

Other journals in brief

A selection of abstracts of clinically relevant papers from other journals.

The abstracts on this page have been chosen and edited by Reena Wadia

Dental burnout and the influence of social media

Dental burnout: is social media a help or hindrance?

Bain C, Jerome L. *Dent Update* 2017; **44**: 937–946

Dentistry is a highly stressful profession and while social media has the potential to reduce the risk of burnout, it may also lead to increasing pressures on dentists.

Burnout can be described as a 'syndrome of emotional exhaustion and cynicism that occurs frequently among individuals who do 'people-work' of some kind'.¹

A UK-based study of 335 dentists found that a small but significant proportion of the dentists surveyed had scores that indicated burnout on all three of the scales used to measure this construct, and a further 18.5% showed burnout on two of the three scales. Dentists who spent a greater proportion of their time in NHS practice were more likely to have high burnout scores and low work engagement scores. This was also the case for solo practitioners and those with no postgraduate qualifications.²

The positive influences of social media on reducing burnout may include virtual group therapy, ie access to professional Facebook groups, which may provide collegiality for solo practitioners. Posting clinical cases on social media is suggested to show a clear, if unstated, desire to be 'liked'. The author mentions a study that found those with a strong need for social comparison were more susceptible to burnout³ and suggested that those regularly posting cases may largely come from a subset more susceptible to burnout, and less than expected praise might accelerate this process. The author also describes that posting blatant displays of 'success', eg luxury acquisitions, may be subconscious cries for positive recognition. These posts may additionally have the potential to cause major psychological damage to less experienced colleagues.

Other influences on burnout were covered and include the temptation of carrying out complex treatment without rigorous training due to aggressive dental marketing and patient demands. The initiation of a vicious chain of events is described: increasing patient complaints, purchase of an expensive item to 'feel' better, spiralling debts, cutting corners to increase cashflow, increased patients complaints, a letter from the GDC and finally burnout. Lack of training in practice organisation, legal and insurance matters and staff management may also negatively influence chances of burnout. The author suggests the investment involved in training young dentists can only be effective if it includes business and life skills. Prevention and early identification of burnout through the recognition of some of the discussed risk factors and signs/symptoms is essential.

DOI: 10.1038/sj.bdj.2017.1107

- Maslach C, Jackson S E. The measurements of experienced burnout. *J Occup Behav* 1981; **2**: 99–113.
- Denton D A, Newton J T, Bower E J. Occupational burnout and work engagement: a national survey of dentists in the UK. *Br Dent J* 2008; **205**: E13; discussion 283–383.
- Hakanen J J, Bakker AB, Demerouti E. How dentists cope with their job demands and stay engaged. The moderating role of job resources. *Eur J Oral Sci* 2005; **113**: 479–487.

Burnout in dental and dental hygiene students

Burnout, depression and suicidal ideation in dental and dental hygiene students

Deeb GR *et al.* *Eur J Dent Educ* 2017; DOI: 10.1111/eje.12259

Given the relatively high percentage of burnout and suicidal ideation in dental and hygiene students there is a need to target preventive intervention during their training.

In this study, third- and fourth-year dental students and first- and second-year hygiene students completed a Patient Health Questionnaire and an abbreviated Maslach Burnout Inventory as measures of depressive symptoms/suicidality and burnout respectively. Forty percent of the 119 dental students and 38% of the 32 dental hygiene students met the criteria for burnout. No differences were found between years or programmes. Nine percent of all students were above the cut-off for moderate depressive symptoms, with no difference between the years. Six percent of dental and 9% of the dental hygiene students were above the cut-off for clinically significant suicidal ideation, with no statistical differences between programmes. There were no differences noted in the dental students based on gender. Depression was significantly associated with all three subscales of burnout. Suicidal ideation was only significantly related to the lack of personal accomplishment subscale of burnout. The authors recommend the need for preventive measures for such affective states in dental and hygiene training programmes.

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Self-compassion, happiness and well-being

Compassion, mindfulness, and the happiness of healthcare workers

Benzo RP, Kirsch JL, Nelson C. *EXPLORE (NY)* 2017; **13**: 201–206

Self-compassion is meaningfully and independently associated with happiness and well-being in healthcare professionals.

Understanding and increasing happiness in healthcare professionals continues to be an important, yet underrepresented area of research. Self-compassion has gained recent attention due to its positive association with well-being and happiness. Four hundred healthcare workers at a teaching hospital were randomly asked to complete questionnaires, which included the Happiness Scale and Self-Compassion Scale, the Five Facet Mindfulness Questionnaire as well as variables associated with well-being. Self-compassion was significantly and independently associated with perceived happiness, indeed it explained 30% of the variance after adjusting for age, marital status, gender and exercise. Two specific subdomains of self-compassion, coping with isolation and mindfulness, accounted for 95% of the self-compassion effect on happiness. It was concluded that the results might have practical implications by providing specific self-compassion components to be targeted in future programmes aimed at enhancing well-being in healthcare professionals.

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