

25% of family physicians experience burnout, according to new JAMA study - June 5, 2017

A [recent study](#) published in JAMA reports that 25% of family physicians in the US experience burnout. The [AMA's Mini Z survey](#) was administered to a representative sample of family physicians (n=1,752) to assess causes and symptoms of burnout. Of physicians reporting burnout (n=441), 91% attributed this to job-related stress, while only 38% of participants who didn't show signs of burnout (n=1,311) endorsed job-related stress ($p<0.001$). Only 35% of physicians experiencing burnout felt they have satisfactory control over their workload vs. 83% of physicians without burnout ($p<0.001$), while only 21% felt they have sufficient time for documentation vs. 61% ($p<0.001$). Interestingly, physicians with burnout symptoms reported spending more time on electronic medical records (EMR) at home vs. those without burnout - 62% vs. 39%, respectively ($p<0.001$). After controlling for other workplace variables, the study concludes that EMR in itself is not an explanation for physician burnout. Rather, added tasks stemming from EMR, including a time-consuming documentation process that often spills over from the clinic to home, show statistically significant correlation to burnout. It seems that the shortcomings of EMR contribute to the time-intensive requirements for documentation, thereby limiting the amount of time that physicians spend in direct contact with their patients. The study suggests that this compression of patient/provider interactions may also play into physician burnout. In a vicious circle, burnout then causes poor physician health/emotional well-being, and leads to worse patient outcomes. Improvements to EMR could thus benefit HCPs and patients alike, and we're eager to see these positive changes to enhance quality of care overall. This is particularly relevant to diabetes care, which requires a complex interplay of drugs and devices as well as coordination between many members of a care team. An EMR that saves time and maximizes each provider's time with the patient is of utmost importance.

-- by Jacqueline Anders, Payal Marathe, and Kelly Close