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Title

Burnout, Depression, Anxiety, and Stress Among Family Physicians: 18 Months into the COVID-19 Pandemic

Priority 1 (Research Category)

COVID-19

Presenters

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Abstract

Introduction: Given the significant turmoil during the COVID-19 pandemic, the authors evaluated burnout and other types of emotional distress experienced by family physicians in Kansas during the second year of the pandemic. The authors compared findings of this study to a similar study conducted three months into the pandemic.

Methods: A cross-sectional online survey of 272 actively practicing family physicians in Kansas was conducted from September 15 to October 18, 2021. A 34-item questionnaire was used to measure the physicians' levels of burnout, personal depression, anxiety, and stress. A mixed method approach was used to collect, analyze, and interpret the data. Descriptive statistics, Mann-Whitney U test/independent samples t-test, Chi-square, adjusted odds ratio, and immersion-crystallization methods were used to analyze the data.

Results: The response rate was 48.9% (n=133). In aggregate, 69.2% of respondents reported at least one manifestation of professional burnout in 2021 compared with 50.4% in 2020; $P < .01$). The 2021 respondents were at higher odds of experiencing burnout compared with 2020 respondents (aOR=1.86; 95% CI, 1.00-3.57; $P = .046$). The respondents who reported at least one manifestation of professional burnout were more likely to screen positive for depression (aOR]=1.87; 95% CI, 1.31-2.66; $P < .01$), report higher levels of anxiety (aOR=1.53; 95% CI, 1.04-2.24; $P = .013$), and higher levels of stress (aOR=1.39; 95% CI, 1.17-1.66; $P < .001$).

Conclusion: As the COVID-19 pandemic continues, there are significant and worsening rates of professional burnout and other forms of emotional distress among family physicians. These findings suggest particularly timely need for appropriate psychological supports.