

#EA20: Wellbeing of Healthcare Providers During COVID-19



In a three-part session on burnout and depression of healthcare providers during COVID-19: diagnosis and approach at Euroanaesthesia 2020, Dr. Miodrag Milenovic of University of Belgrade and Clinical Center of Serbia, Emergency Center, talked about the occupational wellbeing in healthcare providers during the pandemic.

Dr. Milenovic highlighted the fact that the field of anaesthesiology is already quite stressful, but now with the COVID-19 pandemic, anaesthesiologists and intensivists are the frontline fighters, striving hard to save patients' lives while putting their own at risk. While healthcare providers are committed to serving patients, no matter what the risk or situation, the uncertainty of it all, lockdowns, social isolation, lack of support, and disruption to regular routines have all resulted in a significant deterioration in the professional wellbeing of anaesthesiologists, intensivists and other healthcare providers.

Dr. Milenovic discussed several factors that are contributing to professional uncertainty. These include the transmission of the virus, risks of intubation, fear of infection and spreading it to families and co-workers, deterioration of patient status, respiratory distress, mechanical ventilation, shortage of PPE, and unavailability of rapid and reliable COVID-19 testing.

### Four Waves of COVID-19 victims

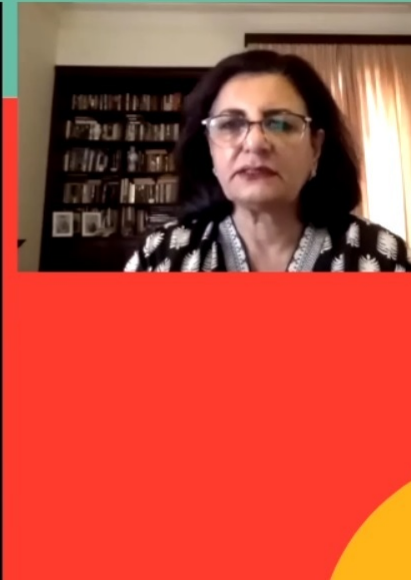
illustration by Victor Tseng, MD. (Victor Tseng @VectorSting)

Duval Neto G, Milenovic M, Onajin-Obembe B, et al. Alert Letter from the WFSA Professional Wellbeing Committee. <https://www.wfsahq.org>

This uncertainty has resulted in higher levels of post-traumatic stress disorder, anger, loss of motivation, insomnia, nightmares, anxiety, and depression. Many healthcare professionals are struggling with the situation and are emotionally drained.

In another talk on healthcare professionals' wellbeing, Prof. Fauzia Khan of the Aga Khan University, Pakistan, discussed strategies that could be implemented to improve wellbeing. These include both individual and organisational strategies. Some examples of self-strategies include regular work breaks, proper rest and sleep, emotional control and acceptance of one's limitations and the limitations of the healthcare systems.

# ADDED STRESSORS DURING COVID 19



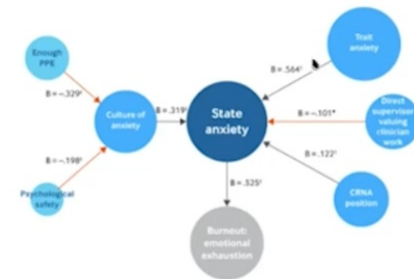
As far as organisational strategies are concerned, Prof. Khan said that institutions should implement stress reduction strategies. They should also provide adequate PPE and should regularly communicate with the employees and be clear and honest with them. It is also important for organisations to enforce proper infection control policies.

Prof. Khan recommended that healthcare institutions should ensure provision of negative pressure rooms and 'should offer both personal and psychological support to their healthcare workers.

In the final talk during this session, Prof. Stuart Brooker discussed burnout prevention strategies during COVID-19.

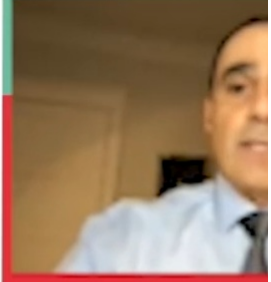
# How has COVID-19 made this worse?

Constellation of Factors Related to Clinician State Anxiety



\*p < .05; \*\*p < .01; \*\*\*p < .001  
 Red lines indicate a negative relationship between the variables.  
 Standardized Beta Coefficients reported. Higher beta coefficient = stronger relationship.  
 Indirect effect for Enough PPE through Culture of Anxiety:  $\beta = -.048$ , 95% CI: .107, -.0206, p < .001  
 Indirect effect for Psychological Safety through Culture of Anxiety:  $\beta = -.043$ , 95% CI: .077, -.0095, p < .013.  
 See full model and confidence intervals in Appendix X.  
 Source: Perelman School of Medicine and The Wharton School, University of Pennsylvania  
 NEM Catalyst (catalyst.nem.org) © Massachusetts Medical Society

Fleisher LA, Sweeney RE, Clapp JT et al. Managing Anxiety in Anesthesiology and Intensive Care Providers during the Covid-19 Pandemic: An Analysis of the Psychosocial Response of a Front-Line Department. *Catalyst.nemj.org* > doi > full > cat.20.0270



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He recommended that institutions and individuals should develop strategies that increase resilience and limit burnout. Healthcare institutions should prioritise the health of their employees and should devote resources to ensure that healthcare workers feel supported.

Source: Live Session #EA20

Image Credit: Live Session #EA20

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