Energized at Work: Strategies and Insights from Thriving Physicians

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McGovern Medical School, UT Houston
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Baylor College of Medicine
You deserve a strong career
You going strong, your career going strong
Energized at work
What can we learn from their strategies?
The Work of Doctoring

- Demands on your brain, body, time, and energy
Physician Task Load and the Risk of Burnout Among US Physicians in a National Survey

Elizabeth Harry MD (Associate Professor, University of Colorado School of Medicine and Senior Director of Clinical Affairs, University of Colorado Hospital.)

Christine Sinsky MD (Vice President, Professional Satisfaction, American Medical Association, Chicago.)
Physician Task Load: Scale of 0-100

- How mentally demanding was the workday?
- How physically demanding was the workday?
- How hurried or rushed was the pace of the workday?
- How hard do you have to work to accomplish your level of performance during the workday?
## Overall Burnout

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Value</th>
<th>P-value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No symptoms burnout</td>
<td>227.3</td>
<td>&lt; 0.0001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 symptom burnout (high EE or DP)</td>
<td>286.7</td>
<td>&lt; 0.0001</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
“The root cause of exhaustion is having too much to do. It doesn’t matter how many stress management courses you offer or how many perks you pile on.”

Adam Grant, The Work Life Podcast
“The best way to fight burnout is to stop overloading people with work.”

– Adam Grant, The Work Life Podcast
Energy management first, time management second
Job Demands/Resources Theory
Job Demands

- Physical
- Psychological
- Social
- Organizational
“associated with certain physiological and/or psychological costs”
Examples

- Irregular working hours
- Unfavorable physical environment
- Demanding interactions with clients
What are you being asked to do?

What resources are you given, or can you marshal?
Job resources buffer the impact of job demands on burnout

Arnold B Bakker, Evangelia Demerouti, Martin C Euwema
Job Resources

- Achieve work goals
- Reduce job demands
- Stimulate personal growth, learning, and development
● Features of the job
● Provided by leadership
● Personal characteristics or skills
Under Our Control

- Doctor Thinking for Pain Points
- Strategic Thinking
- Energy management
Identify and “Treat” Energy Depleters
Deploy Doctor Thinking
“Love your job and you’ll never work a day in your life”

-Things that people like to say
I’m a dermatologist, and I would never say that I love my job.
I love my work, but I don’t always love my job
Physician Burnout & Depression Report
2024
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factor</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Too many bureaucratic tasks (e.g., charting, paperwork)</td>
<td>62%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Too many hours at work</td>
<td>41%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of respect from administrators/employers, colleagues, or staff</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Insufficient compensation</td>
<td>38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of control/autonomy</td>
<td>32%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Doctor Thinking:

What are the pain points?
What are the potential remedies?
Implementing Patient Safety and Quality Improvement in Dermatology Part 2: Quality Improvement Science

Amanda Marsch, MD, Rita Khodosh, MD, Martina Porter, MD, Jason Raad, PhD, Sara Samimi, MD, Brittney Schultz, MD, Lindsay Chaney Strowd, MD, Laura Vera, MSW, LSW, LSSGB, Emily Wong, MD, Gideon P. Smith, MD, PhD MPH

PII: S0190-9622(22)00208-0
DOI: https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jaad.2022.01.050
Reference: YMJD 16645
- Identify patients at high risk for surgical site infection using a checklist system and give prophylactic antibiotics.

- Carry out the study protocol using new checklist in a small number of patients.

- Refine and edit the checklist based on what was learned in the test patient population.

- Analyze and interpret results (number of surgical site infections).
Pain Points

● Patient access
● Mislabeled specimens
● Too many patient portal messages
● Prior authorizations take too much time
● Too much time spent documenting
What treatments have you tried?

- What has worked?
- What hasn’t worked?
- Any adverse effects?
How have other people fixed these pain points?
“Having a scribe has helped so much.”

-Dr. Anthony Brissett
Facial plastic surgeon
Pain points increase burnout
The Association of Team-Specific Workload and Staffing with Odds of Burnout Among VA Primary Care Team Members

Christian D. Helfrich, MPH, PhD,1,2 Joseph A. Simonetti, MD, MPH,1,3 Walter L. Clinton, PhD,4 Gordon B. Wood, MS,4 Leslie Taylor, PhD,4 Gordon Schectman, MD,5 Richard Stark, MD,6 Lisa V. Rubenstein, MD,7,8,9 Stephan D. Fihn, MD, MPH,1,3,4 and Karin M. Nelson, MD, MSHS1,3,4
Overall prevalence of burnout: 41%
Percent Risk for Physician Burnout

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Non-ideal conditions</td>
<td>60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ideal conditions</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- **Non-ideal conditions**: fully staffed teams and right-sized panel.
Potential Remedies
Practice Efficiency in Dermatology: Enhancing Quality of Care and Physician Well-Being

Monitoring Editor: Alexander Muacevic and John R. Adler

Rajani Katta,1,2 Emily Strouphauer,3 Marina K. Ibraheim,4 Jennifer Li-Wang,5 and Harry Dao4
Perspective

Getting Rid of Stupid Stuff

Melinda Ashton, M.D.

In an effort to reduce unintended burdens for clinicians, leaders at a health system in Hawaii asked all employees to look at their daily documentation experience and report anything in the EHR that they thought was poorly designed, unnecessary, or just plain stupid.
Practical tools

The selected practical tools listed here are to get you started on several outlined in this Playbook. The individual toolkits on the AMA STEPS For additional resources. Click on the following links for immediate access to:

- Example Letter to Patients About Electronic Messages (DOCX)
- Sharing Clinical Notes With Patients Pocket Card
- Using Choosing Wisely® Tools to Empower Patients
- Annual Prescription Renewal: Implementation Checklist
- Questions to Help Uncover Nonadherence
- Pre-Visit Questionnaire
- Visit Planner Checklist: Order Sheet for Patient Visits
- EHR Inbox Reduction Checklist
- Inbox Buckets and Team Pool Assignments Visual
- Sample Intake Processes for Telephone and Refill Encounters
My pain point:

“I can’t wait 4 months. That’s unacceptable!”
KattaMD.com

Yearly over 350K handout views
How much I love my work
How much I like my job

Like vs. Job
Structural Forces That Deplete Doctor Energy
The Importance of Strategic Thinking
“I loved the work, but I was charting two hours every night at home. I was burned out.”

Dr. Nahille Natour
Ob-Gyn Hospitalist
“I wrote down everything I wanted in a job, including no call.”

Dr. Nahille Natour
Ob-Gyn Hospitalist
PCPs Increasingly Chained to EHRs

Batya Swift Yasgur, MA, LSW

DISCLOSURES | January 25, 2024
Study showed that patient portal messages to doctors increased by 157% between 2020 and late 2021.
“They are now entitled to our free labor (write a letter, coordinate this issue, answer this question). We do all that other stuff on our own time.”

-comment from a user on Doximity
Your Doctor Replied to Your Email. That’ll Cost $25.

By Sumathi Reddy
March 8, 2024

Access to this paywalled article paid for by Doximity
In a recent study of 10,000 leaders, 97% say that being strategic was the most important element of their role.
In other research – done by Rich Horwath of the Strategic Thinking Institute – 96% of leaders say they lack the time to invest in strategic thinking.
“I structure my time, with strong boundaries between my clinical days and research days”

Dr. Pooja Varshney
Pediatric Allergy and Immunology
Moral Injury
'Get that money!' Dermatologist says patient care suffered after private equity-backed firm bought her practice

A former doctor at a private equity-owned dermatology chain alleges lost biopsies, overbooking and questionable quality control in the company-owned lab.
Alignment with Your Mission
Dr. Monica Huang took a significant pay cut 10 years into her radiology career to do an advanced fellowship in breast imaging.
She is now the Director of the Breast Cryoablation Center at MD Anderson and conducts trials of minimally invasive breast cancer treatments.
Maximize Rechargers
Energy Rechargers: Job
Dr. Ying Guo, PMR at MD Anderson, notes that one of the main things that keeps her energized is the deep satisfaction she feels at seeing her patients improve.
Research on Physician Job Satisfaction
Factors Affecting Physician Professional Satisfaction and Their Implications for Patient Care, Health Systems, and Health Policy

Mark W. Friedberg, Peggy G. Chen, Kristin R. Van Busum, Frances Aunon, Chau Pham, John Caloyeras, Soeren Mattke, Emma Pitchforth, Denise D. Quigley, Robert H. Brook, F. Jay Crosson, and Michael Tutty
What factors are associated with greater professional satisfaction?
“When physicians perceived themselves as providing high-quality care”
“On the days when people are feeling happiest, proudest, and most motivated, the single most prominent event in those days is .....
• “...making progress in meaningful work.”

Teresa Amible, Harvard Business School
The Progress Principle: Using Small Wins to Ignite Joy, Engagement, and Creativity at Work

Teresa Amabile
Steven Kramer
Does your job allow you to do the work that you find most meaningful?
I went from Family Medicine to Obesity Medicine, which I call “happy medicine”

-Dr Sejal Desai
Tula Medical Weight Loss and Wellness
Career fit and burnout among academic faculty

Tait D Shanafelt, Colin P West, Jeff A Sloan, Paul J Novotny, Greg A Poland, Ron Menaker, Teresa A Rumsans, Lotte N Dyrbye

Abstract
Meaningful work for academic faculty

- Patient care
- Research
- Education
- Administration
Spending less than 20% of their time on the most meaningful activity correlated to higher rates of burnout (54% vs 30%)
Impact of Meaningful Work on Burnout Rates

- Spending more than 20% of time on most meaningful activity
- Spending less than 20% of time on most meaningful activity
The Joyful Workplace
The Mini-Z 2.0 Survey
Evaluation of Work Satisfaction, Stress, and Burnout Among US Internal Medicine Physicians and Trainees

Mark Linzer, MD,†1 Cynthia D. Smith, MD,2,9 Susan Hingle, MD,3 Sara Poplau, BA,4 Richard Miranda, MD,5 Rebecca Freese, MS,6 and Kerri Palamara, MD7,8

This study uses the Mini Z 2.0 survey to assess burnout among male and female members of the American College of Physicians who are internists and internal medicine trainees.
Take the Mini-Z 2.0 Survey
“I am employed in a physician-owned practice. The autonomy I have is so important.”

Dr. Stephanie Cotell
Dermatologist
Job Control/ Autonomy
Advice to Young Job-Seekers
Factors Affecting Physician Professional Satisfaction and Their Implications for Patient Care, Health Systems, and Health Policy

Mark W. Friedberg, Peggy G. Chen, Kristin R. Van Busum, Frances Aunon, Chau Pham, John Caloyeras, Soeren Mattke, Emma Pitchforth, Denise D. Quigley, Robert H. Brook, F. Jay Crosson, and Michael Tutty
High levels of autonomy and perceived control equals high levels of job performance and satisfaction.
What can leaders do?
Better ratings of leadership behaviors = greater professional fulfillment

**Figure 1** Likelihood (%, 95% CI) of professional fulfillment status by the tertiles of supervisor leadership. Behaviour score for female and male physicians.
Worse ratings of leadership behaviors = higher rates of burnout

Figure 2  Likelihood (%, 95% CI) of burnout status by the tertiles of supervisor leadership. Behaviour score for female and male physicians.
Leadership behaviors associated with employee engagement

- Respect
- Keeping people informed
- Nurturing professional development
- Providing feedback and recognition
- Soliciting input
BMJ Open  Impact of leadership behaviour on physician well-being, burnout, professional fulfilment and intent to leave: a multicentre cross-sectional survey study

Mihriye Mete,1,2,3 Charlotte Goldman4, Tait Shanafelt5, Daniel Marchalik3,6
Dr. Thao Galvan, transplant surgeon, rounds with a team of up to 20 for post-op checks on her pediatric patients. One of her key pieces of advice for students:

“Take your vacation days!”
Vacation
Vacation Days Taken, Work During Vacation, and Burnout Among US Physicians

Christine A. Sinsky, MD, MACP¹; Mickey T. Trockel, MD, PhD²; Lotte N. Dyrbye, MD, MHPE³; et al

How many physicians take less than 5 days of vacation a year?

How many physicians work on a typical vacation day?
20% take less than 5 vacation days

70% work on the typical vacation day
Vacation Days and Risk of Burnout (Odds Ratio)

- 3 weeks vacation
- Full inbox coverage
- 30-60 min work on typical vacation day
- 60-90 min work on typical vacation day
“The fact that $\frac{2}{3}$ of physicians are obligated to continue to provide clinical care to their patients while on vacation...”
“...should be considered a marker of poorly designed systems of teamwork, inadequate clinical staffing, and poorly designed cross-coverage systems.”
Energy Rechargers: Organizational
Dr. Amy Paller, Chair of Dermatology and translational researcher, speaks on the importance of her fantastic clinical team and research team in her success.
A Positive Workplace Culture
Perceptions of collegiality, fairness, and respect were key determinants of professional satisfaction.
How effective is teamwork really? The relationship between teamwork and performance in healthcare teams: a systematic review and meta-analysis

Jan B Schmutz ¹, Laurenz L Meier ², Tanja Manser ³
Energy Rechargers: Personal
BRAIN

BODY

EMOTION

CORE ENERGY
Energy:

Brain
Body
Emotional
Brain Energy
Brain Energy

Alert

Fuzzy
“[EHRs] require a substantial cognitive load and result in cognitive fatigue.”
Electronic medical record-related burnout in healthcare providers: a scoping review of outcomes and interventions  

Calandra Li, Camilla Parpia, Abi Sriharan, Daniel T Keefe
How bad “cognitive ergonomics” can drain doctors’ brainpower

AUG 16, 2021 • 4 MIN READ

Tanya Albert Henry
Contributing News Writer
Cognitive Ergonomics: A Review of Interventions for Outpatient Practice

Jennifer Li-Wang 1, Alexandra Townsley 2, Rajani Katta 3, 4

1. English, Katta Dermatology, Houston, USA 2. Psychology, Rice University, Houston, USA 3. Internal Medicine, Baylor College of Medicine, Houston, USA 4. Dermatology, University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston, Houston, USA

Corresponding author: Jennifer Li-Wang, liwang.jenny@gmail.com

Abstract

Doctoring is difficult mental work, involving many cognitively demanding processes such as diagnosing, decision-making, parallel processing, communicating, and managing the emotions of others. According to cognitive load theory (CLT), working memory is a limited cognitive resource that can support a finite amount of cognitive load. While the intrinsic cognitive load is the innate load associated with a task, the extraneous load is generated by inefficiency or suboptimal work conditions. Causes of extraneous cognitive load in healthcare include inefficiency, distractions, interruptions, multitasking, stress, poor
Body Energy
Assessment of Physician Sleep and Wellness, Burnout, and Clinically Significant Medical Errors

Mickey T. Trockel, MD, PhD¹; Nikitha K. Menon, BA¹; Susannah G. Rowe, MD, MPH²; et al

Insufficient sleep predicts clinical burnout

Marie Söderström, Kerstin Jeding, Mirjam Ekstedt, Aleksander Perski, Torbjörn Akerstedt

Influence of sleep on symptom improvement and return to work in clinical burnout

Mieke Sonnenschein, Marjolijn J Sorbi, Marc J P M Verbraak, Wilmar B Schaufeli, Cora J M Maas, Lorenz J P van Doornen
The results identified "too little sleep (< 6 h)" as the main risk factor for burnout development, with adjustment for work demands and sleep quality.
Do you follow your own advice?
Sleep
Exercise
Diet
Stress management strategies
Positive relationships
Avoidance of risky substances
Emotional Energy
Emotional Energy

- Positive Energy
- Negative Energy/Cynicism
“If you can possibly avoid it, don’t get burned out because it’s miserable. You’re angry and just impossible to live with for months...”

Cellist Yo-Yo Ma
How do you treat a headache?
Take 2 Tylenol
How do you “treat” a bad day at work?
When Patient Rudeness Impacts Care: A Review of Incivility in Healthcare

Monitoring Editor: Alexander Muacevic and John R Adler

Alexandra Townsley, 1 Jennifer Li-Wang, 2 and Rajani Katta 3, 4

- Author information - Article notes - Copyright and License information - PMC Disclaimer
How often are frontline workers treated rudely at work?

Dr. Christine Porath
Survey of more than 2,000 workers in more than 25 industries worldwide
Physicians’ Experiences With Mistreatment and Discrimination by Patients, Families, and Visitors and Association With Burnout

Liselotte N. Dyrbye, MD, MHPE\textsuperscript{1,2}; Colin P. West, MD, PhD\textsuperscript{1}; Christine A. Sinsky, MD\textsuperscript{3}; et al
Findings  In this cross-sectional study of 6512 US physicians, mistreatment and discriminatory behaviors by patients, families, and visitors within the previous year were common, especially for female and racial and ethnic minority physicians, and associated with higher burnout rates.
Body-Mind Medicine
How do you downregulate?
• How do you decrease cortisol levels?
• How do you decrease sympathetic arousal?
• How do you activate the parasympathetic nervous system?
Coping Mechanisms That Physicians Use for Burnout

- Exercise: 52%
- Talk with family/friends: 49%
- Sleep: 41%
- Spend time alone: 39%
- Play/listen to music: 37%
- Eat junk food: 33%
- Drink alcohol: 24%
- Meditate/Similar stress-reduction techniques: 23%
- Binge-eat: 21%
Healthcare Workers' Well-Being: A Systematic Review of Positive Psychology Interventions

Monitoring Editor: Alexander Muacevic and John R Adler

Alexandra P Townsley,1 Jenny Li-Wang,2 and Rajani Katta3,4
The Awesomest 7-Year Postdoc or: How I Learned to Stop Worrying and Love the Tenure-Track Faculty Life
• I decided that this is a 7-year postdoc.
• I stopped taking advice.
• I created a "feelgood" email folder.
• I work fixed hours and in fixed amounts.
• I try to be the best "whole" person I can.
• I found real friends.
• I have fun "now".
How do you increase oxytocin?
Oxytocin reduces amygdala activity, increases social interactions and reduces anxiety-like behavior irrespective of NMDAR antagonism

Rosanna Sobotá,¹ Takuma Mihara,¹,² Alexandra Forrest,¹ Robert E. Featherstone,¹ and Steven J. Siegel¹.
Under Our Control

- Doctor Thinking for Pain Points
- Strategic Thinking
- Energy management
For links to references:
TheWorkDoctor.com