Burnout and Job Satisfaction among Dental Undergraduates and Faculty

By Dr. Shatha Subhi ALHarthi1 & Monika M. Wahi, MPH, CPH2

1Department of Periodontology, College of Dentistry, Princess Nourah Bint Abdulrahman University, Riyadh, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia
2General Education Department, Laboure College, Milton, Massachusetts, United States of America

Abstract

Aim: To measure the level of burnout and job satisfaction experienced by dental students and faculty at Princess Nourah Bint Abdulrahman University College of Dentistry (PNU), and to examine if there is an association between burnout and job satisfaction.

Methods: The Maslach Burnout Inventory Human Services Survey (MBI-HSS) was used to measure burnout, and the Dentist Satisfaction Survey (DSS) was used to measure job satisfaction. Full-time faculty and fourth- and fifth-year dental students completed the MBI and DSS online. T-test comparisons were performed, and the emotional exhaustion (EE) subscore from the MBI and the overall DSS score were correlated.

Results: The survey was sent to 65 students and 37 full-time faculty. A total of 31 and 17 faculty surveys were available for analysis (response rate 48% and 46%, respectively). The mean EE was 19.24 for faculty and 28.45 for students, both indicating moderate burnout (p<0.0000). The mean overall DSS score was 3.35 for faculty and 3.03 for students, indicating “neutral” job satisfaction (neither satisfied nor dissatisfied, p=0.0043). EE was significantly negatively correlated with DSS (r=-0.73, p=0.0001).

Conclusion: Students and faculty at PNU are moderately burned out. Burnout is significantly negatively associated with job satisfaction.

Introduction

"Burnout describes a process beginning with high and sustained levels of stress resulting in feelings of irritability, fatigue, detachment and cynicism" (1).

Burnout has been documented in dentists.

• One study of dentists found that on average, dentists were moderately burned out on two of the three subscales (2, 3).
• Another study of dentists found the frequency of exhaustion, depersonalization, and intensity of feeling being unsuccessful was 21.1%, 81.6%, and 100%, respectively (4).
• A study of dentists in Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA), and found that over a fourth of general dentists were suffering from high levels of emotional exhaustion (5).

Burnout has been shown in dental trainees as well.

• A systematic review of studies of stress in dental students found that they experience considerable amounts of stress, mainly due to the demanding nature of the training, and the results of the studies suggest that there are adverse effects of elevated stress on students' health and environment (6).
• A 2014 study in Spain found that 43.1% of second-year students were burned out and 50.9% of fourth-year students were burned out, but only 25.6% of fifth-year students are burned out (7).
• A German study also found that dental students were on average moderately burned out (8).

Burnout reduces a healthcare provider’s commitment to his or her organization, and can increase his or her intention to leave the job (9).

Mean overall job satisfaction in a Korean dentist study was only 3.2 out of 5, and patient relations, perception of income, personal time, staff, and specialty training, which can influence burnout, were important work environment factors influencing job satisfaction (10).

A similar result was found in a study of Egyptian dentists, where mean job satisfaction was 3.24 out of 5 (11), and in Saudi dental assistants, where the mean job satisfaction was 3.86 out of 5 (12).

Evidence to support the concept of undergraduate or graduate level dentists actually having a “job” and therefore being able to have “job satisfaction” could be seen by reading into the results of a study on postgraduate dentists who essentially were experiencing the same high level of stress as career dentists (13).

Methods

• Students and faculty at PNU were sent an online, anonymous questionnaire asking questions from the MBI (to measure burnout) and the Dentist Satisfaction Survey (DSS), to measure job satisfaction.
• The MBI has three subscales: Emotional Exhaustion (EE), Depersonalization (DP), and Personal Achievement (PA). See Table 1 for scoring rules.
• The DSS has an overall score and seven subscales (see Table 2). These are all scored the same way.

Results

• The survey was sent to 65 students and 37 full-time faculty. A total of 31 and 17 faculty surveys were available for analysis (response rate 48% and 49%, respectively).

Table 3. Student Demographics

Table 4. Faculty Demographics

Table 5. Burnout and Job Satisfaction

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Conclusions

• Both students and faculty at PNU are at least moderately burned out, and students may have a higher risk of burnout.
• Both students and faculty have similar neutral job satisfaction, but are dissatisfied with the amount of personal time they have, and are satisfied with their patient relations and delivery of care.
• Allowing students and faculty more personal time may improve both burnout and job satisfaction levels.
• One possibility is limiting student workdays to up to 4 hours per day, and limiting faculty workdays to up to 8 hours per day.

References