

Stress of being a psychiatric resident : Is there room for improvement?

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Aim of the Work: to detect stress and burnout and investigate on-call related stress among a sample of Saudi psychiatric residents, and display some suggestions that may help to solve these problems.

Subjects and Methods: A sample of Saudi psychiatric residents joining a training program in different hospitals in Riyadh was selected to evaluate the stressors they face especially during on-calls. We compared them with internal medicine residents working in the same places. Burnout Selftest questionnaire and Perceived Stress Scale were used.

Results: Our sample composed of 26 psychiatric residents (PR) compared with 31 internal medicine residents (IMR). Half of the psychiatric group reported work itself to be a cause of stress. Only 7% mentioned health to be a source of stress. The psychiatric residents reported time constraints, work overload, atmosphere and content, and lack of rest in less significant ratios. About half of the index participants suffered from sleep deprivation. Also, around 9% had sick leaves in the previous duration. The psychiatric residents got a mean score of 35.73 on the Burnout scale, and 17.92 on the Stress scale.

Conclusion: Work-related stress and burnout is found among psychiatric residents especially during on call. But in contrast to our expectations, the findings were somewhat surprising because the data of this study proved that psychiatric work conditions were better compared to internal medicine one. Also, we identified some suggestions that might help improving the stressful situation as shortening work and the on-call hours and diminishing the on-call frequencies.