

III. PEDIATRICS

DOES THE BURNOUT SYNDROME EXIST AT THE PAEDIATRICIANS FROM ARAD? - A PILOT STUDY -

Simona Dumitra, Mihaela Corciu, Sabina Morgovan, Liana Precup, D Lazar

¹Western University “Vasile Goldis”, Arad, Romania

²County Emergency Hospital, Arad, Romania

Abstract

Introduction: Burnout is a psychological term that defines the long term exhaustion and lack of interest, usually in context of work. The paediatric field needs an evaluation of the burnout as it is a medical environment that involves a lot of stress.

Objectives: The aim of this study is to identify the levels of burnout of the paediatric consultants from Arad, using the Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI), created by Cristina Maslach.

Methods: The study involved 13 paediatric consultants, who work in the Paediatric Emergency Unit and in the Paediatric Department of the Clinical Emergency Hospital, Arad. They were asked to submit their answers for the MBI self test. MBI considers burnout to be a multifactorial problem and identifies 3 subscales: emotional exhaustion, depersonalization and lack of personal accomplishment. Each subscale is measured by a different score. The higher the score on emotional exhaustion and depersonalization are, the higher the levels of burnout will be.

Results: The data was introduced in an Excel database and analyzed statistically. A high average was obtained for the emotional exhaustion subscale (30.23) and a moderate one for depersonalization and personal accomplishment subscales (10.37 and 35.84 respectively).

Conclusions:

1. There are high scores for emotional exhaustion, due to the large number of working hours and shifts.
2. There are moderate scores for depersonalization and personal accomplishment, which can be explained through the paediatric profile.
3. Further studies are required to obtain a more realistic view of the problem.

Key words: burnout, exhaustion, depersonalization, personal accomplishment, paediatrician.

Introduction

Burnout is a psychological term for the experience of long-term exhaustion and diminished interest (depersonalization), usually in the context of work. Burnout is often construed as the result of a period of spending too much effort at work while having too little recovery.

The paediatric field demands a quantification of the burnout as it is a medical environment where doctors experience a lot of stress.

Objectives

The aim of this study is to identify the emotional exhaustion, depersonalization and personal accomplishment scores of the paediatric consultants from Arad, using the Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI), created by Cristina Maslach.

Method

13 paediatric doctors submitted their answers for the MBI self test. All of them work as paediatric consultants, having from 15 to 25 years of medical experience in this field, working from 46 to 72 hours per week and with an average of the monthly shifts ranging from 3 to 7.

4 of them work in the Emergency Paediatric Unit while the others work in the Paediatric Department of the Clinical Emergency Hospital, Arad, and have, also, private cabinets.

MBI identifies the most essential subscales:

- emotional exhaustion
- depersonalization
- lack of personal accomplishment.

Each subscale is measured by a different score.

A high degree of burnout is shown by high scores of emotional exhaustion and depersonalization

subscales, and by low scores of personal accomplishment (lack of) subscale.

An average degree of burnout is reflected in average scores on the three subscales.

A low degree is shown by low scores of emotional exhaustion and depersonalization and by high scores of personal accomplishment subscales. (1, 2 ,3, 5).

The higher the score on emotional exhaustion and depersonalization, the higher the levels of burnout. Moreover, the lack of personal accomplishment scale measures in the opposite directions, the lower the scale, the higher the level of burnout (7).

The scores are analyzed according to the MBI standard, after more then 11.000 persons answered this questionnaire.

MBI	Low	Average	High
Emotional exhaustion	<16	17-26	>27
Depersonalization	<6	7-12	>13
Personal accomplishment	>39	38-32	<31

BURNOUT SELF-TEST by Cristina Maslach

It helps you look at the way you feel about your job and your experiences at work, so that you can get a feel for whether you might be at risk of burnout.

On a scale of 0 (never) to 6 (every day), state how often you feel that the following statements apply to you:

- 0- never
- 1- a few times a year or less
- 2- once a month or less
- 3- a few times a month
- 4- once a week
- 5- a few times a week
- 6- every day

Emotional exhaustion score

1. I feel emotionally drained from my work.
2. I feel used up at the end of the day.
3. I feel fatigued when I get up in the morning and I have to face another day on the job.
4. Working with people all day is a strain for me.
5. I feel burn-out from my work.
6. I feel frustrated from my job.
7. I feel I'm working too hard on my job.
8. Working with people directly puts too much stress on me.
9. I feel like I'm at the end of my rope.

Depersonalization score

10. I feel I treat some people in an impersonal manner.
11. I've become more callous toward people since I took this job.
12. I worry that this job is hardening me.
13. I don't really care what happens with some people I encounter at work.
14. I feel others at work blame me for some of their problems.

Personal accomplishment score

16. I can easily understand how people I work with feel about things.
17. I deal very effectively with problems people bring me at work.
18. I feel I'm making a difference in other people's lives through my work.
19. I feel very energetic.
20. I can easily create a relaxed atmosphere with people at work.
21. I feel exhilarated after working with people closely on my job.
22. I have accomplished many worthwhile things in this job.
23. In my work, I deal with emotional problems very calmly.

Results and discussion

The data was introduced in an Excel database and analyzed statistically. The following results were obtained for the paediatric doctors from Arad.

Table nr.1 - The obtained scores.

MBI	Low	Average	High
Emotional exhaustion	<16	17-26	>27 30.23
Depersonalization	<6	7-12 10.37	>13
Personal accomplishment	>39	32-38 35.84	<31

A high average can be noticed for the emotional exhaustion subscale (30.23), and a moderate for depersonalization and personal accomplishment subscales (10.37 and 35.84 respectively) (fig. 1).

The results were compared with the superior limit of the highest MBI scores admitted (fig. 2).

In comparison with a study performed on oncologists in Turkey, the results show higher scores for emotional exhaustion and depersonalization, but lower for personal accomplishment (fig.3).

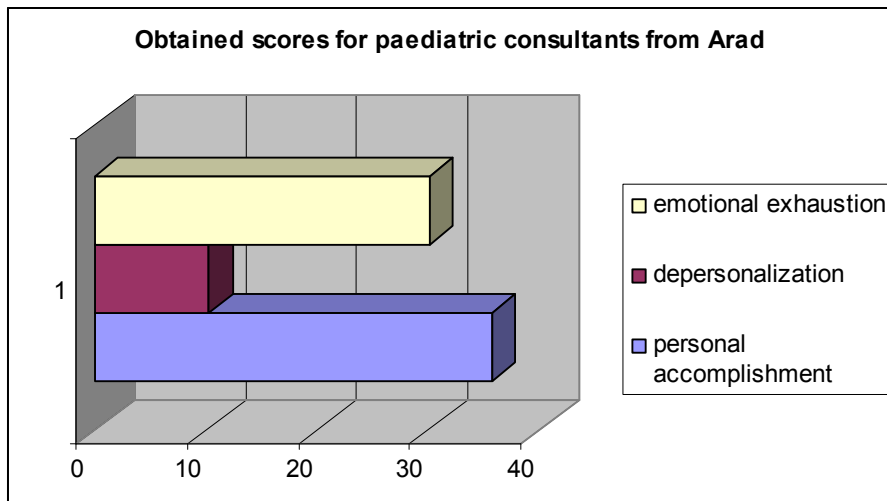


Figure 1. Obtained scores.

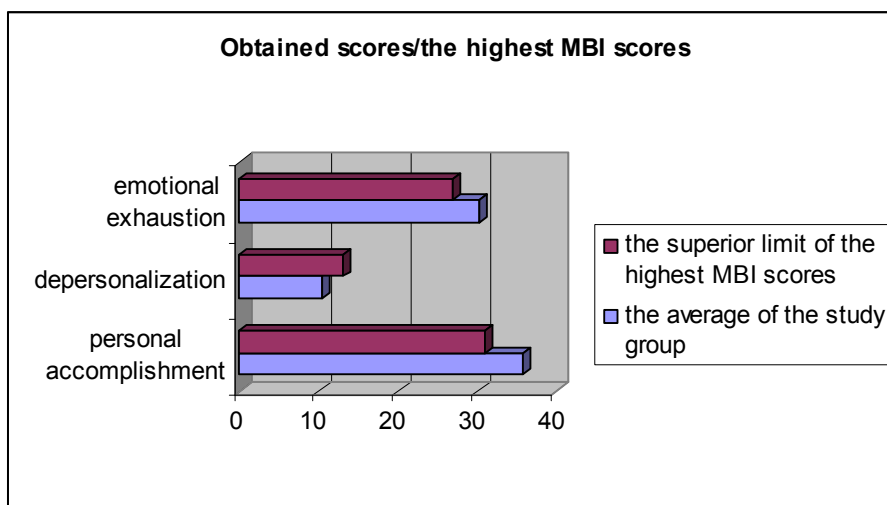


Figure 2. Comparing the obtained scores with the superior limit of the MBI scores.

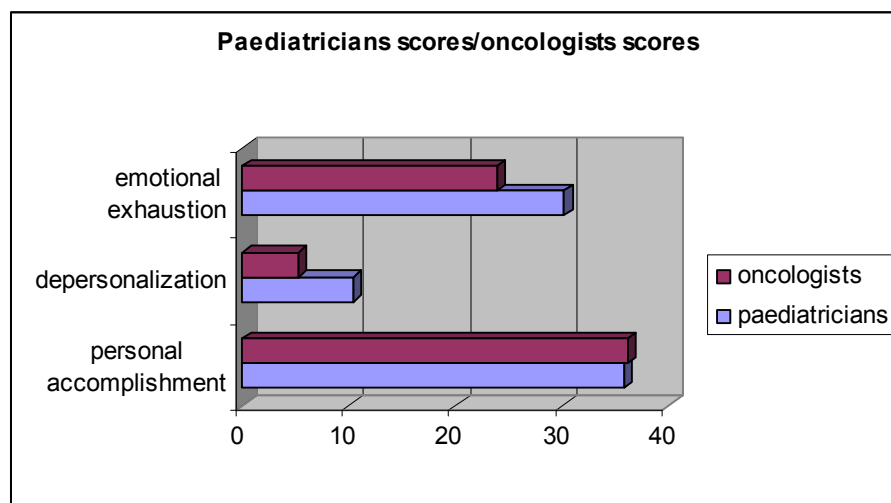


Figure 3. Comparing paediatricians scores / oncologists scores.

Conclusions

1. There are high scores for emotional exhaustion, due to the large number of working hours and shifts.

2. There are moderate scores for depersonalization and personal accomplishment, which can be explained through the paediatric profile.

3. Further studies are required to obtain a more realistic view of the problem.

References

1. Armstrong J, Lederberg M, Holland J. Fellows' forum: A workshop on the stresses of being an oncologist. *J Cancer Educ.* 2004; 19:88-90.
2. Armstrong J, Holland J. Surviving the stresses of clinical oncology by improving communication. *Oncology (Williston Park).* 2004; 18:363-368, 373-375.
3. Holland JM, Neimeyer RA. Reducing the risk of burnout in end-of-life care settings: The role of daily spiritual experiences and training. *Palliat Support Care.* 2005; 3:173-181.
4. Holland JC. Management of grief and loss: Medicine's obligation and challenge. *J Am Med Womens Assoc.* 2002; 57:95-96.
5. Kash KM, Holland JC, Breitbart W, et al. Stress and burnout in oncology. *Oncology (Williston Park).* 2000; 14:1621-1633, 1633-1634, 1636-1637.
6. Maslach C., Schaufeli W - Historical and conceptual development of burnout.
7. Professional burnout: Recent developments in theory and research. Ed. by Schaufeli W., Maslach C. Marek T. New-York, Taylor and Francis 1993.
8. ***31st Congress of the European Society of Medical Oncology (ESMO). "Burnout is an important issue for oncology employees," lead author Senem Dubova, MD, from Ege University Medical School, in Bornova-Izmir, Turkey.

Correspondence to:

Simona Dumitra
 Spitalului Street, No. 2-3,
 Arad,
 Romania
 Tel: +40-740013028
 E-mail: dumitrasimona@yahoo.com