

Fitting In Time For Myself: Stress/Burnout

By

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Introduction

- Define Stress/Burnout
- Discuss predisposing factors
- Define occupational risk factors
- Review coping strategies

Physician Characteristics

- Compulsive
- Excessive guilt
- Self-Doubt
- Overly responsible
- Doesn't ask for help
- Perfectionist
- Denies feelings
- Need for control
- Doesn't take time off
- Difficulty with trust

Vaillant & Gabbard

Physician Expectations of Self

Myths of “The Good Doctor”

- Long Hours/All Hours - High Achievement
- Tough/Can “handle it”
- Know everything
- Don’t make mistakes
- Self-sacrificing
- Please everyone – Work & Home
- Financial Security

’Physician Heal Thyself’ (Proverb)

Myths Physicians Hold

- Uncertainty or showing emotion = WEAKNESS
- Should always put patient first = Self-denial
- Technical Excellence = Satisfaction
- Immune to illness
- Personal needs aren't important
- Psychology of postponement (JAMA '89)

“Illness doesn't belong to us. It belongs to them...”
(McKevitt '97)

“The fool, with all his other thoughts, has this also: he is always getting ready to live.”

-Epicurus, 341-270 BC

The Normal Physician

- A moderately well-compensated Obsessive-Compulsive neurotic; with a dominant superego, that is conscientiousness-driven and depression-prone.

(Gabbard)





Dr. Jonathan Drummond-Webb, renowned pediatric heart surgeon, commits suicide at the age of 45.

Drummond-Webb worked tirelessly to save his patients: “Some would say he saved 98 out of 100. He looked at it and said, ‘I lost 2 out of 100.’”

Dr Jonathan Bates, CEO, Ark.
Children’s Hospital

Stressors In Our Lives

- Physical
- Psychological
- Family
- Spiritual
- Social
- Occupational

Occupational Stressors

- Specialty choice
- Increased number of patients
- Persistent direct patient contact
- Repetitive single task
- Lack of call coverage
- Time pressure/competing demands

(Cont.)



Occupational Stressors

- Lack of “time outs”
- Lack of support system
- Don’t recognize or share feelings
- Not trained to work with people
- We fix blame vs. time to solve problems
- Indispensable Syndrome

Stressors We Anticipated

- Years of preparation
- Anxiety about knowing enough
- Chronic fatigue
- Intense life/death issues and difficult issues
- Difficult patients/family members

Unanticipated Stressors

- Government
- Third party intrusion
- Amount of paperwork/increasing workload
- Malpractice Crisis/Defensive Medicine
- Loss of control/autonomy
- Difficulty with balancing demands
- Running a cost effective business
- Politics of medicine
- Diminishing reimbursement
- More stressful doctor/patient relationship



Types of Stress

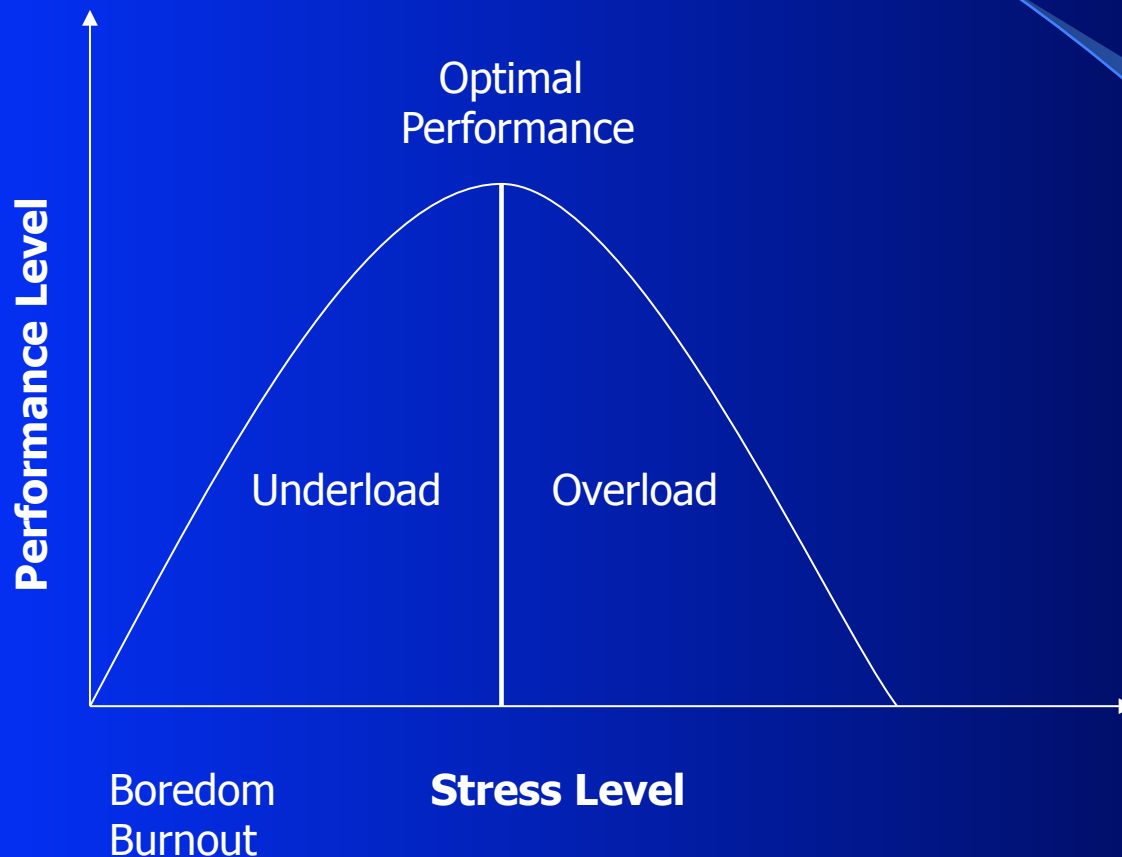
- **Eustress** – Enhances our growth, motivation, and development
- **Distress** – More stress than individual's ability to cope
- **Work Stress** – Increases with mental workload and lack of decision latitude

Weight of Work Stress

The higher the **mental workload** and the lower the **decision latitude**, the more stressful the work.

Gendel

Performance Curve



Underload

Boredom
Apathy
Irritability
Motivation
Accidents
Alcoholism
Absenteeism
Negativity

Optimal Performance

Exhilaration
High Motivation
Mental Alertness
High Energy
Sharp Perception
Calm under Pressure

Overload

Irritability
Alcoholism
Strained Relationships
Poor Judgement
Increased Errors
Indecisiveness
Withdrawal
Loss of Perception
Diminished Memory¹⁷

Burnout

A syndrome of emotional exhaustion, depersonalization and reduced personal accomplishment that can occur among individuals who do people work of some kind



Masklach, PhD

Burnout

- Demands >> >> >> > Exhaustion
- Exhaustion >> >> >> Withdrawal
- Withdrawal >> >> >> Decreased
accomplishment and productivity

J Wynn, MD

How Big Is The Problem?

- 81% - A significant problem
- 67% - Affects my group
- 75% - Affects patient satisfaction
- 43% - Affects me personally

“An Erosion of the Soul”

Maslach '97

Contributors To Burnout

- Workload
- Specialty
- Practice setting
- Types of patients
- Sleep deprivation
- Personality type
- Indispensable
- Coping skills
- Malpractice suit
- Loss of autonomy
- Poor balance/No limits
- Decreased income
- Female gender
- Being a leader

Consequences of Unaddressed Stress/Burnout

- Dissatisfaction with Medicine
- Lack of Joy / Depression
- Alcohol/Substance Abuse
- Relationship distress/affairs
- Emotional/behavioral problems (i.e. Disruptive)
- Inefficient work/Professional problems
- Physician Impairment

(from “Joyless Striving,” Holmes & Raphe)

The Key

- Stress is an integral part of the physician's experience. It is unavoidable. The key is to learn to RECOGNIZE and MANAGE our stress/stressors

That physician will hardly be thought very careful of the health of his patients if he neglects his own.

(Galen 130 – 200 A.D.)



What Can We Do Before it Is Too Late?

- Recognize
- Restore
- Replenish
- Renew

Wynn

Recognize

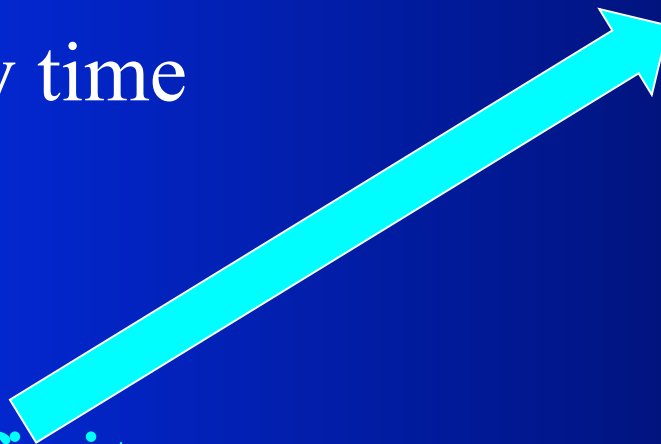
- Emotional reserves
- Connectedness to others
- Engagement in work
- Workload
- Control
- Rewards
- Background
- Family History
- Personality Traits
- Degree of Balance
- Pulse of the marriage
- Substance Use
- Exercise

Restore

- Basics: Eat, sleep, exercise
- Recreation
- Alone time
- Family time
- Hobby time

Baseline

Deficit



Replenish

- Take some time to get above the baseline
 - an hour, an afternoon, a long weekend
- Remember to reconnect with you significant other – intimately, emotionally, and sexually

We do not see things as they are, we see them as we are. – Anais Nin

Renew

- Growth, creativity, something rewarding
- Time for reading, writing, to spend with friends and family
- Determine and manage your priorities
- Seek out and maintain professional balance
- Time to “debrief” with colleagues
- Mindfulness / meditation

Prevention

- Distinguish between wish to excel and unobtainable goal of perfection
- Marriage – Make time to talk regularly
- Get a doctor
- Schedule Balance
- Great lesson/gift of the dying: Cultivate and nurture relationships.

Balance: In Life

- Achieving balance in your life can be a process that takes considerable time and effort --
- You have to make life-long decisions about how you will spend your time--
- What things you'll say “yes” to
- What things deserve a “no”

And then feel good about your answers

Stress Management

- Manage yourself (Self-Care)
- Manage your reaction to stress (Attitude)
- Manage the amount of stress (Workload)
- Acceptance/Spirituality



Managing Ourselves

- Scheduled Balance
- Exercise, Proper Diet
- Don't treat self -- Get a Doctor
- Acknowledge your self-worth
- Build self-worth of others
- Take time to waste time
- Learn communication/conflict resolution
- Nurture important relationships (family/friends)
- Spiritual enrichment



Managing Our Reaction To Stress

- Change self-talk
- Don't over react
- Expect/enjoy the unexpected
- Use “time out”
- Learn relaxation techniques
- Laugh/add fun to your work

Manage The Amount of Stress

- Address major stressors
(Problem-focused or emotion-focused)
- Manage time/get organized
- Define “reasonable”. Take “smaller bites”
- Don’t sweat the small stuff
- Learn to say “NO”
- Set Values – (work, income, time)

Learn the Change Process

Imagine it

Pretend it

Become it

Attitudinal
or
Conceptual
Clarification

Behavioral
Change

Emotional
Change



Join the “Who Moved My Cheese” Group

Acceptance

- My level of serenity is directly proportional to my acceptance and inversely proportional to my expectations.

Big Book of AA

If Stress/Burnout is a Problem For You

- Discuss with close friends/family/a colleague
- Go to workshops on the topic
(International Conf. On Physician Health)
- Hospital Wellness Committees
- Counselor/Coach
- Psychologist/Psychiatrist
- Come to WPHP

Imagine life as a game in which you are juggling five balls in the air. You name them – work, family, health, friends, and spirit – and you're keeping all of these in the air. You will soon understand that work is a rubber ball. If you drop it, it will bounce back. But the other four balls – family, health, friends, and spirit are made of glass. If you drop one of these, they will be irrevocably scuffed, marked, nicked, damaged, or even shattered. They will never be the same. You must understand that and strive for balance in your life.

Brian Dyson, CEO Coca Cola 1959-1994

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