

The long-term impact of Mental Burnout on attentional cognitive performance among Anaesthesia and Intensive Care practitioners: a pilot, time-series, multi-centric study.

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Argomento: Altro

Introduction: Chronic stress is a common condition within the Medical setting, especially in Anaesthesia and Intensive Care practice [1]. This can result in Mental Burnout syndrome, which primarily weakens cognition [2]. Although the impact of mental burnout on cognitive performance has been widely investigated, its long-term role on cognitive performance has not received attention, yet. Thus, expanding on Orena E. et al [3], this pilot study aims at longitudinally evaluating the impact of mental burnout on attentional cognitive performance among Anaesthesia and Intensive Care practitioners.

Methods: 40 Anaesthetists Intensivists were recruited from Anaesthesia and Intensive Care Unit of six hospitals. Attentional cognitive performance was tested by means of reaction times (RTs), pre- and post-shift, with a five-subtest computerized neuropsychological battery. The burnout level was tested with the Maslach Burnout Inventory-Human Service Survey (MBI-HSS), combining its three subscales to obtain two different burnout groups (Non-at-risk & At-risk). The same procedure was repeated for three different points in time (T1:July; T2:September; T3:December).

Results: At all 3 times, t-tests showed a worsening in performance in the post-shift condition ($p<.001$). RM-ANOVA showed a significant effect of at-risk burnout group ($p<.001$). In T3, only 23 participants were followed longitudinally. 33.3% of anaesthetists became at-risk from T1 to T3, whereas at-risk anaesthetists in T1 remained at-risk. A t-test found no significant difference of RTs over time.

Conclusion: Anaesthetists experience mental fatigue during their shift, resulting in worsening in attentional performance, specifically within the at-risk burnout group. Anaesthetists with at-risk level of mental burnout remain at-risk, whereas risk of mental burnout tends to increase over time, resulting in a constant worsening performance. Longitudinal research should be done and long-term interventions should be taken to reduce this phenomenon.

Reference: [1]Gurman, J *Clin Monit Comput*, 2012 [2]Maslach, *Annu. Rev. Psychol*, 2001 [3]Orena, *Saudi Journal of Anaesthesia*, 2013.