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Residents' burnout in COVID 19 pandemic environment

L'épuisement des résidents en contexte de pandémie de la COVID 19

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Introduction

Burnout is a prevalent problem among medical professionals affecting anywhere from 17% to 75% of individuals.¹⁻³ Residents are especially vulnerable due to factors including: long work hours, inexperience, and geographical relocation.⁴⁻⁷ Residents are on front line of patient care delivery especially during the COVID 19 pandemic. Burnout as a concept includes aspects of emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and declining work satisfaction.

This study attempts to capture residents' experiences of burnout within the current COVID pandemic. Previous research showed burnout rates as moderate, and we expect those on the front lines to be much higher than the last time we surveyed them. The objective of the study is to use quantitative and qualitative methods to explore the association of burnout during the COVID 19 pandemic, across a wide variety of residency programs at one institution.

Methods

Participants included residents and fellows who were training in one of the 20 programs at the Medical College of Georgia (MCG) at Augusta University. The study employed an explanatory sequential design in which quantitative data is followed by qualitative data for interpretive purposes. The 22-item Maslach Burnout Inventory has been used extensively in research concerning burnout.⁸ Questionnaires that measure burnout along with demographic and practice information will be sent to all MCG residents (up to 500 residents) via Qualtrics. The

survey respondents will also be invited to participate in a thirty minute one on one interview in which they will be asked to share their experience of burnout during this pandemic (up to 20 residents). Individual semi-structured interviews will include questions exploring resident perspectives on burnout in general and mitigating/exacerbating factors during the COVID 19 pandemic.

The researchers have taken a pragmatic approach in the process of data collection and analysis, which accepts philosophically that there are singular and multiple realities that can best be measured and observed using a combination of mixed methods research. All statistical analysis will be performed using SAS 9.4 and statistical significance will be assessed using an alpha level of 0.05. Data will be analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics. The interviews' data will be transcribed, checked the accuracy using direct content analysis, and then an inductive analysis to understand residents' experiences on burnout during pandemic.

The study is approved by the Augusta University Institutional Review Board.

Summary

This study is first step to document and understand effect of residents' practicing in pandemic environment on their burnout. This will lead to developing recommendation to residency program directors to prepare and retain the well-being of physicians in training.

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