Physician Burnout:
Why We Should Care and What We Can Do About It

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• None
What is Burnout?

Burnout is a syndrome of:

- depersonalization
- emotional exhaustion
- low personal accomplishment

leading to decreased effectiveness at work.
Burnout among Practicing Physicians

National Data (Shanafelt et al., Arch Intern Med 2012)

- Burnout: 45.8%
- Emotional exhaustion: 37.9%
- Depersonalization: 29.4%
Burnout by Specialty (National)

- Emergency Medicine
- General Internal Medicine
- Neurology
- Family Medicine
- Otolaryngology
- Orthopedic Surgery
- Anesthesiology
- OB/GYN
- Radiology
- Physical medicine/Rehab
- Average all physicians
- General Surgery
- Internal Medicine Subspecialty
- Ophthalmology
- General Surgery Sub-specialty
- Urology
- Psychiatry
- Neurosurgery
- Pediatric Subspecialty
- Other
- Radiation Oncology
- Pathology
- General Pediatrics
- Dermatology
- Preventative/Occupational Medicine

Consequences of Physician Burnout

- Medical errors\textsuperscript{1-3}
- Impaired professionalism\textsuperscript{5,6}
- Reduced patient satisfaction\textsuperscript{7}
- Staff turnover and reduced hours\textsuperscript{8}
- Depression and suicidal ideation\textsuperscript{9,10}
- Motor vehicle crashes and near-misses\textsuperscript{11}

\textsuperscript{1}JAMA 296:1071, \textsuperscript{2}JAMA 304:1173, \textsuperscript{3}JAMA 302:1294, \textsuperscript{4}Annals IM 136:358, \textsuperscript{5}Annals Surg 251:995, \textsuperscript{6}JAMA 306:952, \textsuperscript{7}Health Psych 12:93, \textsuperscript{8}JACS 212:421, \textsuperscript{9}Annals IM 149:334, \textsuperscript{10}Arch Surg 146:54, \textsuperscript{11}Mayo Clin Proc 2012
Physician Burnout: Key Drivers

- Excessive workload
- Inefficient environment, inadequate support
- Loss autonomy/flexibility
- Problems with work-life integration
- Loss of meaning in work
Intervention Trial

• RCT testing if an established, portable, low-cost curriculum administered during regular work hours can promote meaning and reduce burnout
  – Arm A (Intervention):
    • meet 90 minutes (12:30-2) every other wk (60 mins protected time, ~1% FTE)
    • 9 months
    • Facilitated curriculum, small groups of 6-8 physicians
  – Arm B (Control):
    • Receive 60 minutes every other week for professional/administrative tasks (~1% FTE)
• Outcomes assessed quarterly, 3 months post, 12 months post

West et al., JAMA Intern Med. 2014:174:527-33
Conclusions

• A small amount of protected time during the workday resulted in improved meaning from work and reductions in burnout
  – Effects larger in facilitated small group arm than in “free time” control arm, particularly in promoting meaning and reducing depersonalization.
  – Follow-up study data found sustained benefits at 1 year after the close of the study.

West et al., JAMA Intern Med 2014:174:527-33
Second Intervention Trial

DOM faculty
N=550

Volunteers
N=125

Intervention
N=64

Waitlist Control
N=61

Non-volunteers
N=425

Current Practice
Conclusions

• Compared to the wait-listed control group, the facilitated small group intervention improved:
  – Depersonalization
  – Personal accomplishment
  – Overall QOL
  – Depression
  – Meaning from work
  – Social isolation at work
  – Job satisfaction
  – Likelihood of leaving in next 2 years

• Initial intervention shows benefit with sustained changes over subsequent 6 months.
Individual Strategies

- Identify Values
  - Debunk myth of delayed gratification
  - What matters to you most (integrate values)
  - Integrate personal and professional life

- Optimize meaning in work
  - Flow
  - Choose/focus practice

- Nurture personal wellness activities
  - Calibrate distress level
  - Self-care (exercise, sleep, regular medical care)
  - Relationships (connect w/ colleagues; personal)
  - Religious/spiritual practice
  - Mindfulness
  - Personal interests (hobbies)
What Can Organizations Do?

• Be value oriented
  • Promote values of the medical profession
  • Congruence between values and expectations

• Provide adequate resources (efficiency)
  • Organization and work unit level

• Promote autonomy
  • Flexibility, input, sense control

• Promote work-life integration

• Promote meaning in work
Burnout: Key Drivers

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Thank You!

- Comments/questions
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