
Physician Burnout is Worsening



An update from a three-year study that evaluated burnout and work-life balance reveals that burnout among American physicians is worse today than it was three years earlier. The study was conducted by Mayo Clinic researchers in collaboration with the American Medical Association and the findings appear in Mayo Clinic Proceedings.

“Burnout manifests as emotional exhaustion, loss of meaning in work, and feelings of ineffectiveness,” says Tait Shanafelt, MD. “What we found is that more physicians in almost every specialty are feeling this way and that’s not good for them, their families, the medical profession, or patients.”

Evidence shows that physician burnout eventually leads to poor care, higher turnover and an overall decline in the quality of the healthcare system. When the survey was conducted initially in 2011, 45 percent of physicians met the burnout criteria and the highest rate was observed among physicians in general internal medicine, family medicine and emergency medicine. In 2014, the percentage increased to 54 and the satisfaction with work-life balance also declined.

The update thus shows that there is an overall increase of 10 percent in physician burnout over the last three years. Burnout rates have increased across all specialties although there was no increase in physician work hours or rates of depression.

The researchers point out that the increase in physician burnout is primarily a system issue and there is a need for health care organisations to jointly address this problem. They should take measures to help physicians by improving the efficiency of the work environment, reducing clerical burden on physicians and by providing them greater flexibility and control. There is also a need for research to provide evidence-based interventions that address burnout. They also point out that factors in the practice or work environment need to change since it's no longer sufficient to simply offer self-help solutions.

Source: [Mayo Clinic](#)

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Published on : Thu, 3 Dec 2015