



# Work-Life Balance of Healthcare Specialists

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## Background

### What is Work-Life Balance?

The Cambridge dictionary defines work-life balance as “the amount of time you spend doing your job compared with the amount of time you spend with your family and doing things you enjoy.”

For physicians, however, defining what work time means is complex in modern medicine. Typical physician duties include patient contact, administrative tasks, charting, teaching, meetings, and community outreach activities. Individual and organizational factors may affect burnout in physicians and advance practice clinicians (APCs), such as the addition of mobile technology which can impede personal time with work.

Burnout levels have risen four points from 61% in 2021 to 65% in 2022 of surveyed physicians. Among the associated physicians with burnout, 75% have stated that their work-life balance has deteriorated within the past year (2022).

### What contributes to Work-Life Balance?

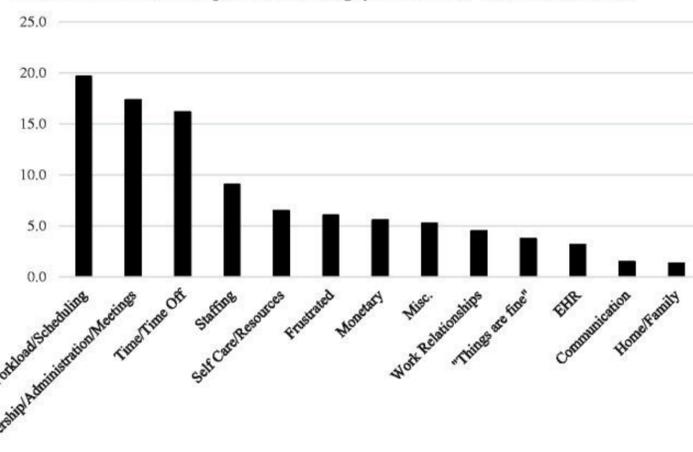
- Sleep
- Exercise
- Nutrition
- Interactions with family and friends
- Pursuits of enjoyment

## Response

### What are beneficial changes that physicians want?

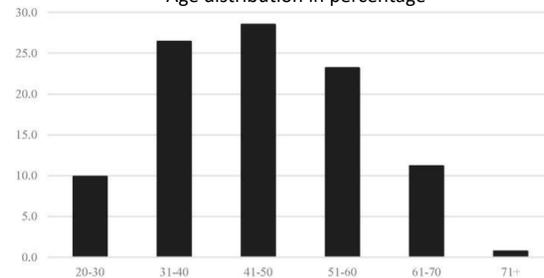
A total of 1393 surveys were sent out. Of these, 530 respondents gave complete baseline data, and 343 responded to the follow-up survey. There were 414 individual comments, which included 663 factors on work-life balance. The major factors impacting work-life balance included workload, workflow, and scheduling, followed by comments on administration and meetings, time/time off, staffing, and self-care.

How can we as an organization help you have a “better balance”?



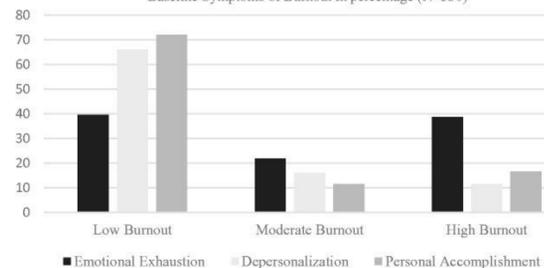
## Data

Age distribution in percentage

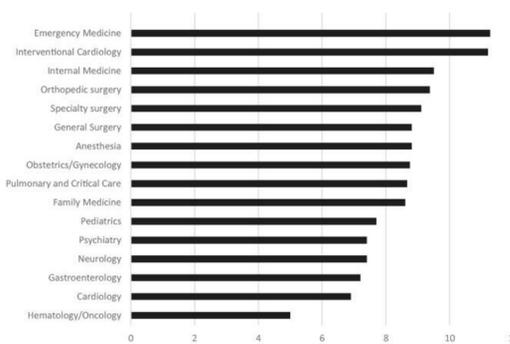


In total, 530 of the 1,393 physicians and APCs responded to the initial burnout survey. 54% were female; 25.3% were hospital based, 43.9% were office based, and the remaining were both office and hospital based.

Baseline Symptoms of Burnout in percentage (N=530)



Among the respondents, 60.5% and 32% had symptoms of moderate to high EE and DP, respectively. 28% of the respondents had symptoms of moderate to low personal accomplishment.



Emotional exhaustion score according to specialty. The major factors impacting work-life balance included workload, workflow, and scheduling.

## Effect

### What is the effect of an improper work-life balance?

- Financing
- Decreased hospital capacities
- Privatization of hospitals
- Pressure for overperformance
- Increased cynicism in physicians
- Inclination to leave clinical work
- Higher medical errors and malpractice risk
- Lower work ethic
- Decreased quality of life
- Direct negative impact to mental and physical wellbeing
- Alcohol and drug abuse
- Higher suicide rates for physicians than the general population

## ‘Why?’

### Why are physicians more prone to work-life imbalance?

Due to the overwhelming amount of stimulus in the field of healthcare, it isn't uncommon for even the best caretakers to develop poor work-life balance habits, leading to symptoms of long-term burnout. Packed schedules, demanding pace, time crunches, and emotional intensity are all aspects in a physician's career that may not be seen as significantly impactful in other careers.

There is a known stigma within society that physicians and medical providers are supposed to be 'superhuman' and not suffer from the same diseases as others. But research has shown that early signs of poor work-life balance and burnout can be attributed to the educational level, when students are in the process of acquiring their MD or DO degree.



## Solutions

There is a significant level of burnout in physicians and APCs which is directly linked to the lack of work-life balance in their careers. With the ever-increasing need for healthcare providers in our society, it is paramount that communities recognize and respect the importance of proper work-life balance.

Although adjustments for work-life balance require foundational changes at the industry level, practicing healthcare professionals can also incorporate individual quality of life alterations to alleviate burnout and improve work-life balance.

### Potential methods for industry level improvement for work-life balance:

- Reduced working schedules
- Fines for pressuring overtime work
- Flexible contracts for healthcare providers
- Working towards a culture that values physician health

### Potential methods for individual improvement for work-life balance:

- Schedule Personal Time
- Learn to say “No”
- Establish Boundaries

## References

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