

Resilience in the Time of Covid-19



ECR – European Congress for Radiology – is the gold standard for radiology conferences as proven over many years. Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the 2021 edition is an online event. Resilience in the face of challenge is what the organisers (the ESR) have shown to make this conference possible.

Radiology has always been the *raison d'être* for ECR. Yet, life as we used to know it, has changed forever including how we balance the demands of work and family. This year topics such as resilient organisations, burnout and depression, wellbeing, chronic stress and the impact of the pandemic on daily work practices feature more prominently.

Medical staff are expected to show grit despite an austere situation, but the onus should not be on the individual, according to Diane Sliwka, Chief Physician Experience Officer, UCSF Health, Professor of Medicine, University of California, San Francisco School of Medicine. In her lecture “How to create a resilient organization”, she looked at the organisation’s role in supporting staff.

Most importantly, the organisation has to make sure that employees do not suffer from burnout. As a first step, management could measure wellbeing regularly to gauge how employees are faring. By embedding wellbeing in the organisation, management sends a clear message that they want to create an optimal work experience for everyone.

Creating a resilient organisation depends on resilient employees, who are supported by leadership, noted Prof. Sliwka. Although a complex process, success depends much on communication. Not only should the leadership make wellbeing a priority, but they should also be held accountable to deliver. By encouraging and allowing different units to share problems, front-line problem solving can take place. As new ways of working are inevitable in an unpredictable world, medical staff will be called upon to be more resilient than ever before.

Yet, burnout occurs.

In his lecture “Employee silence and employee voice as well-being factors in building resilient organisations,” Andrew Montgomery, Professor of Work and Organisational Psychology, University of Macedonia, Greece, draws on research to show how employee silence/voice contributes to burnout among healthcare professionals.

If the organisation expects the individual to be more resilient – without providing support – employee silence thrives, which in turn leads to burnout. Magnified by the pandemic, many healthcare employees have been suffering in silence, with dire consequences at work and home.

Prof. Montgomery urged leadership to better connect clinical practice and healthcare professional wellbeing in developing preventive interventions. By becoming familiar with possible interventions at the organisational level, employee silence will decrease, thus leading to more sharing of best practices. He believes that if leadership shows compassion and connects with frontline workers, they would thereby acknowledge the enormous demands imposed upon them.

Source: <https://connect.myesr.org/course/resilient-organisations-the-role-of-the-organisation-in-ensuring-employee-vitality-engagement-and-productivity/>

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