



RCSI

BURNOUT AND STRESS IN INTERNS IN IRISH HOSPITALS

Contributing Factors and Potential Solutions

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Introduction



- ‘Physician burnout’ a well-recognised occurrence
- Transition from medical school to internship often challenging
- High rates of burnout and stress reported
- 48.5% of junior doctors report psychological distress
- Reasons for this are multifactorial
- Can negatively impact both patient care and health of NCHDs

'Burnout'

- Herbert Freudenberg 1974
- Job dissatisfaction precipitated by work-related stress
- *"A state of mental and physical exhaustion related to work or caregiving activities"*
- Triad:
 - Emotional exhaustion
 - Depersonalisation
 - Reduced personal accomplishment



'Stress'

- Challenging to define
- Highly subjective
- Difficult to quantify/measure
- Hans Selye 1936
 - *"The non-specific response of the body to any demand to change"*
- Canadian Mental Health Association
 - *"Harmful physical and emotional responses that can happen when there is a conflict between job demands on the employee and the amount of control an employee has over meeting these demands"*



Aims

1. Quantification of rates of burnout & stress among interns
2. Identification of main contributing factors
3. Proposition of potential solutions

Methods

- Interns identified across 4 hospitals over 2-year period
- Invited to partake in anonymous survey
- Conducted at halfway-point throughout intern year
- Details on background & demographics recorded
- Likert scale
 - Ranking of workplace challenges according to stress induced
 - Ranking of challenges faced in transition from medical school to workplace
- Questionnaire on knowledge and availability of support services

How do we measure burnout?

MBI Questionnaire

TABLE 2: Factor loadings of the initial 20-item burnout scale items ($N = 443$).

Item number	Item	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3
BS_1	I feel weak while at work.	-0.02	0.75	0.05
BS_2	I do not have enough energy to carry out my daily tasks.	0.11	0.71	0.08
BS_3	I do not have the energy to go to work in the morning.	0.08	0.73	0.04
BS_4	I feel exhausted at the end of a working day.	0.04	0.72	-0.04
BS_5	I feel emotionally exhausted at work.	0.10	0.76	-0.03
BS_6	My work makes me feel weary.	0.13	0.43*	0.35*
BS_7	I do not feel like building relationships with my co-workers.	0.00	-0.04	0.84
BS_8	I lack the energy to build relationships with people at work.	0.07	0.05	0.73
BS_9	I feel I am less connected to my work.	-0.03	0.13	0.69
BS_10	I feel frustrated at work.	-0.13	0.37*	0.56*
BS_11	I am unable to imagine the feelings of my co-workers.	0.16	0.08	0.54
BS_12	I am not emotionally affected by how other people at work feel.	-0.03	-0.02	0.66
BS_13	I am not excited about my job.	0.23	-0.23	0.62
BS_14	I do not think clearly while at work.	0.65	0.22	0.08
BS_15	I cannot concentrate while at work.	0.70	0.19	0.06
BS_16	I struggle to process problems quickly.	0.67	0.07	0.07
BS_17	The thought of the work I have to do make me tired.	0.50*	0.34*	0.12
BS_18	I find it difficult to learn new things on my job.	0.81	-0.13	0.07
BS_19	I find it difficult to think about complex things while at work.	0.89	-0.08	-0.05
BS_20	I am not focused while working.	0.65	0.20	-0.02

*, Indicates items that loaded on more than one factor.

How do we measure stress?

GHQ-12

How have you been feeling, in general, over the past few weeks?

Have you recently?

	A	B	C	D
1. Been able to concentrate on what you're doing?	Better than usual	Same as usual	Less than usual	Much less than usual
2. Lost much sleep over worry?	Not at all	No more than usual	Rather more than usual	Much more than usual
3. Felt you were playing a useful part in things?	More so than usual	Same as usual	Less useful than usual	Much less useful
4. Felt capable of making decisions about things?	More so than usual	Same as usual	Less than usual	Much less capable
5. Felt constantly under strain?	Not at all	No more than usual	Rather more than usual	Much more than usual
6. Felt you couldn't overcome your difficulties?	Not at all	No more than usual	Rather more than usual	Much more than usual
7. Been able to enjoy your normal day-to-day activities?	More so than usual	Same as usual	Less than usual	Much less than usual
8. Been able to face up to your problems?	More so than usual	Same as usual	Less than usual	Much less able
9. Been feeling unhappy and depressed?	Not at all	No more than usual	Rather more than usual	Much more than usual
10. Been losing confidence in yourself?	Not at all	No more than usual	Rather more than usual	Much more than usual
11. Been thinking of yourself as a worthless person?	Not at all	No more than usual	Rather more than usual	Much more than usual
12. Been feeling reasonably happy, all things considered?	More so than usual	About same as usual	Less than usual	Much less than usual

Results

Demographics

Total Number of interns	101	
Medical school	RCSI: 59% UCD: 21% TCD: 6% UL: 6%	UCC: 2% NUIG: 0% Other EU: 6% Non-EU: 0%
Hospital	Beaumont: 52% Connolly: 5%	Drogheda: 6% Waterford: 37%
Ethnicity	Irish: 76% EU: 16% Non-EU: 8%	
Age range	20-30yrs: 55% 30-40yrs: 33% 40+yrs: 12%	
Programme	Undergraduate: 55%	Postgraduate: 45%

Challenges Faced in Transition

Challenge faced	% which disagree/strongly disagree
“I feel adequately prepared to work as an NCHD in a hospital environment”	53%
“I successfully manage to balance work with my personal life	53%
“I feel my role as an intern is adequately defined”	71%
“I do not find interactions with other allied healthcare professionals challenging”	24%
“I do not find interactions with senior staff members challenging”	24%
“I feel my practical skills are adequate to work in a hospital environment”	28%
I feel my clinical knowledge is adequate to work in a hospital environment”	47%
“I feel my clinical skills are adequate to work in a hospital environment”	54%
“I feel I have integrated well with my team”	14%

Workplace Challenges

Challenge faced	% who ranked as 4-5 out of 5 on Likert scale
Lack of support	59%
Work overload	67%
Poorly defined role as an intern	69%
Financial worries & overtime pay dispute	72%
Bullying, intimidation & manipulation at work	47%
Future & career uncertainty	43%
Conflict with allied health professionals	45%
Gaining competencies in practical clinical skills	35%
Fear of error leading to patient suffering	19%
Fear of medicolegal consequences	60%
Fatigue & sleep deprivation	56%

MBI Questionnaire

Factors of MBI questionnaire	% ranked as 'high'
Emotional exhaustion	51%
Depersonalisation	49%
Lack of personal accomplishment	41%

GHQ-12

GHQ-12 score	% of interns
>3 (Stressed)	45%
<3 (Not stressed)	55%

Awareness of Support Services

- 84% unaware of or unsure of support services available
- Only 2% have availed of support services
- 35% lack support from senior colleagues
- Only 10% feel their educational needs are adequately met
- **49% expressed intentions to leave Ireland after intern year**

Discussion

- Burnout & stress are a significant problem among interns in Irish hospitals
- May have significant impact on patient care & physician health
- Many contributing factors
 - Multiple challenges faced in transition from medical student to NCHD
 - Many workplace challenges exist
 - Lack of awareness of support services
- Could be a significant contributing factor in loss of Irish graduates to overseas healthcare systems

Potential solutions?

- Increased staff & student awareness of burnout
- Clearly defined roles & sharing of tasks
- Dedicated NCHD teaching & protected educational leave
- Bleep policies
- Work hour regulations
- 'Clock in/out' system
- Mentoring programmes
- Stress-reduction programmes
- Counselling services
- Exercise programmes

- “If all of the knowledge and advice about how to beat burnout could be summed up in one word, that word would be balance—balance between giving and getting, balance between stress and calm, balance between work and home.”

Thank you

Any questions?