

A Survey to Assess Burnout of Physicians Working in the Belgian Pharmaceutical Industry

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Abstract

This is the first study to assess burnout among physicians working in the pharmaceutical industry in Belgium. We performed the study among the 170 members of the Belgian association of physicians working in the pharmaceutical industry (ABEMEP/BEVEFA). The primary objective of this study was to assess the prevalence of subjects who suffer or have been suffering from burnout. We characterized the severity of the components of burnout (depersonalization, lack of accomplishment, emotional exhaustion) by using the Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI). More than half of the 82 respondents are or have been burned out. Marital status and social network are protecting factors, whereas antecedents of stress aggravate the risk of relapse.

Introduction

- Burnout is a state of physical, emotional and mental exhaustion that affects talented managers with high ideal.
- Burnout is the result of a long term involvement in emotionally demanding situations.
- Burnout is often misinterpreted by the business environment and mistreated by health professionals.
- Consequences are
 - emotional : depersonalization with anger, frustration, demotivation, feeling of incompetence, professional dissatisfaction;
 - physical : pains, insomnia, depression, illnesses;
 - social : absenteeism, isolation;
 - behavioral : eating disorders, substance abuse, workaholism;
 - social and familial.

Study Objectives

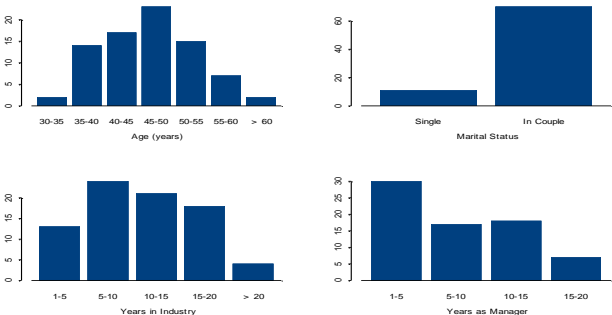
- The survey was commissioned by the Board of the National Association of the Physicians working in the Pharmaceutical Industry in Belgium (ABEMEP/BEVEFA).
- Primary Objective: Assess the prevalence of current and retrospective burnout episodes.
- Secondary Objectives :
 - Identify demographic profiles
 - Evaluate seriousness of the problem
 - Identify factors of stress.

Tools

- Demographic questionnaire
- Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI) to assess the tripod of symptoms characterizing burnout:
 - emotional exhaustion (EE)
 - depersonalization : cynicism/negative attitudes (DP)
 - feeling of loss of professional accomplishment (PA)
- Factors of risks questionnaire
- Impact on social and familial milieu questionnaire
- Strategies to recover

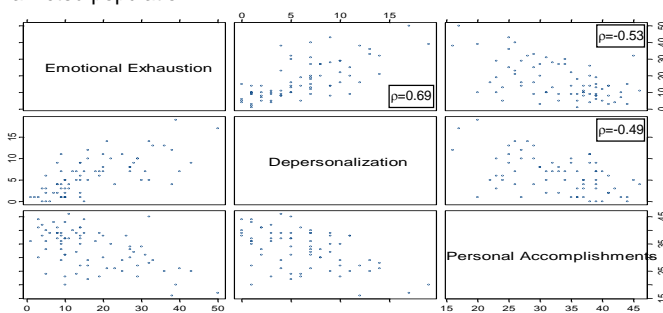
Demographic Characteristics

- 82 out of 170 members responded.



Maslach Burnout Inventory

- 37, 40 and 67% of the respondents respectively expressed emotional exhaustion, depersonalization and feelings of lack of professional accomplishment.
- There is a correlation between emotional exhaustion, depersonalization and lack of professional satisfaction among the afflicted population.



Risk Factors

	Emotional Exhaustion	Depersonalization	Feeling of Lack of Accomplishment
Meeting efficiency	+	+	+
Lack of support from family/colleagues	+	+	+
Conflict of values	+		
Lack of time to accomplish job	+	+	
Lack of job description		+	+

Burnout in the Past

- 56% of the respondents reported to have burnout at least once in the past. Those had higher scores in EE and DP.

Causes of burnout

Problems with management	41 %
Stress as a whole	24 %
Lack of satisfaction	22 %
Work overload	20 %

Health consequences

Chronic Pain (headaches, back)	26 %
Sleep disorders	26 %
Depression	24 %
Cardiac	13 %
None	41 %

- Health problems were associated with higher scores in EE.

Consequences on private life

Deterioration of family/friends relationships	61 %
Irritability, stress, loss of interest towards family	30 %
Impact on children/partner	24 %
None	28 %

Strategies to recover

Change in professional life	48 %
Personal development/psychotherapy	26 %
Change of strategy	26 %
Investment in private life	14 %
Professional networking	14 %