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Survey of neonatologists' burnout on a neonatal surgical unit: Audit study from Cairo University specialized pediatric hospital, SNICU

Mahmoud Tarek Mohamed
Cairo University, Egypt

Background: More doctors are complaining of burnout than before, Burnout is a state of physical and mental exhaustion unfortunately caused by the doctor's lifestyle. Medical errors are also more likely in those suffering from burnout and these may result in catastrophic consequences.

Methodology: A retrospective audit of burnout response of all neonatologists rotating on the surgical neonatal intensive care unit (SNICU) over a 6 month period was carried out. Data was gathered using a standard burnout questionnaire. Responses were divided into 5 categories according to the final score of the 28 questions in the questionnaire: category 1 with score from 28-38 with almost no work stress, category 2 with score (38-50) who express a low amount of job related stress, category 3 with score (51-70) with moderate amount of stress, category 4 with score (71-90) those express a high amount of job stress and begun to burnout, category 5 with score (91 and above) who are under a dangerous amount of stress and advanced stage of burnout.

Results: The study period covered was January 2017 to September 2017. The questionnaire was distributed among 33 neonatologists. 23 responses were sent back with a response rate of 69.6%. (61%) of respondents fell in to category 4, 31% in to category 5, while 8% were equally distributed between category 2 and 3 (4% each of them). No respondents were in category 1.

Conclusion: Severe burnout is present among neonatologists on the SNICU. Interventions to reduce burnout and improve working conditions should be prioritised.

mahmoudpedsur@gmail.com