
Self-care and burnout

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Resilience and Mindfulness Program for Physicians

Bringing Intention, Attention and Reflection to
Clinical Practice



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Program for Integrative
Medicine and Health Care
Disparities



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What is burnout?

- Emotional exhaustion
 - Emotionally overextended and exhausted by work
- Depersonalization
 - Negative, cynical attitude, treating patients as objects
- Sense of low personal accomplishment
 - Feelings of incompetence, inefficiency & inadequacy



Measuring burnout

2 Item measure from Maslach Burnout Inventory:

- “I feel burned out from my work”
- “I have become more callous toward people since I took this job”

(Likelihood ratios high w/ “once a week” or more)

Prevalence

- 25% - 60% of practicing physicians (several)
- 76% of internal medicine residents (Shanafelt 2003)
- 45% of 3rd year students (Dyrbye 2006)

From: **Burnout and Satisfaction With Work-Life Balance Among US Physicians Relative to the General US Population**

Arch Intern Med. 2012;172(18):1377-1385. doi:10.1001/archinternmed.2012.3199

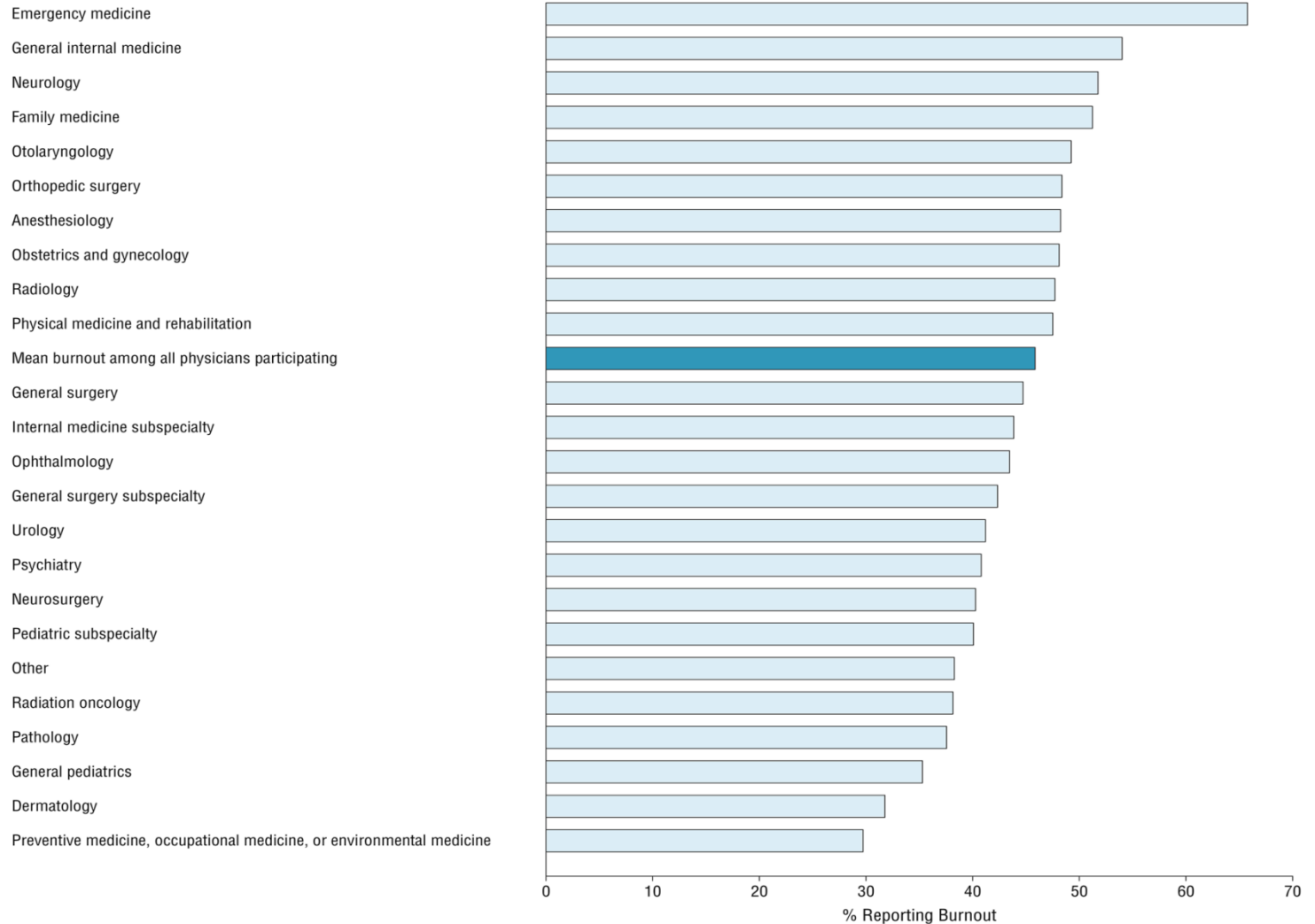


Figure Legend:

Figure 1. Burnout by specialty.

From: **Burnout and Satisfaction With Work-Life Balance Among US Physicians Relative to the General US Population**

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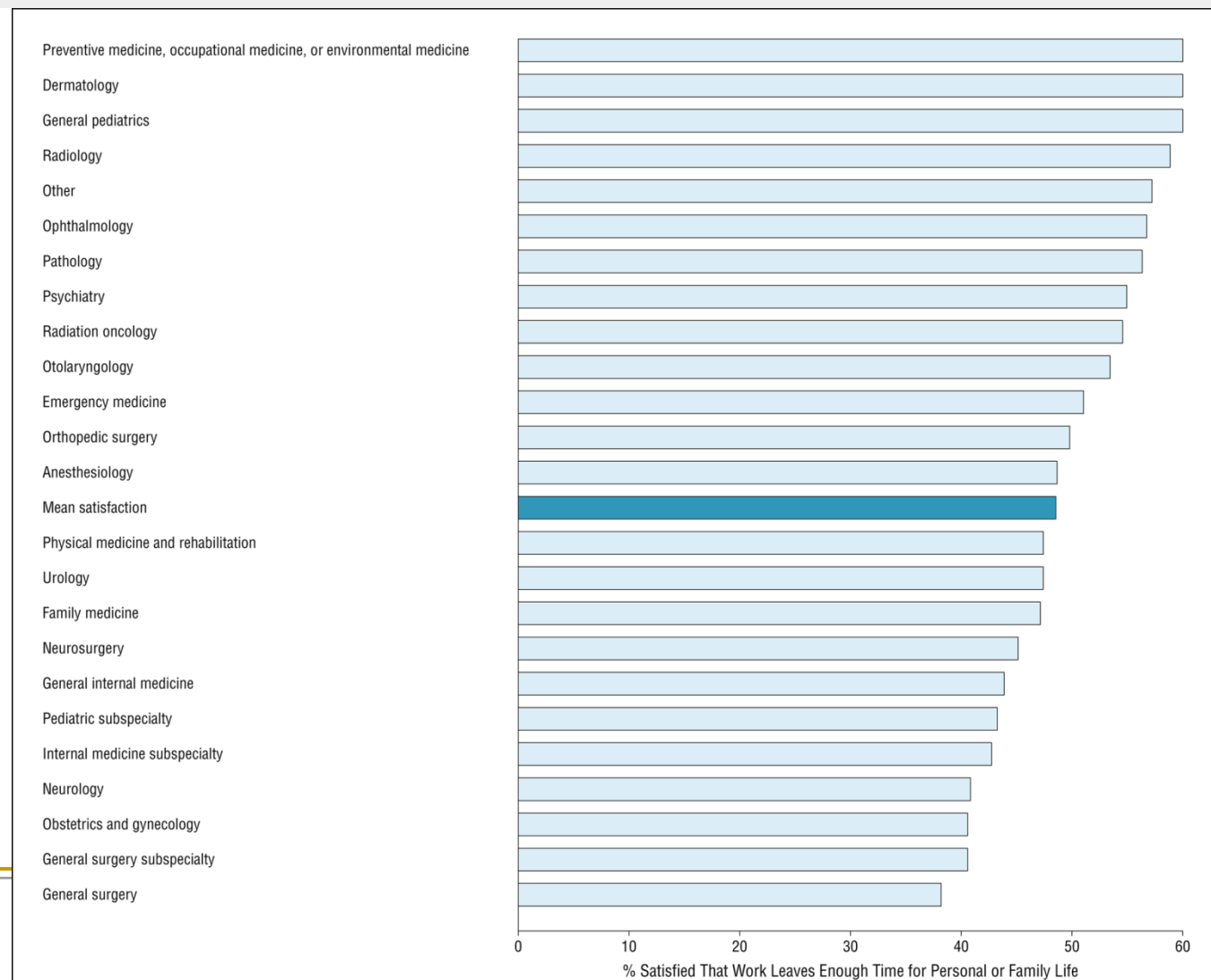


Figure Legend:

Figure 2. Satisfaction with work-life balance by specialty.

Causes of burnout

- Overwork
- Sleep deprivation
- Low control / high responsibility
- Inadequate support
- Lack of self-awareness
- Imbalance between personal and professional life

Source: Shanafelt TD et al. 2003



What personality characteristics
make an exemplary physician
(or med student or resident)?



Psychological strengths of physicians

- Thoroughness
- Commitment
- Perfectionism
- Healthy skepticism
- Altruism, stoicism, hard work
- Caring
- Rationality
- Self-criticism

Psychological vulnerabilities of physicians

- Over-compulsiveness
- Over-commitment
- Inability to admit mistakes
- Need for certainty
- Neglecting self-care and family
- Compassion fatigue
- Emotional distance
- Self-deprecation

Delayed Gratification

“Professional demands within medicine, especially during the training years, often appear more urgent and powerful than do personal or family needs. Physicians who sacrifice their personal lives during training believe they will reap the rewards of a balanced life after graduation. Unfortunately, without skills to clarify and prioritize values or to develop a personal philosophy that integrates professional, personal and spiritual domains, such balance does not easily occur.”

Narrative Writing Exercise

Take about 5 minutes and write 2 brief stories:

- One about a time when you were very stressed or burned out at work.
- The other about a time when you were working at your best and experiencing a general sense of well-being.

In each case, notice how your state of well-being affected your thoughts, your emotions and what you felt in your body. How did it affect your practice of medicine?

Take 5 minutes each

■ For the storyteller, address:

- What happened?
- What helpful qualities did you bring to that moment?
- Who else was involved, and how did they contribute?
- What aspects of the context made a difference?
- What lessons from this story are useful to you?

■ For the listener:

- Be attentive, don't interrupt
- Ask questions to help your partner clarify and provide details
- Don't talk about your own ideas or experiences
- Use reflective questions and empathy when appropriate

If you get done sooner, just be silent. We'll let you know when it is time to switch.

Research on physician stress suggests:

- Adopt a healthy **philosophical attitude** toward life
 - Not taking yourself too seriously, simplifying, balance, self-forgiveness
- Find **support** in the workplace
 - Good mentoring, setting limits, administrative support
- Engage and find **meaning**
 - Sense of self-worth and self-efficacy
- Develop **healthy relationships**
 - Time with friends and family, supportive partner, support group
- **Take care of yourself**
 - Exercise, nutrition, treat depression, avoid intoxicants, vacation
- Cultivate **self-awareness**
 - Meditation, support groups, narrative writing

Source: Shanafelt TD et al. 2003 and 2005, Horowitz 2003

BMC offerings

- ❑ Izzy Berenbaum MD/BU FSAO/ BMC EAP
- ❑ Schwartz Rounds
- ❑ Critical Incident Debriefing
- ❑ Chaplain services
- ❑ Interdisciplinary Writing to Heal
- ❑ Integrative Medicine – massage



BMC Wellness Program

Welcome to the BMC Wellness Program Website where you can explore questions and concerns about yourself and colleagues. The BMC Wellness Program is a resource for all providers, teachers and staff at BMC. Wellness can be supported across many domains: physical, mental, emotional, spiritual, relationship, religious, and social.



This website provides information on existing programs and opportunities to help cope with work or personal problems and to promote wellness and health. Most resources are available to everyone, but some are specific for employees at BMC or BU, for BMC residents/fellows, or for BU students.

We partner with these key programs to help promote wellness:

BMC:

[BMC Employee Assistance Program](#) – free, confidential counseling via toll-free phone line or in person for BMC employees and eligible dependents.

[BMC Chaplain Services](#) – pastoral counseling, family systems and working with groups as well as in a wide range of traditional spiritual and religious areas.

[BMC Human Resources](#) – non-confidential services for BMC employees (this link does not work if opened not from BMC or BU computer)

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9/23 Field Hockey vs. UVA

Boston University Medical Campus

BMC Wellness Program

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Stress and Burnout

Feeling “stressed out”? This catch phrase has become all too common in everyday life—especially at work. Stress can cause more than a little anxiety or discomfort, however. Making time for healthy stress breaks at work can help combat the long-term health and psychological effects of stress, which can include decreasing self-confidence and an increased risk of heart disease and even death. Taking a short break several times a day also can help keep you focused, energized and productive.

Your breaks can last just a few seconds or several minutes, depending on the circumstances. If you feel particularly stressed, you might want to take a few minutes to regroup.

For a quick pick-up

If you just need to catch your breath, a few seconds' pause could do the trick. To avoid burnout, make sure you take time to recharge when you need it.

For a quick pick-up, take several seconds to change position. Close your eyes and breathe deeply. Try thinking about something funny or an activity you enjoy. Repeat this pause at strategic times throughout the day.

A longer break

Taking a few longer breaks of up to about 5 minutes can help overcome mid-morning and mid-

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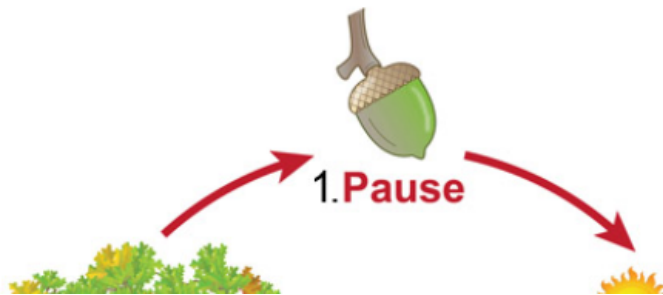
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A 3 Step Exploration of Health: Practice in Your Practice

Incorporate these three mindfulness steps in to your daily life or clinical practice:

1. **Pause**
2. **Presence**
3. **Proceed**

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