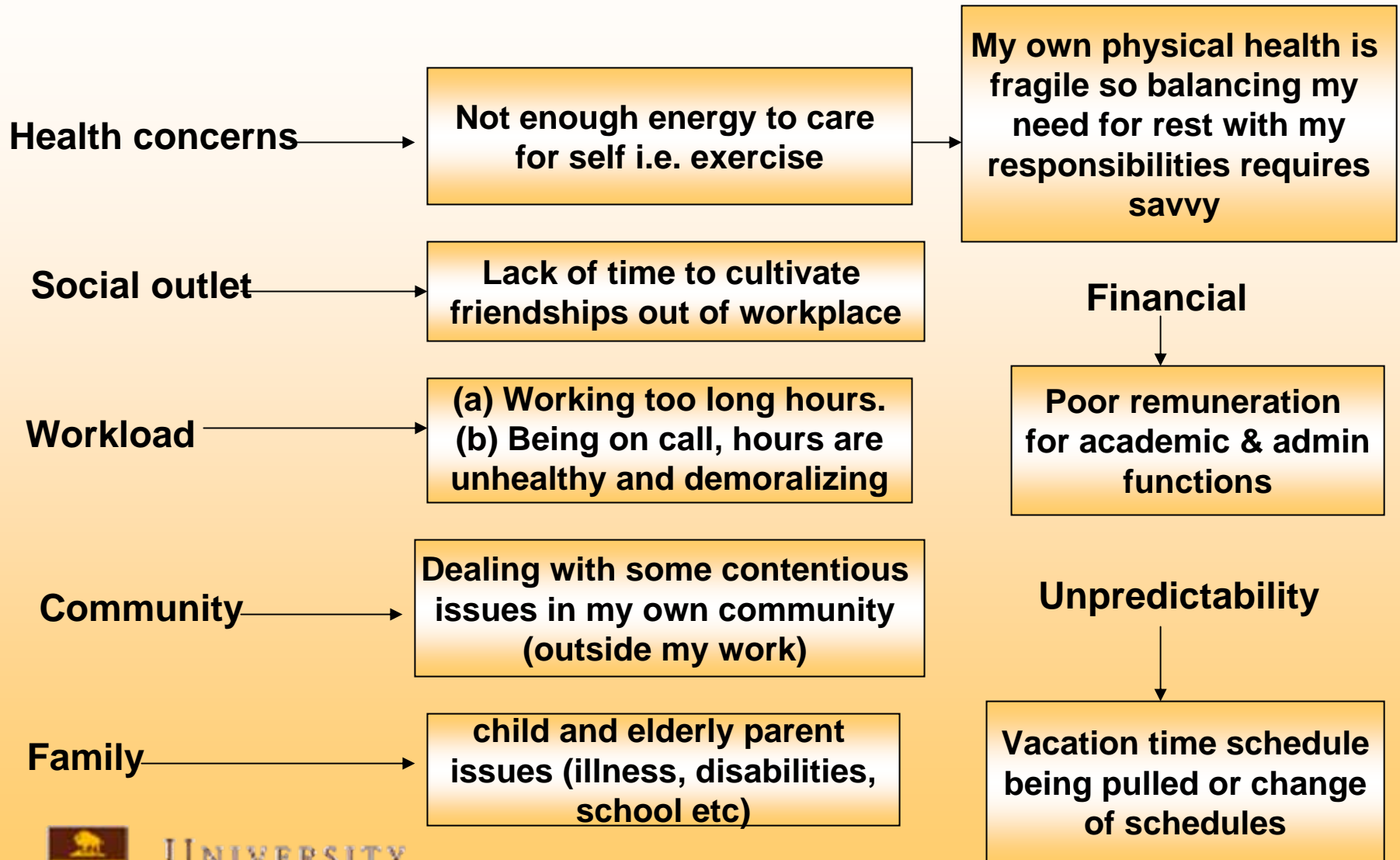
Theme Four: Work/Life Balance responses 127

What causes imbalance?

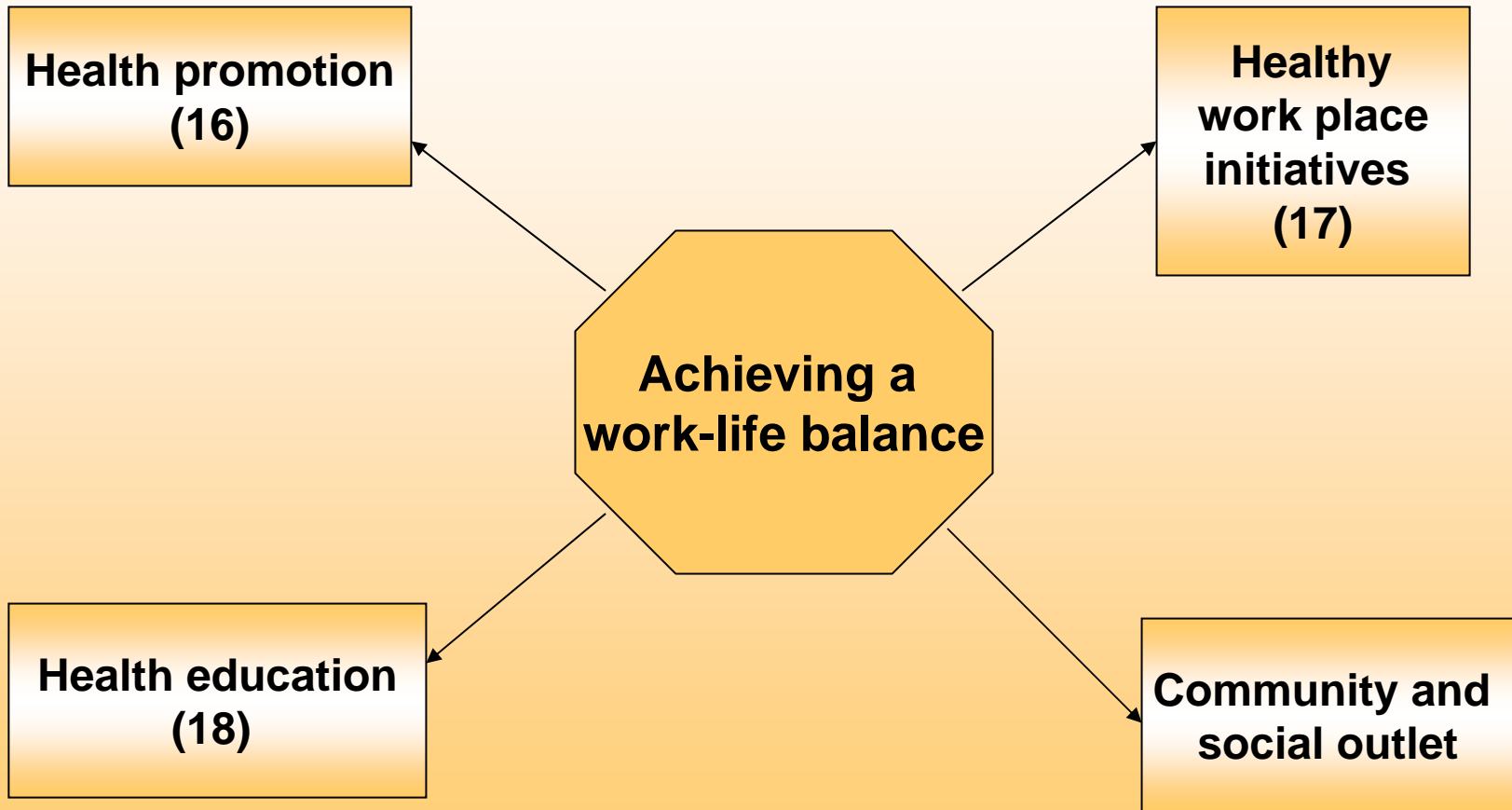


Physician comments

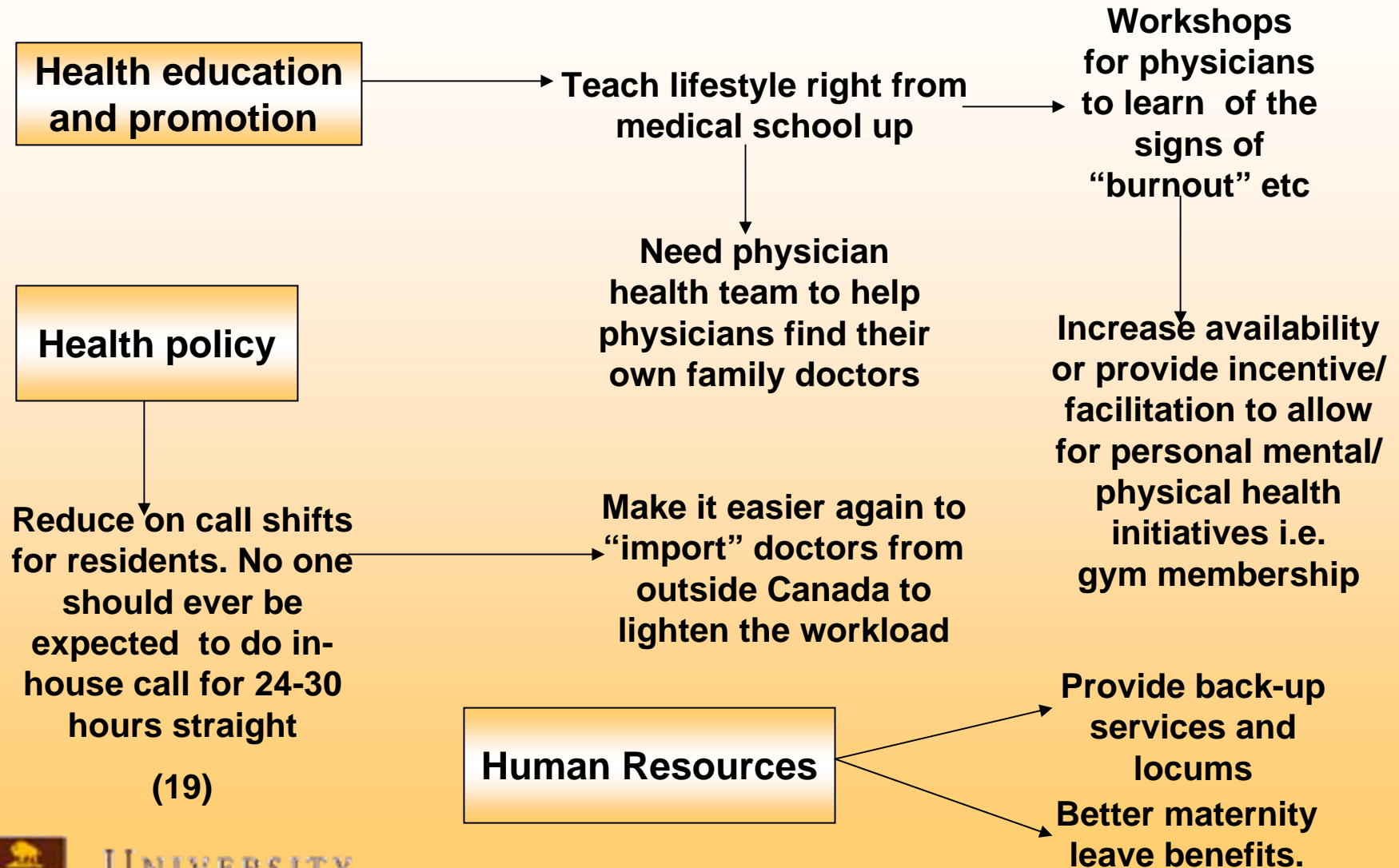
What causes imbalance ?



Ways to restore work/life balance



Implications Work/Life Balance physician comments



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Results from our study will be published throughout 2007 and 2008.



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