

ORIGINAL ARTICLE

ASSESSMENT OF BURNOUT AND ITS DETERMINANTS AMONG HEALTHCARE PROFESSIONALS: A WORKPLACE WELLNESS APPROACH

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ABSTRACT:

Introduction: There should be a good communication and cooperation among the staff of laboratory. Laboratory work is very technically difficult requiring a healthy physical and mental health. The laboratorians should have to be trained regularly for stress management, decision making and empathy. The CEO should encourage them by appreciating and recognizing their honesty, hard work and commendable services for the lab. This further adds to the contribution of the laboratorians and saves from burnout at the workplace even when there is heavy work load.

Objective: This study was expected to highlight role of workplace wellness initiatives in reducing burnout among healthcare professionals in laboratory.

Methods: An observational cross-sectional study survey was done in the department of Pathology at MMDC, Multan. WHO software was used to assess the number of participants (40 males=15; females=25) to be studied in the study. The participants included in the study were the doctors, lab technologists, lab technicians, lab attendants and janitorial staff. Burnout was defined as the presence of both high exhaustion and high disengagement. Data were collected using a structured proforma containing the 16-item OLBI.

Results: The management was good to identify that most of the study subjects were not having any burnout or exhaustion related to workplace.

Conclusion: Overall, supportive leadership and employee recognition are key to promoting staff well-being, sustaining high-quality laboratory services and reduced burnout at healthcare workplace

Keywords: Burnout, health workers, OLBI, laboratory, leadership

INTRODUCTION:

Poor countries have suboptimal system of health because of insufficient infrastructure, low budget problems, and lack of experienced personnel. Due to all these problems the doctors and other care givers suffer due to increase in the work burden that results in their burnout.¹ The increased volume of work leads to poor general health status including physical and mental health. But the ultimate affecter is the patient.² If this chronic workplace stress is not properly managed the workers may suffer from burnout syndrome.³ So, this. Heavy workload, high demand, lengthy hours of work with high levels of responsibility causes emotional distress among the

professionals and has to be successfully dealt with.⁴

Different researchers have proved that a large percentage of workers in health providing services of different disciplines suffer from BOS. It has further been reported the the nursing staff has the maximum frequency seen to be suffering from BOS.⁵ Among health care persons, the Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI) is used to evaluate the BOS. This is a systematically validated instrument to measure the psychological health of health care providers and is used worldwide. MBI evaluates depletion of emotional condition (9 items), cynical attitude for patients (5 items) and competence in work (8 items). Responses to each item are recorded using a 7-point Likert scale ranging from 0 ("Never") to 6 ("Every day"), indicating the frequency of the respondent's experiences. The scores determine the BOS.^{6,8}

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Recently another psychological instrument naming the Oldenburg Burnout Inventory (OLBI) has also been introduced for a broader assessment of BOS.^{9,11} It has two scales cognitive fatigue due to prolonged work (8 items and lack of interest in work (8 items). But this is not restricted to human public health service professions In a pathology laboratory the workers often come across a lot of challenges as shortage of staff, retentive work over the whole day, pressure of provision of quality reports to meet patient's expectations. Especially the female staff feel stress because of additional responsibilities of raising kids at home along with other home chores. So, keeping all these factors in mind, the organization should manage all these problems in such a way that the laboratorians should not suffer from Burnout syndrome. There have to be a positive approach so as to workers should be able to work in a peaceful environment which is free of any pressure or fear.¹³ There should be a good communication and cooperation among the staff of laboratory. Laboratory work is very technically difficult requiring a healthy physical and mental health. The laboratorians should have to be trained regularly for stress management, decision making and empathy. The CEO should encourage them by appreciating and recognizing their honesty, hard work and commendable services for the lab.¹⁴ This further adds to the contribution of the laboratorians and saves from burnout at the workplace even when there is heavy work load.¹⁵

MATERIALS

An observational cross-sectional study survey was done in the department of Pathology at MMDC, Multan. from September to October 2025. The Ethical Committee approved to carry out the survey.

WHO software was used to assess the number of participants (40 males=15; females=25) to be studied in the study. The participants included in the study were the doctors, lab technologists, lab technicians, lab attendants and janitorial staff. All those having any diagnosed psychological disease as depression, anxiety were excluded from the study. Those who were not willing to participate in the study were also excluded. Informed consent was taken and confidentiality regarding the data was strictly observed and their identities was anonymous. Structured questions set, the Survey Instrument was provided to all the willing participants.

The Oldenburg Burnout Inventory (OLBI) is a 16-item questionnaire used to assess burnout. Each item is scored from 1 (low burnout) to 4 (high burnout). It measures two dimensions: exhaustion (8 items) and disengagement (8 items), with items mixed to reduce response bias. Mean scores were calculated for each dimension by dividing the total score by 8. A mean score of ≥ 2.25 indicated high exhaustion, while a score of ≥ 2.1 indicated high disengagement. Burnout was defined as the presence of both high exhaustion and high disengagement. Data were collected using a structured proforma containing the 16-item OLBI.^{9,11}

Data were analyzed using SPSS version 26.0, and categorical variables were presented as frequencies and percentages.

RESULTS

The general characteristics of the participants included in the burnout assessment study (N = 40) are presented in Table 1. The table summarizes the key participants' baseline profile and provides an overview of the enrolled group. Determinant and other influencing factors that contributed to burnout among

g participants are presented in Table 2. The table highlights the various occupational and personal factors associated with occupational exhaustion, job related fatigue and chronic work-related stress observed in the research population. The occurrence of

possible factors leading to burnout among participants (N = 40) is presented in Table 3. The table summarizes the frequency and distribution of identified professional-related factors within the study group.

Table1

Participant characteristics in the burnout assessment study (N = 40)

Variables	Segment	n (%)
Sex	Male Participants	15 (37.5)
	Female Participants	25 (62.5)
Years of Age	20-40	20 (50)
	41-60	20(50)
Civil Status	Married	25 (62.5)
	Unmarried	15 (37.5)
Job Title	Doctor <u>Incharge</u>	5 (12.5)
	Lab Technologists	5 (12.5)
	Lab Technicians	10 (25)
	Lab Attendants	18 (45)
	Janitor	2 (5)

Table2

Occurrence of Potential Burnout Contributing Factors (N = 40)

contributing factors of burnout	Frequency, n (%)
Scheduled shift hours	02 (5)
Duty Roster Issues	05 (12.5)
High Patient turnover	10 (25)
Unsupportive workplace environment	01 (2.5)
Forced Career Choice	10 (25)
Chronic Illness	01 (2.5)
unmet patient expectations	10 (25)
Legal Concerns	10 (25)
reduced authority over processes	01 (2.5)
competing responsibilities	01 (2.5)
workplace communication gaps	09 (22.5)

Table3**Comparison of Factors Associated with Burnout Among Study Participants (n = 40)**

Factors	Burnout: Yes (n = 3)	Burnout: No (n =37)	p-value
Sex			<0.05
Male Participants	0	15	
Female Participants	3	22	
Years of Age			<0.05
20-40	0	20	
41-60	3	18	
Civil status			<0.05
Married	3	22	
Unmarried	0	15	
Job Title			<0.05
Doctors Incharge	0	5	
Lab Technologist	2	3	
Lab Technicians	1	9	
Lab Attendants	0	18	
Janitors	0	2	

Statically significant= $p < 0.05$

DISCUSSION

Good Leadership promotes a respectful, supportive and safe environment where the health workers can report any problem without any fear or stigma and with confidentiality.¹⁶ Employee-friendly and ergonomic workspace along with promotions in the jobs may have a good result in the job satisfaction. Similarly, regular breaks, performance incentives and performance bonuses also play a critical role to reduce work related psychological and physical strains.¹⁷ Same has been proved in our study.

Validated burnout measuring tools should regularly be used to assess the high-risk groups who can have psychological or physical ill effect so as to timely manage and proper actions can be taken.¹⁸ Direct communication with the workers, wellness initiatives and flexible leave policies further enhance the sustained output and engagement of laboratorians

and reduce burnout. In combination of departmental support with employees coping strategies, healthcare system can improve the retention of staff, enhance diagnostic precision and accuracy, and ultimately strengthen the quality and safety of pathology laboratory services.^{19,22} The findings of the present study were consistent with those of these studies.

In few studies a high burnout was reported contrary to our study. The difference may be due to the fact that the participants were the nursing staff of the wards and there was a direct interaction with patients.^{3,4}

Similarly, some other research work showed higher prevalence of psychological and physical burnout.^{7,8} This may be due to the fact that our study was conducted in a private institution and the work load is not very high. Besides the employment is based solely on good merit and experience. High exhausti-

on, disengagement and low self-esteem was reported in another study affecting the patients.^{9,10} This is due to the fact that we excluded the subjects who already had some psychological problems or unbalanced emotional condition. In poor countries many of the healthcare professionals show improvement by doing their psychotherapy, giving them financial support by bonus with emotional support as financial burden is their major problem.^{19,20} The results of our study were in agreement with those reported in these studies. Limitations of our study was a low sample size and that too from a selected small selected area.

CONCLUSION: Overall, supportive leadership and employee recognition are key to promoting staff well-being, sustaining high-quality laboratory services and reduced burnout at healthcare workplace.

DECLARATION OF INTEREST: The authors declare no conflict of interest.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS:

A.I.: Data collection, data analysis, literature review, write-up and references

A.G.: Conceptualization, proofreading, and final editing of manuscript

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