

Creating Healthy Work Environments VIRTUAL 2021

Self-Management Techniques for Compassion Fatigue in the Emergency Department

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Purpose: The purpose of this study was to examine the implementation and utilization of mindfulness-based stress reduction exercises in the adult emergency department (ED) and its impact on compassion fatigue (CF) during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Methods: All full-time and part-time ED staff members were eligible to participate in the parent longitudinal research study, with cross-sectional data from the second data collection period being used for this analysis. The survey, distributed in July 2020, included the Professional Quality of Life-5 (ProQol-5) survey, to capture CF via compassion satisfaction (CS), burnout (BO), and secondary traumatic stress (STS), the Perceived Stress Scale (PSS-10) to capture stress, and self-reported stress reduction intervention use such as meditation, breathing exercises and progressive muscle relaxation. Spearman tests were used, with statistical significance set at $p < 0.05$.

Results: There were 112 (28% response rate) adult ED staff members that completed the survey. The majority ($n=94$, 83.9%) reported using at least one stress reduction method, with a mean of 2.7 ± 2.4 stress reduction modalities used per staff member. Meditation was the most popular stress reduction method with 71 (63.4%) reporting use; this was followed by breathing exercises ($n=47$, 42.0%) and progressive muscle relaxation ($n=40$, 35.7%). The total number of stress reduction modalities used was positively correlated with STS ($p=.030$), as was progressive muscle relaxation ($p=.012$). Individuals using multiple modalities and/or progressive muscle relaxation were more likely to have higher STS scores. CS, BO, and stress were not correlated with any of the stress reduction modalities.

Conclusion: Compassion fatigue impacts all ED team members, including clinical and ancillary support staff, and may be worsened due to the life demands of the COVID-19 pandemic. Self-management interventions to reduce STS for all ED staff were utilized to help reduce CF. A larger study group over a longer period of time may demonstrate the sustainability and effectiveness of various stress reduction programs.

Title:

Self-Management Techniques for Compassion Fatigue in the Emergency Department

Keywords:

Compassion fatigue, Resilience training and Stress reduction

Abstract Summary:

To determine populations at risk of compassion fatigue within the adult emergency department setting and the use of mindfulness-based stress reduction interventions to reduce it.

Late Breaking Reason:

Compassion fatigue has been a growing concern for both direct and ancillary staff in the adult emergency department and may be worsened by the Covid-19 pandemic. Self-management stress interventions were used in this study to help reduce compassion fatigue.

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