



Mental Health Among Health Workers

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and presented at the
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October 10
is
World Mental Health Day

Mental Health For All

എല്ലാവർക്കും പ്രാപ്യമായ മാനസികാരോഗ്യം

Theme for 2020

Mental health remains neglected **even now !**

- **Stigma**
- **Lack of awareness**
- **Lack of facilities**

Mental health remains neglected **even among doctors !**

Mental Health for ALL

Mental Health is important for
DOCTORS also !!

Unfortunately we tend to consider it
a problem of **THEM** (Others, General
Public etc) only

Unique Mental Health Challenges faced by Health Care Workers

- Burn out and Stress
- Depression and Suicide
- Covid 19 related

Burn Out

- Burn out / Work overload is an established and unique mental health challenge among doctors.
- Present in up to 70% of doctors !!!
- This just means **most of us** have work overload or face burn out, either knowingly or unknowingly.
- More common in public sector.

WHO recently declared burnout as a “occupational phenomenon” in the International Classification of Diseases 11th revision (ICD-11), recognizing **burnout** as a serious health issue.

Doctors experiencing burnout are at a higher risk of making poor decisions; display hostile attitude toward patients; make medical errors; and have difficult relationships with co-workers.

Burnout among doctors also increases risk of depression; anxiety; sleep disturbances; fatigue; alcohol and drug misuse; marital dysfunction; premature retirement and perhaps most seriously suicide.

*“Physicians in many countries are experiencing **great frustration** in practicing their profession, whether because of **limited resources**, government and/or corporate micro-management of health care delivery, **sensationalist media reports** of medical errors and unethical physician conduct, or challenges to their authority and skills by patients and other health care providers”*

WHO Medical Ethics Manual – 2nd Ed

Burnout may be conceptualized as a three-dimensional construct consisting of Emotional Exhaustion, Depersonalization and reduced Personal Accomplishment.

1. Emotional Exhaustion - Tiredness, Somatic Symptoms
2. Depersonalization - Impersonal feeling towards patients & considering them as objects
3. Reduced Personal Accomplishment - Feeling of inefficiency

All these can hamper personal and professional life.

Burn out has a varying prevalence among specialties

In the Medscape survey, quoted by AMA in Jan 2020, the highest percentage of physician burnout occurred among these medical specialties:

Urology: 54%. Neurology: 50%. Nephrology: 49%. Family medicine: 46%. Radiology: 46%.

The lowest rates of burnout were reported by physicians in these medical specialties:

SPM: 29%. Ophthalmology: 30%. Orthopedics: 34%. Psychiatry: 35%. ENT: 35%.

In addition to patient load, various other factors can contribute to **burn out**.

- Too much emphasis on buerocratic works - Charting, Records
- Emphasis on profits over patients
- Lack of respect from patients
- Lack of respect from administrators / employers
- Insufficient compensation
- Lack of autonomy

How to tackle Stress and **Burn Out** ?

“ And on the seventh day God ended his work which he had made; and he rested on the seventh day from all his work which he had made.

Genesis 2:2, King James Bible

”

Welcome to the concept of **Work – Life balance**

Following the industrial revolution, industrialists and unions alike agreed that workers needed a day off. This later became a two-day 'weekend'.

But in those days, 'work' was mostly manual, and once workers left the site, they also left their work behind.

They were genuinely able to rest, away from work, without having to think about it or worry about what might be going on in their absence.

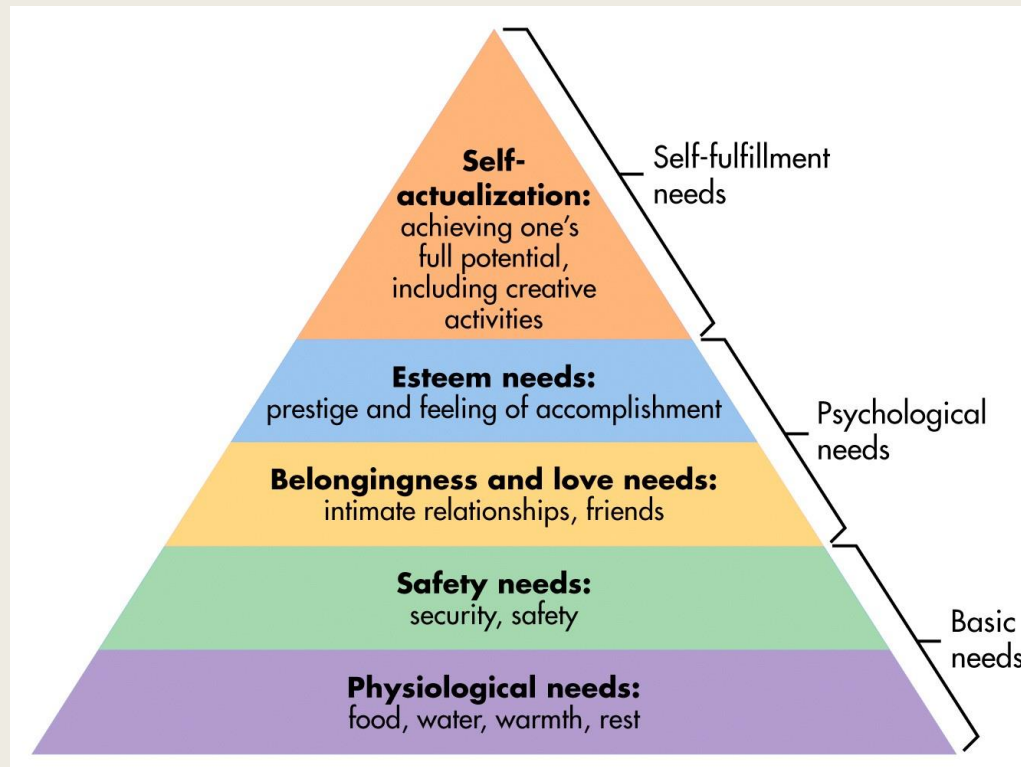
The phrase 'work-life balance' is rather more recent in origin.

It has, however, taken on a new meaning with the recent technological changes that have made it possible for workers to stay in touch 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

Smart phones, remote working technology and the like have meant that, even on holiday, people find it hard to 'switch off' and genuinely rest.

People are expected to be 'on-call' at all times, without being allowed to have a life outside work.

Why do we work ? What are our **real** needs ?



How to achieve a **work - life balance** ?

No universal answer

You should be a doctor only in the hospital !!!

Be assertive when required -

- ✓ Say **NO** to those patients who turn late for their appointment
- ✓ Say **NO** to that hospital manager / administrator pushing you to take extra duties

Should not be mistaken for being professionally lazy

Understand that your family and friends need you

Understand that you are easily replaceable professionally, but not in personal life

An ideal Work - Life pattern should have space and time for the following aspects, atleast

- Exercise
- Hobbies, Passion
- Friends
- Family

Depression and Suicide

One interesting finding about **depression** in doctors is that many of the risk factors associated with depression in the general population are not applicable to them. Such risk factors include low socio-economic status, low education, unemployment, and being female.

As per a study conducted at the PGI, Chandigarh and published in IJP in 2018, 30% of doctors are depressed and about 17% had thought about ending their lives.

This is **ALARMING !**

One doctor commits **suicide** in the U.S. every day - the highest suicide rate of any profession.

Anderson, P. (2020). Doctors' Suicide Rate Highest of Any Profession. Retrieved 10 October 2020, from <https://www.webmd.com/mental-health/news/20180508/doctors-suicide-rate-highest-of-any-profession>

After six doctors in AIIMS checked into the psychiatric ward for treatment in March 2018, the IMA stated that suicide among physicians was a “public health crisis” to be “tackled before it was too late”.

<https://www.thehindu.com/news/cities/Delhi/suicide-among-doctors-a-public-health-crisis-says-ima/article23396037.ece>

What can be done ?

- At association / society level :
 - ✓ push for change in policies
- At personal level :
 - ✓ maintain good work - life balance
 - ✓ get help when required

Covid 19 and Mental Health



Doctors and nurses do not have the luxury of holding themselves up in their homes to protect themselves from the outbreak.

They must get up every day and go to work knowing very well that they must expose themselves to risk.

A lot of them have voluntarily separated themselves from their families to keep them safe.

As per Health Ministry officials, the healthcare workers (HCWs) at the frontline have become particularly vulnerable to mental stress.

Worried about risk of infection to themselves and their families, adequacy of protection, long working hours, being in quarantine/isolation, and separation from families can lead to severe psychological distress among health professionals.

If not effectively recognised and treated, such stress can transform into more persistent illnesses, even leading to suicidal thoughts and feelings.

Again, what can be done ?

Again, it's the same :

Try to maintain a proper **Work - Life balance**,

AND

get help when needed.

Seeking professional psychiatric help should
not be considered a shame.



HOMAGE

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