

STRESS AND BURNOUT IN ONCOLOGY CAREGIVERS

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LARNACA, CYPRUS
JUNE 22-24, 2007

INTRODUCTION

- The practice of oncology entails dealing with life-threatening illnesses on a daily basis
- Caregivers work closely with this patient population, many of whom may have advanced disease and limited chances of cure
- Significant stressors for oncology caregivers
 - Providing palliative or terminal care
 - delivering bad news
 - dealing with patient death and suffering
 - Large work load
 - Work environment
- Outcome: SEVERE STRESS AND BURNOUT!

STRESS AND BURNOUT

- Stress is inherent in the practice of medicine
- Not all types of stress are deleterious
- Some stress can be beneficial and promote personal development
- Burnout occurs from an imbalance between the demands of the job and the individual's ability to cope

DEFINITION

- Burnout is the end result of stress in the professional life of a physician or caregiver
- It is a combination of:
 - Emotional exhaustion
 - Depersonalization
 - Apathy and suspicion
 - Disillusion and depression
 - Low personal achievement
 - Loss of interest and enthusiasm in one's job

CONSEQUENCES OF BURNOUT

- Direct impact on the quality of care provided to patients
- Serious deterioration in the personal and professional life of the caregiver
- Working with children with cancer and their families may result in more rapid burnout
- Burnout usually occurs slowly over time and in most cases, goes unrecognized

BURNOUT SYNDROME

- Burnout can affect the entire 'team' of oncology caregivers
- Most vulnerable population
 - Nurses
 - Physicians
- Random surveys:
 - 1000 oncologists: 56% reported burnout in their professional life
 - 35 oncology nurses: 54% statements revealed medium to high level stress at work, 22% very high stress levels

QUESTIONS TO BE ADDRESSED

1. How does burnout manifest itself in health care professionals?

Recognized stages in the development of burnout

2. What are some of the causes of burnout?

Related to work environment

Personal

3. How do you prevent burnout in health care professionals?

Changes in work environment

Self care –how to stay energized and set personal limits

4. How to remedy burnout once it has occurred?

Relaxation training, stress management, spiritual support

Psychotherapeutic intervention programs

OBJECTIVES OF THIS MEETING

- Become familiar with the Stress and Burnout Syndrome
- Recognize stages in the development of burnout
- Learn techniques to prevent personal burnout
 - Mind body medicine
 - Art therapy
- Take this information back to home institutions
 - Adopt measures to prevent and remedy burnout in all caregivers

REVIEW ARTICLES

- Burnout: Caring for the Caregivers
 - Oncologist 2000,5;425-434
- Guidelines for the Recognition, Prevention and Remediation of Burnout in Health Care Professionals Participating in the Care of Children with Cancer: SIOP Report.
 - Med. Pediatr Oncol, 2000,35:122-125
- The Wellbeing and Personal Wellness Promotion Strategies of Medical Oncologists in the North Central Cancer Treatment Group
 - Oncology 2005;68:23-32