

Gender-based Burnout Issues: The Physician Experience

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Learning Objectives

- Define burnout and discuss its importance in medicine
- Discuss factors that increase the risk of burnout
- Discuss gender related burnout issues
- Review strategies to mitigate burnout

What is Burnout?

- Emotional exhaustion
- Depersonalization or cynicism
- Diminished personal efficacy or accomplishment

Why is Burnout Important?

- Ubiquitous across professions
- More common in healthcare
- Physician burnout affects individual clinicians, their family, and their patients

Factors That Lead to Physician Burnout

Work Related Stressors

- Administrative burden
- Workload
- Perceived lack of autonomy and control
- Lack of organizational support

Individual Factors

- Imposter syndrome
- Depression and anxiety
- Neuroticism
- Age

Factors That are More Likely Lead to Burnout in Women

- Bias and discrimination
- Sexual harassment
- Work life integration
- Gender specific work expectations
- Lack of parity

How is Burnout Different for Women?

- Women are more likely to experience emotion exhaustion
- Does gender play an independent role in burnout?
- Women who experience burnout are more at risk for increased alcohol intake

Burnout in Women in Academic Medicine

- Fewer women physicians enter academia
- Women report higher rates of burnout
- Rates of burnout for women in academia vs private practice

Factors Leading to Burnout in Women in Academia

- Similar issues as women physicians in general
- Lack of access to leadership positions
- Difficulties achieving promotion and tenure
- Lack of mentorship and sponsorship

Effect of COVID-19 on Burnout

- Increased burnout in front line specialties
- Increased burnout in Ob-Gyn and Pediatrics
- Not specifically related to care of COVID patients

What Can We Do About Burnout?

Individuals

- Self-care
- Learning when and how to say no
- Advocate for yourself
- Get help when you need it

Organizational Level Interventions

- Level the playing field for women
- Work to eliminate gender discrimination and harassment
- Develop a supportive work environment
- Education about gender bias

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