

Physician Burnout: Recognition, Prevention, and Management

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Overview

- Overall physician health status
- Physician satisfaction
- Burnout and its causes
- Healthy approaches to stress

Well-Being

- Leading a life that's balanced in body, mind and spirit

Physicians' Health Status

- Overall mortality rates are half that of age-matched general population
- Lower rates are due to decreased rates of cardiovascular disease, lung cancer and other diseases related to smoking

Physician Satisfaction

- Physicians are less satisfied with their work now than 15 years ago
- Predictors of satisfaction
 - Autonomy
 - Ability to manage patient interactions
 - Ability to provide high quality care
- Finding meaning in work is also important

Outcomes Correlated with Low Physician Satisfaction

- Increased turnover
- Worse mental health status
- More burnout
- Riskier prescribing practices
- More dissatisfied patients
- Lower patient adherence

(Williams and Skinner, Health Care Manage Rev 2003;28:119)

Burnout

- Marked by emotional exhaustion, cynicism, depersonalization
- Seems to be increasing among physicians- affects up to 80% of residents

Personal Factors Leading to Burnout

- Family of origin issues
- Personality factors- compulsive traits
 - Doubt
 - Guilt feelings
 - Exaggerated sense of self-importance
- Family stressors- work-home interference
- Psychology of postponement

(Spickard et al, JAMA 2002;288:1447)

Work Factors Leading to Burnout

- Lack of control
- Overwork
- Low job satisfaction- meaning?
- “Dislocation between what people are doing and what they are expected to do”

“ Engrossed late and soon in professional cares you may find, too late, with hearts given way, that there is no place in your habit-stricken souls for those gentler influences which make life worth living.”

William Osler, Address to medical students, 1899

“By midcareer, the momentum of burnout is maintained by the subtle reinforcement of the esteem and recognition of one’s peers for being a hard worker and placing service to others before self-care.”

(Spickard et al, JAMA 2002;288:1447)

Potential Factors Leading to Impairment

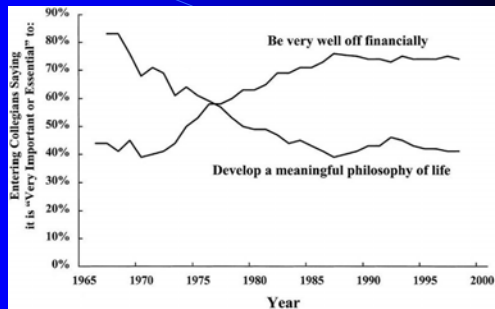
- Personality traits: “If I only work harder, I will be loved”
- Difficulty expressing emotions
- Difficulty seeking and accepting help
- Work stress / harassment
- Family history / family of origin issues
- Depression
- Self-medication

Impaired Physicians

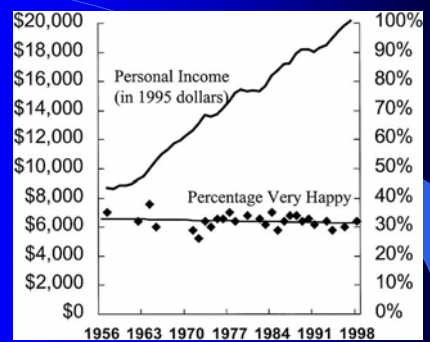
- Often say recovery process is the best thing that ever happened to them

Balance

- The ability of physicians to influence their own happiness through their personal values, choices and mindset
- The need for physicians to have some control over their external work environment
- Finding meaning in our work



(Myers: Am Psychol, Volume 55(1).January 2000.56-67)



(Myers: Am Psychol, Volume 55(1).January 2000.56-67)

“Preferring high income and occupational success and prestige rather than close friends and a good marriage is strongly associated with being unhappy.”

(Shanafelt, et al. Am J Med 2003;114:513)

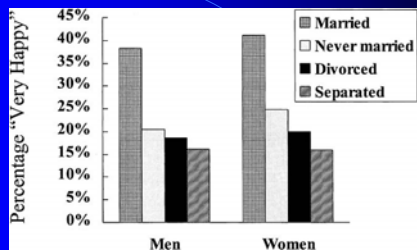
"You got to be careful if you don't know where you're going, because you might not get there. "

- Yogi Berra

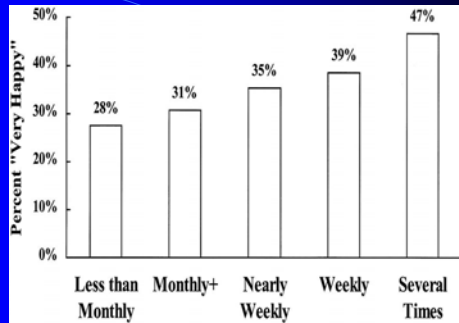
Successful Physician Wellness-Promotion Practices

- Foster relationships
- Religion or spirituality
- Self-care- physical and psychological
- Work- foster meaning and control
- Develop an approach to life

(Weiner, Swain. Western J Med 2001:174:19-23)



Marital Status and Happiness
(Myers: Am Psychol, Volume 55(1), January 2000.56-67)



Church Attendance and Happiness
 (Myers: Am Psychol, Volume 55(1), January 2000, 56-67)

“Approach to Life”

- Need to differentiate between approaches that help us maintain the status quo and those that lead to true insight and personal growth
- It is insight into both what drives us and what sustains us, as well as an understanding of our core values that can lead us to a more balanced life

Determining Core Values

- What are the five most important values or factors in your life today?
- What would you do if you only had six months to live?
- If you could make one change in your life today, what would it be?

Balance

- Implies concordance between the life we live (including work) and our values

“It is okay for doctors to be people- to experience grief, awe- okay not to always know the answer and to live a full and meaningful life, to balance this with the care of your patients.”

UVA medical student