

Energized at Work: Strategies and Insights from Thriving Physicians

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Clinical Professor of Dermatology
McGovern Medical School, UT Houston
Clinical Assistant Professor of Medicine
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



The Joint Commission Journal on Quality and Patient Safety

Volume 47, Issue 2, February 2021, Pages 76-85



Physician Task Load and the Risk of Burnout Among US Physicians in a National Survey

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

,

Christine Sinsky MD (is 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

No symptoms burnout

227.3

< 0.0001

1 symptom burnout (high EE or DP)

286.7

< 0.0001

“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?**

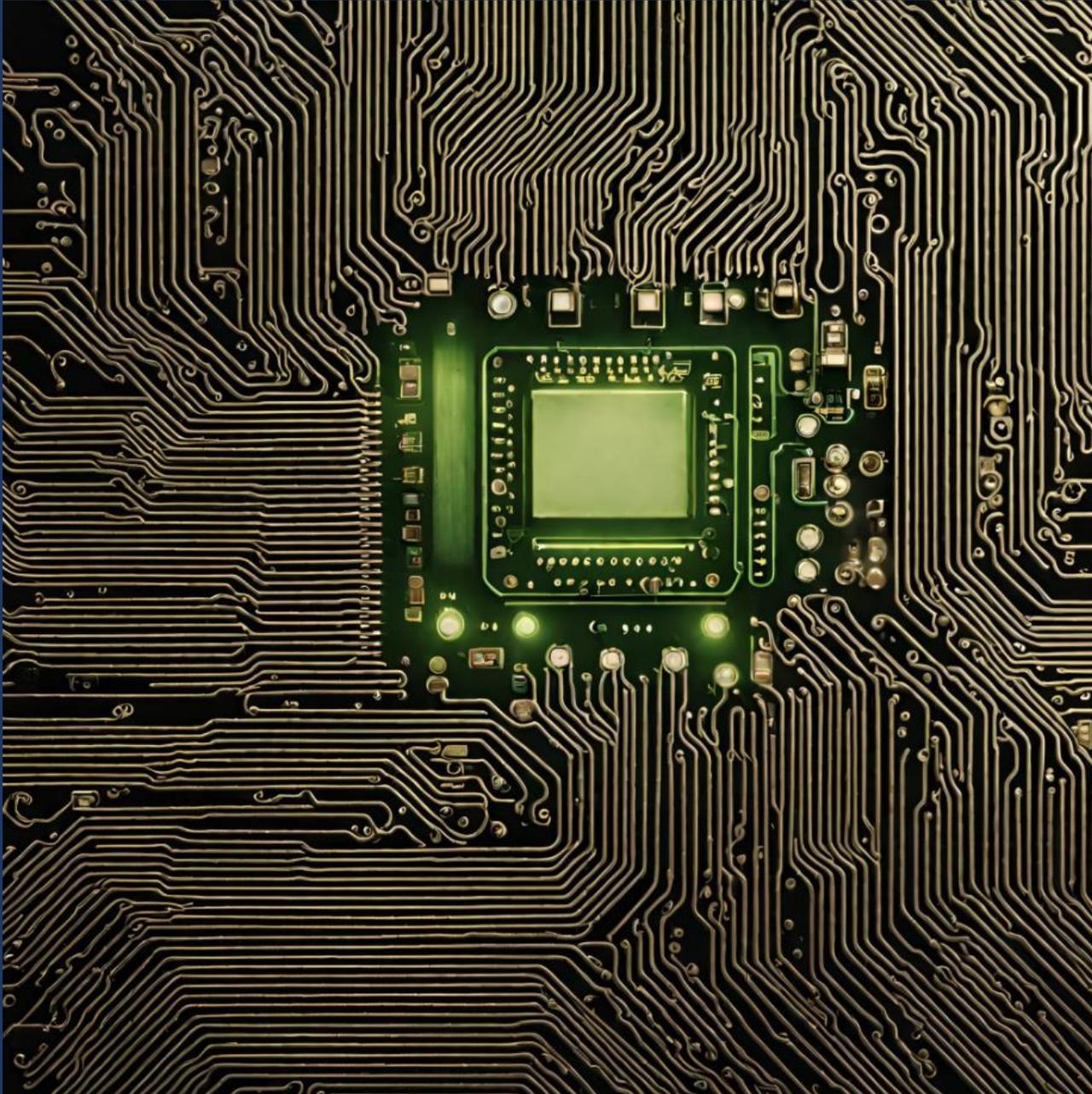
Job resources buffer the impact of job demands on burnout

Arnold B Bakker ¹, 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**

Medscape

**Physician Burnout &
Depression Report**

2024



What Contributes Most to Your Burnout?

Too many bureaucratic tasks
(eg, charting, paperwork)

62%

Too many hours at work

41%

Lack of respect from administrators/
employers, colleagues, or staff

40%

Insufficient compensation

38%

Lack of control/autonomy

32%



Doctor Thinking:

What are the pain points?
What are the potential remedies?

Quality Improvement Science

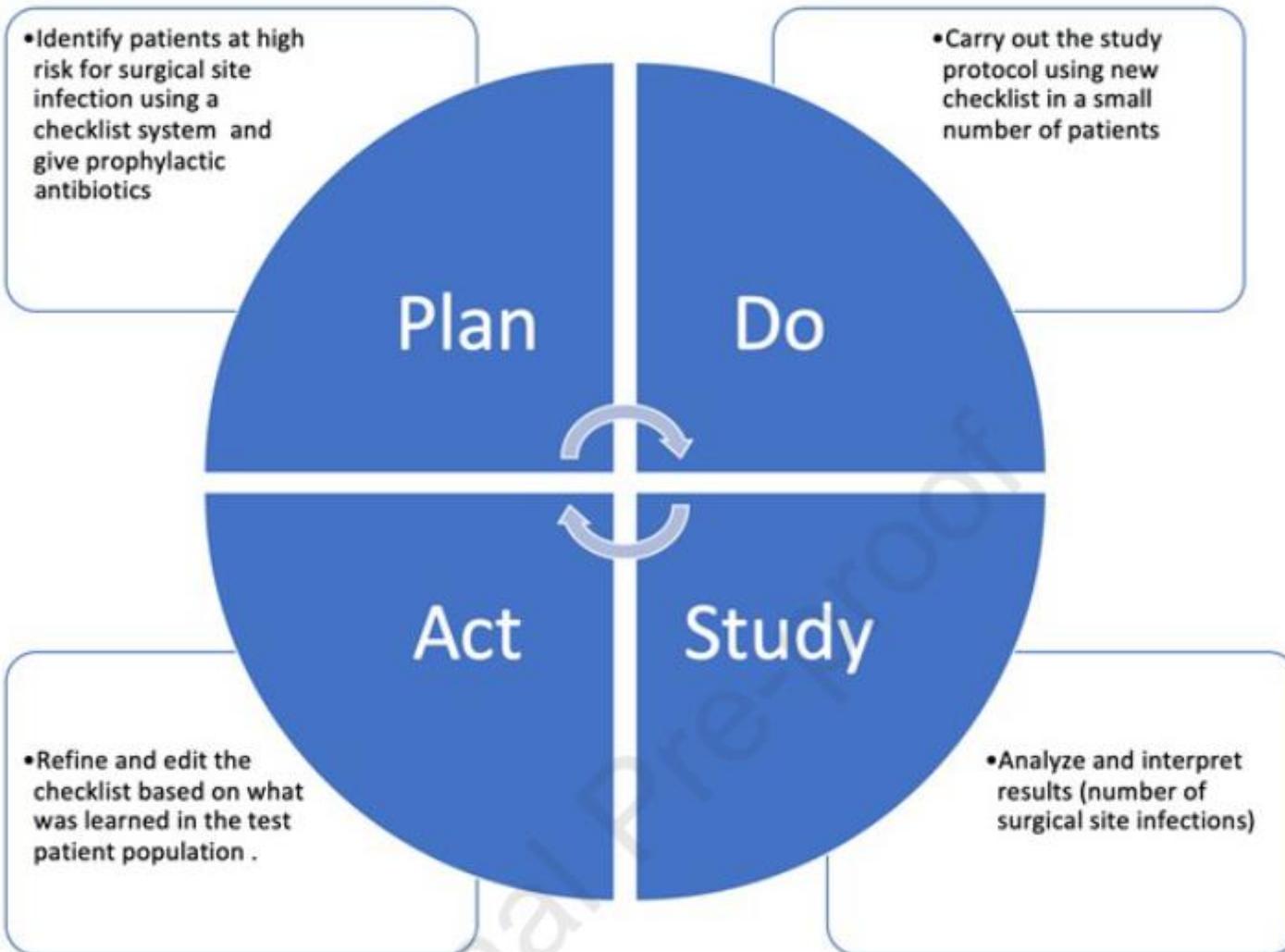
Implementing Patient Safety and Quality Improvement in Dermatology Part 2: Quality Improvement Science

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



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

[J Gen Intern Med](#). 2017 Jul; 32(7): 760–766.

PMCID: PMC5481228

Published online 2017 Feb 23. doi: [10.1007/s11606-017-4011-4](https://doi.org/10.1007/s11606-017-4011-4)

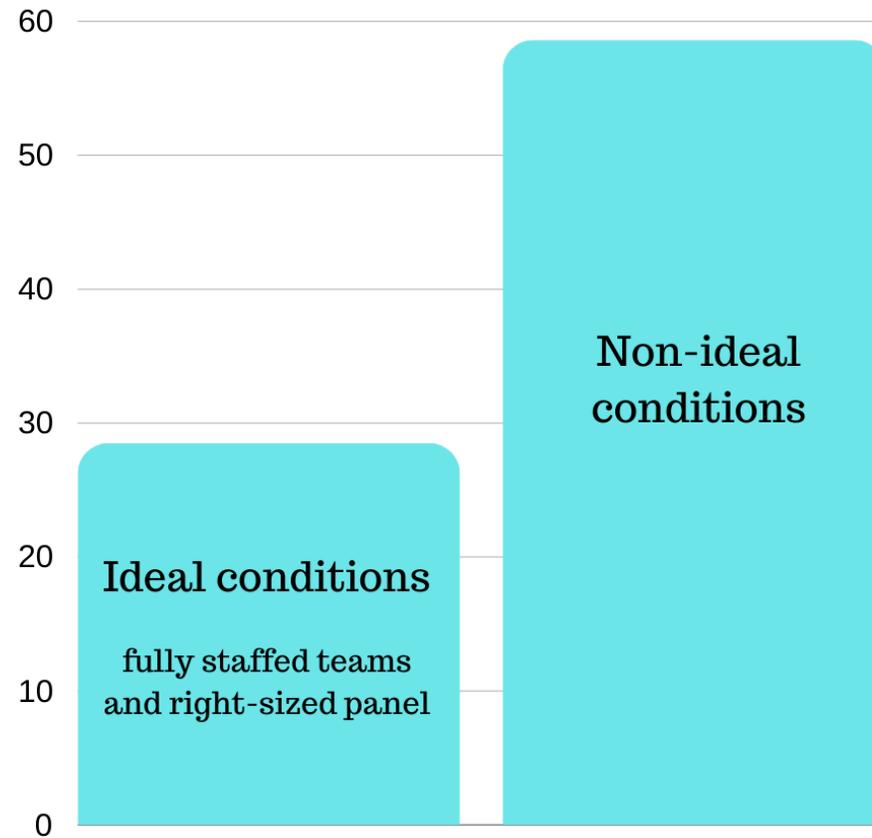
PMID: [28233221](https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/28233221/)

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, MSHS^{1,3,4}

Overall prevalence of burnout: 41%

Percent Risk for Physician Burnout



Potential Remedies

[Cureus](#). 2023 May; 15(5): e39195.

PMCID: PMC10292050

Published online 2023 May 18. doi: [10.7759/cureus.39195](https://doi.org/10.7759/cureus.39195)

PMID: [37378213](https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/37378213/)

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 Stroupauer](#),³ [Marina K Ibraheim](#),⁴ [Jennifer Li-Wang](#),⁵ and [Harry Dao](#)⁴



Perspective FREE PREVIEW

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.

[Join](#)[Renew](#)

reduce the burden of EHR work.

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

Contact Dermatitis by Location

[Eyelid Allergic Contact Dermatitis](#)

[Hand Allergic Contact Dermatitis](#)

[Neck Allergic Contact Dermatitis](#)

[Genital Allergic Contact Dermatitis](#)

[Lip Allergic Contact Dermatitis](#)

[Dermatitis of the Underarm Area](#)

[Generalized Dermatitis](#)

Contact Dermatitis

[Fragrance Allergy](#)

[Hair Dye Allergy](#)

[Less Allergenic Skin Care 2022](#)

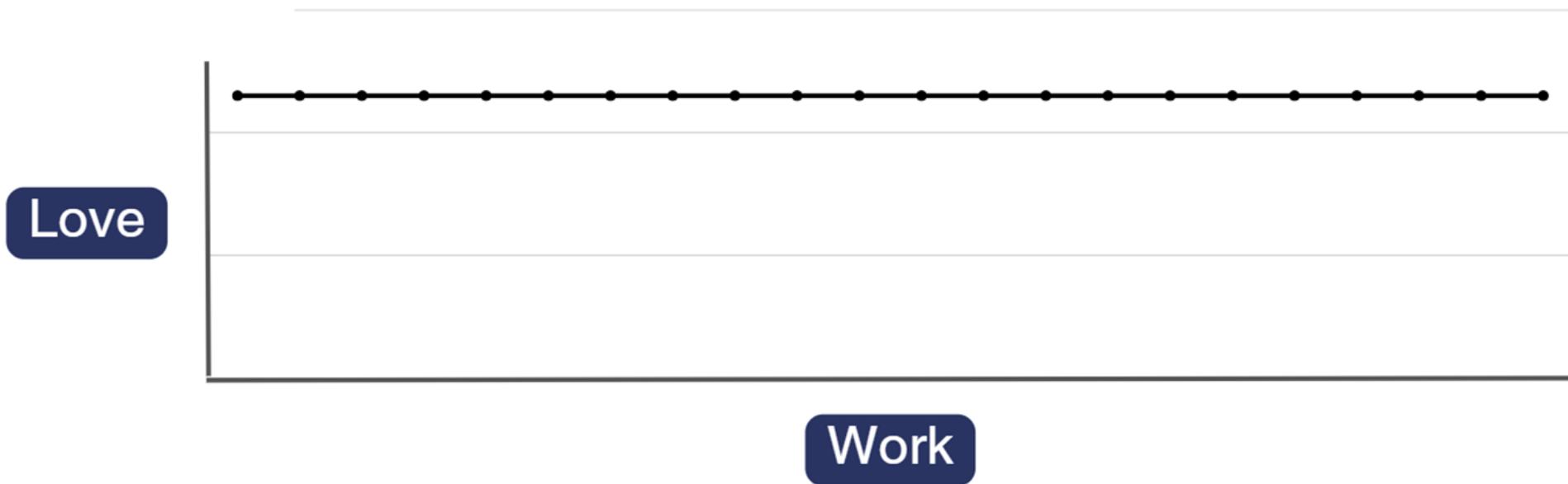
[Nickel Allergy and Jewelry](#)

[Shoe Allergy](#)

[Less Allergenic Makeup 2022](#)

[Systemic Contact Derm: Overview](#)

How much I love my work



How much I like my 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**

Medscape Medical News

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

> [J Am Med Inform Assoc. 2022 Jan 29;29\(3\):453-460. doi: 10.1093/jamia/ocab268.](#)

Assessing the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on clinician ambulatory electronic health record use

[A Jay Holmgren](#)¹, [N Lance Downing](#)², [Mitchell Tang](#)^{3 4}, [Christopher Sharp](#)²,
[Christopher Longhurst](#)⁵, [Robert S Huckman](#)⁴

Affiliations + expand

PMID: 34888680 PMCID: [PMC8689796](#) DOI: [10.1093/jamia/ocab268](#)

“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*

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL.

Your Doctor Replied to Your Email. That'll Cost \$25.

By Sumathi Reddy

March 8, 2024 [Original article](#) 

■ 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

RAND HEALTH QUARTERLY

Informing health policy through innovative research and analysis

[Rand Health Q.](#) 2014 Winter; 3(4): 1.

Published online 2014 Dec 1.

PMCID: PMC5051918

PMID: [28083306](#)

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](#).

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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

BASED ON THE #1 BREAKTHROUGH IDEA FROM *HARVARD BUSINESS REVIEW*

THE
PROGRESS
PRINCIPLE

USING SMALL WINS TO
IGNITE JOY, ENGAGEMENT, AND
CREATIVITY AT WORK



TERESA AMABILE
STEVEN KRAMER

HARVARD BUSINESS REVIEW PRESS

**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**

Comparative Study > Arch Intern Med. 2009 May 25;169(10):990-5.

doi: 10.1001/archinternmed.2009.70.

Career fit and burnout among academic faculty

Tait D Shanafelt ¹, Colin P West, Jeff A Sloan, Paul J Novotny, Greg A Poland, Ron Menaker, Teresa A Rummans, Lotte N Dyrbye

Affiliations + expand

PMID: 19468093 DOI: 10.1001/archinternmed.2009.70

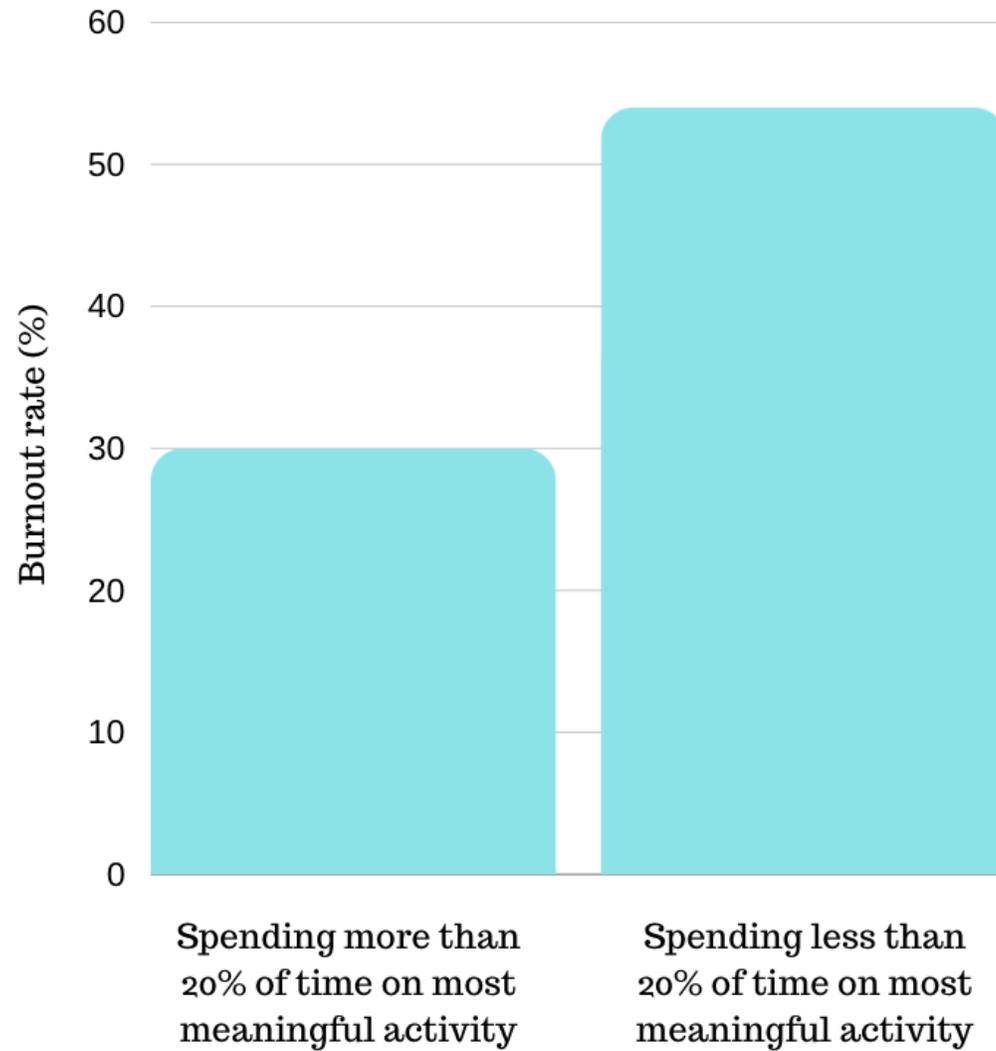
Abstract

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



The Joyful Workplace

The Mini-Z 2.0 Survey

[JAMA Netw Open](#). 2020 Oct; 3(10): e2018758.

PMCID: PMC7557504

Published online 2020 Oct 14. doi: [10.1001/jamanetworkopen.2020.18758](https://doi.org/10.1001/jamanetworkopen.2020.18758)

PMID: [33052399](https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/33052399/)

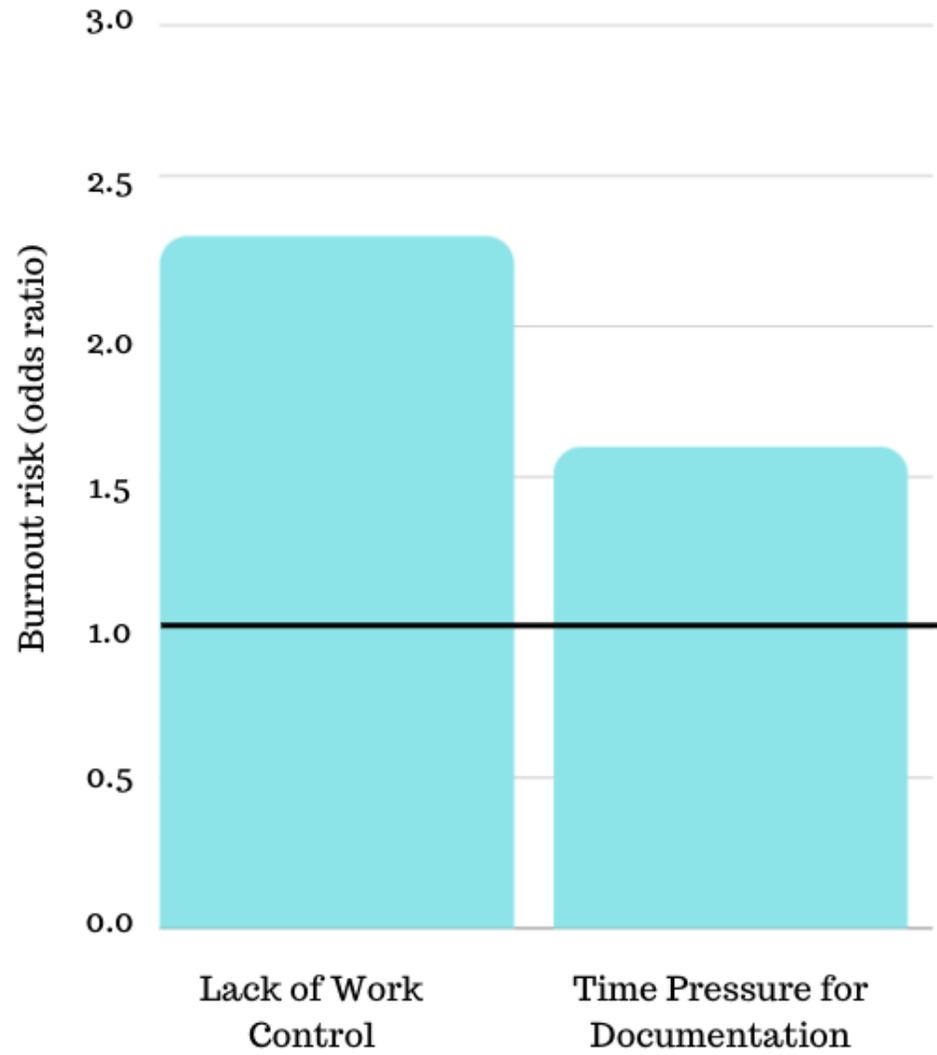
Evaluation of Work Satisfaction, Stress, and Burnout Among US Internal Medicine Physicians and Trainees

[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](#), MD^{7,8}

▶ [Author information](#) ▶ [Article notes](#) ▶ [Copyright and License information](#) [PMC Disclaimer](#)

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.

Risk Factors for Burnout



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

RAND HEALTH QUARTERLY

Informing health policy through innovative research and analysis

[Rand Health Q.](#) 2014 Winter; 3(4): 1.

Published online 2014 Dec 1.

PMCID: PMC5051918

PMID: [28083306](#)

Factors Affecting Physician Professional Satisfaction and Their Implications for Patient Care, Health Systems, and Health Policy

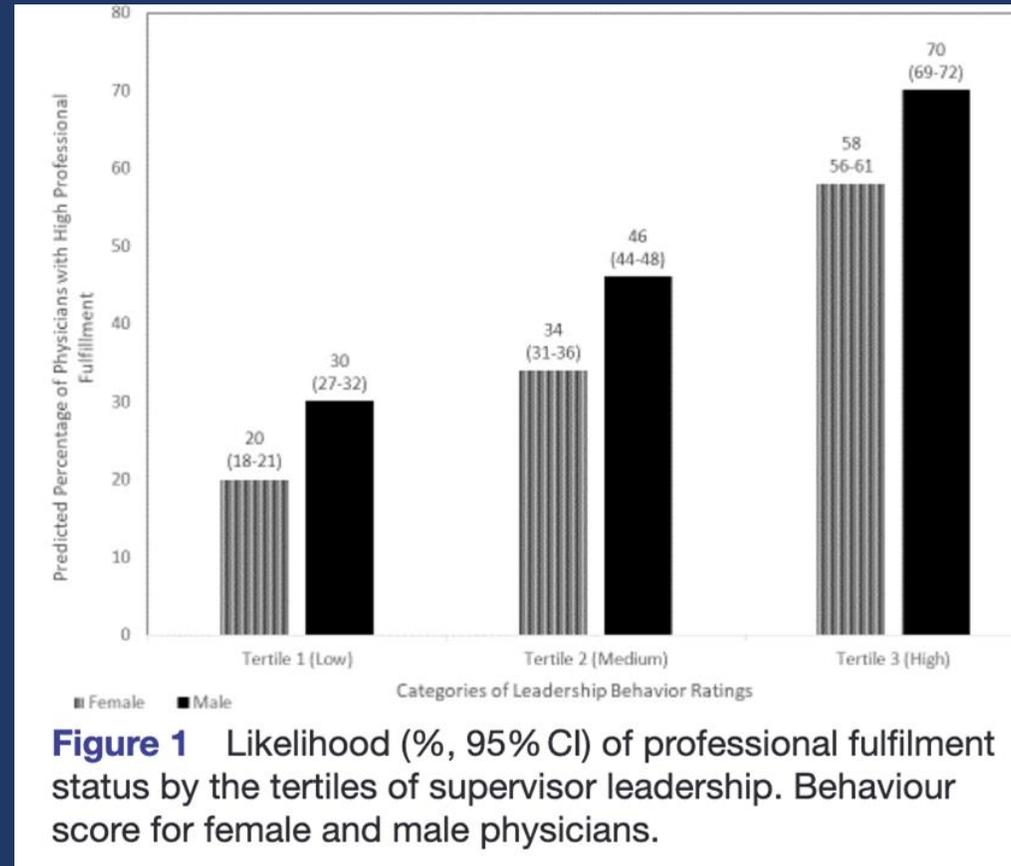
[Mark W. Friedberg](#), [Peggy G. Chen](#), [Kristin R. Van Busum](#), [Frances Aunon](#), [Chau Pham](#), [John Caloyeras](#), [Soeren Mattke](#), [Emma Pitchforth](#), [Denise D. Quigley](#), [Robert H. Brook](#), [F. Jay Crosson](#), and [Michael Tutty](#).

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**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



Worse ratings of leadership behaviors = higher rates of burnout

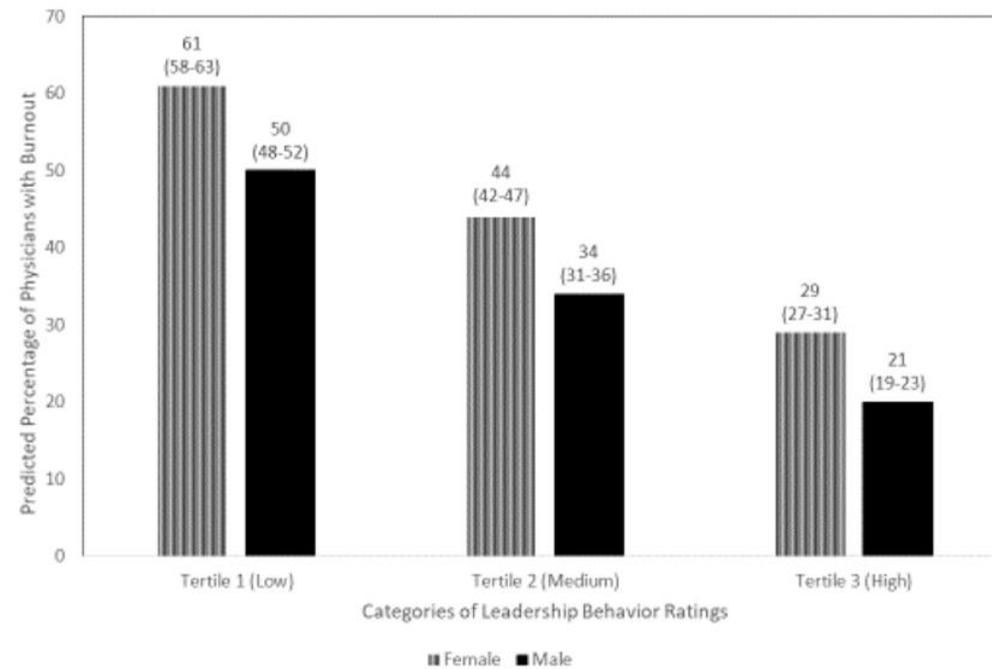


Figure 2 Likelihood (% , 95% CI) of burnout status by the tertiles of supervisor leadership. Behaviour score for female and male physicians.

Leadership behaviors associated with employee engagement

- Respect
- Keeping people informed
- Nurturing professional development
- Providing feedback and recognition
- Soliciting input

Open access

Original research

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 Goldman ,⁴ Tait Shanafelt,⁵ Daniel Marchalik^{3,6}

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

January 12, 2024

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

» [Author Affiliations](#) | [Article Information](#)

JAMA Netw Open. 2024;7(1):e2351635. doi:10.1001/jamanetworkopen.2023.51635

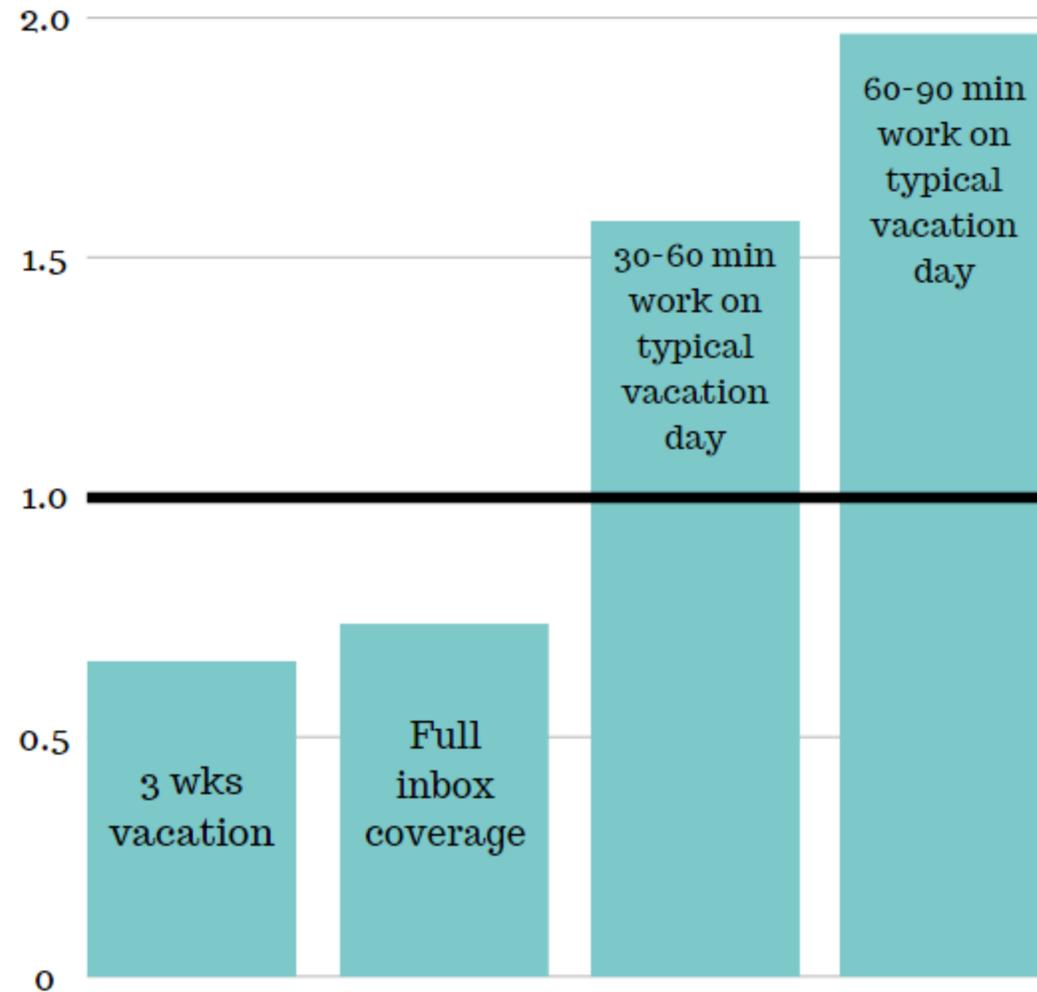
How many physicians take less than 5 days of vacation a year?

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)



“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**

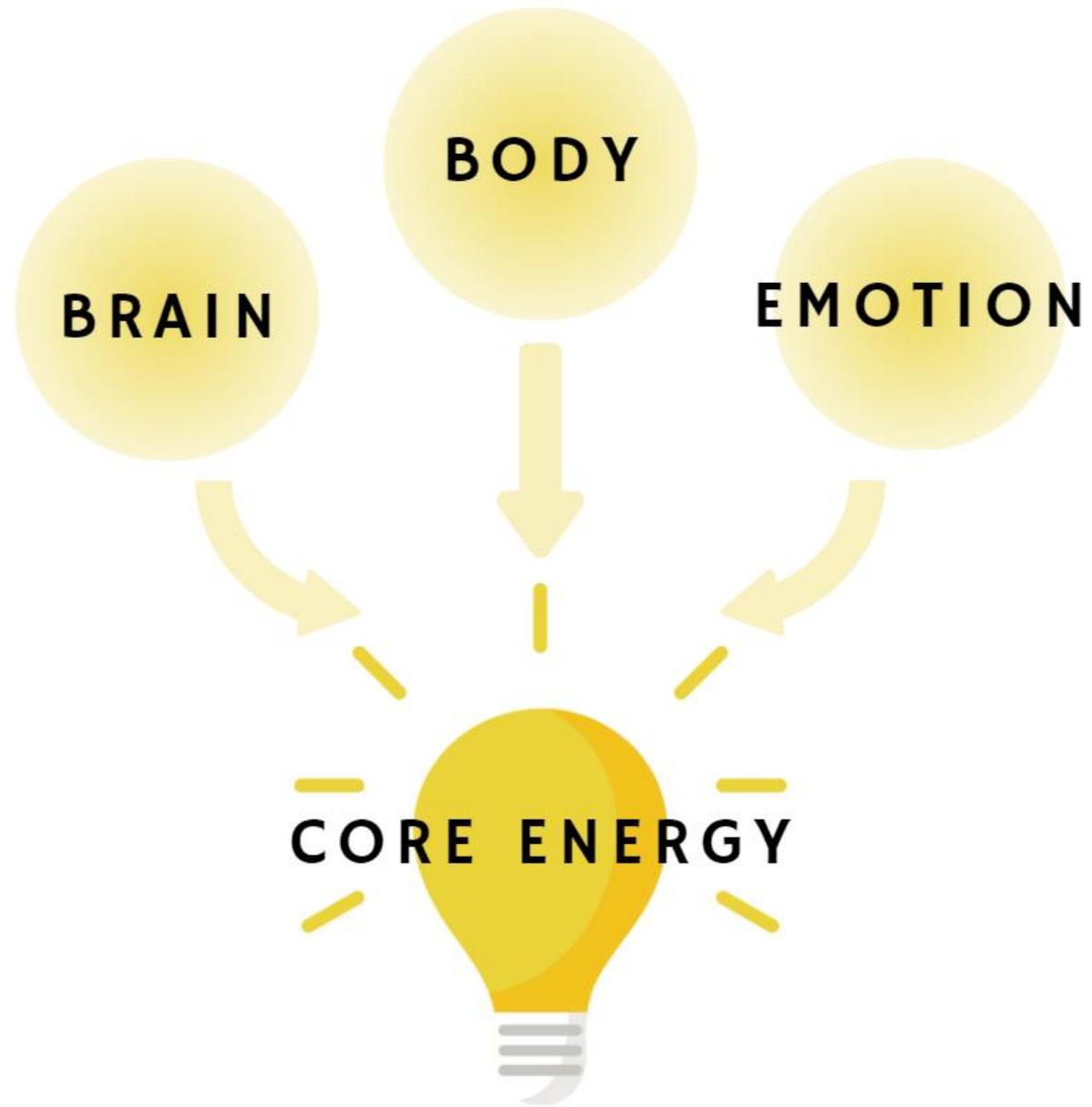
Meta-Analysis

> [BMJ Open](#). 2019 Sep 12;9(9):e028280. doi: 10.1136/bmjopen-2018-028280.

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



Energy:

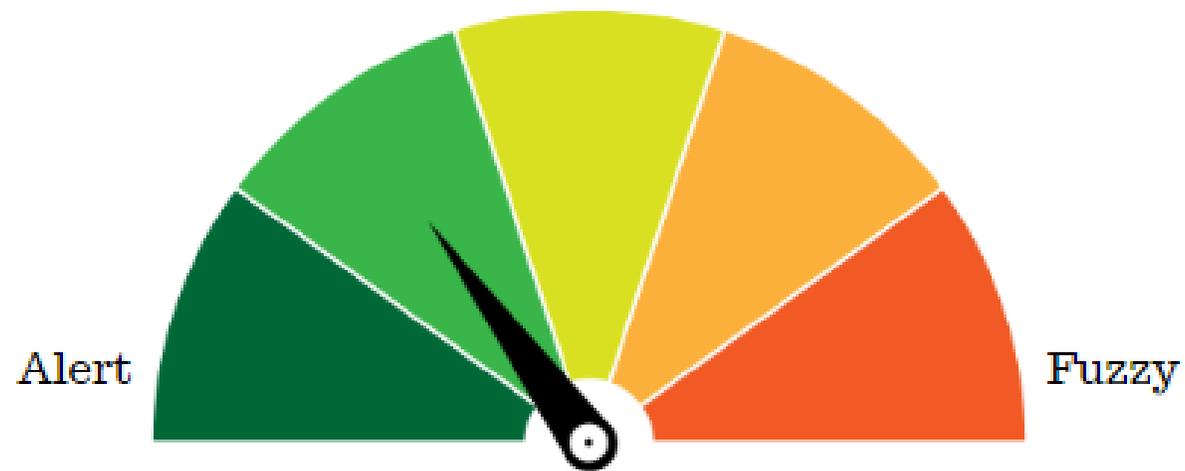
Brain

Body

Emotional

Brain Energy

Brain Energy



“[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 ¹,  Camilla Parpia ¹,  Abi Sriharan ^{2, 3},  Daniel T Keefe ^{4, 5}



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PHYSICIAN HEALTH

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-Wang¹, Alexandra Townsley², 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

Body Energy



Original Investigation | Health Policy



December 7, 2020

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](#)

» [Author Affiliations](#) | [Article Information](#)

JAMA Netw Open. 2020;3(12):e2028111. doi:10.1001/jamanetworkopen.2020.28111

Sleep

Insufficient sleep predicts clinical burnout

Marie Söderström ¹, Kerstin Jeding, Mirjam Ekstedt, Aleksander Perski, Torbjörn Akerstedt

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

Mieke Sonnenschein ¹, 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?

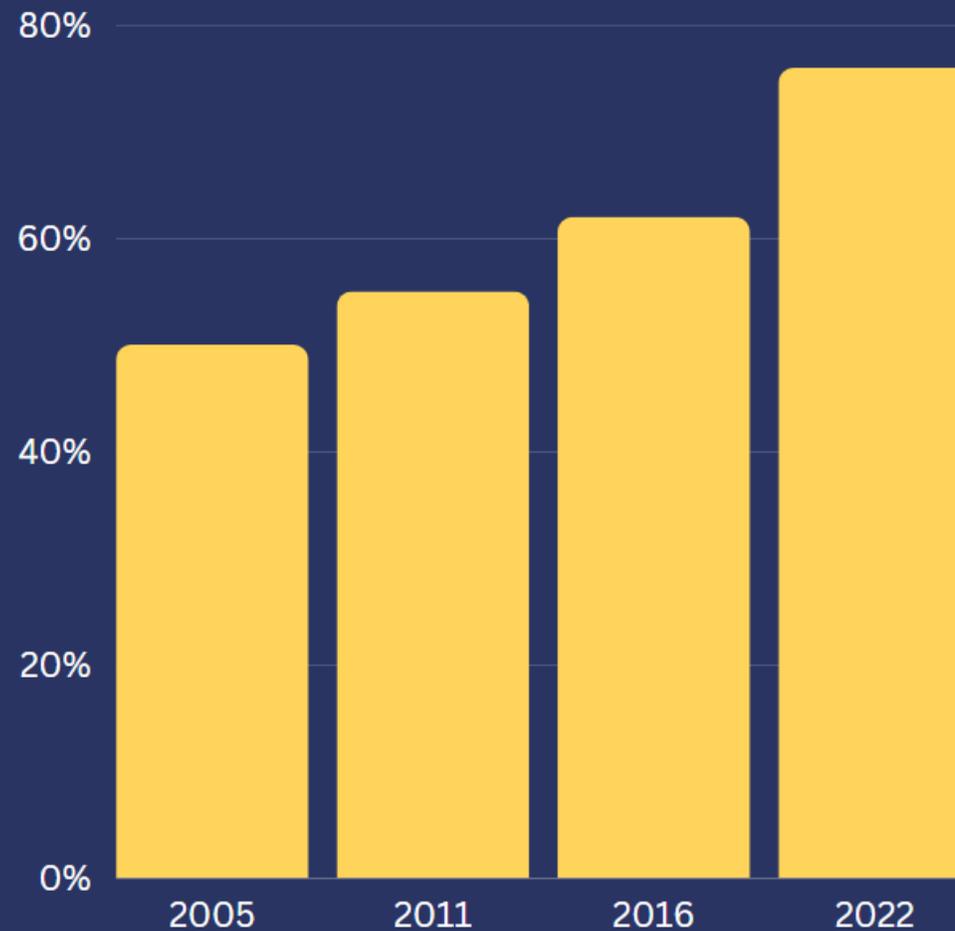
When Patient Rudeness Impacts Care: A Review of Incivility in Healthcare

Monitoring Editor: Alexander Muacevic and John R Adler

[Alexandra Townsley](#),¹ [Jennifer Li-Wang](#),² and [Rajani Katta](#)^{3,4}

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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



This Issue

Views **11,527** | Citations **7** | Altmetric **372**



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Original Investigation | Occupational Health



May 19, 2022

Physicians' Experiences With Mistreatment and Discrimination by Patients, Families, and Visitors and Association With Burnout

Liselotte N. Dyrbye, MD, MHPE^{1,2}; Colin P. West, MD, PhD¹; Christine A. Sinsky, MD³; et al

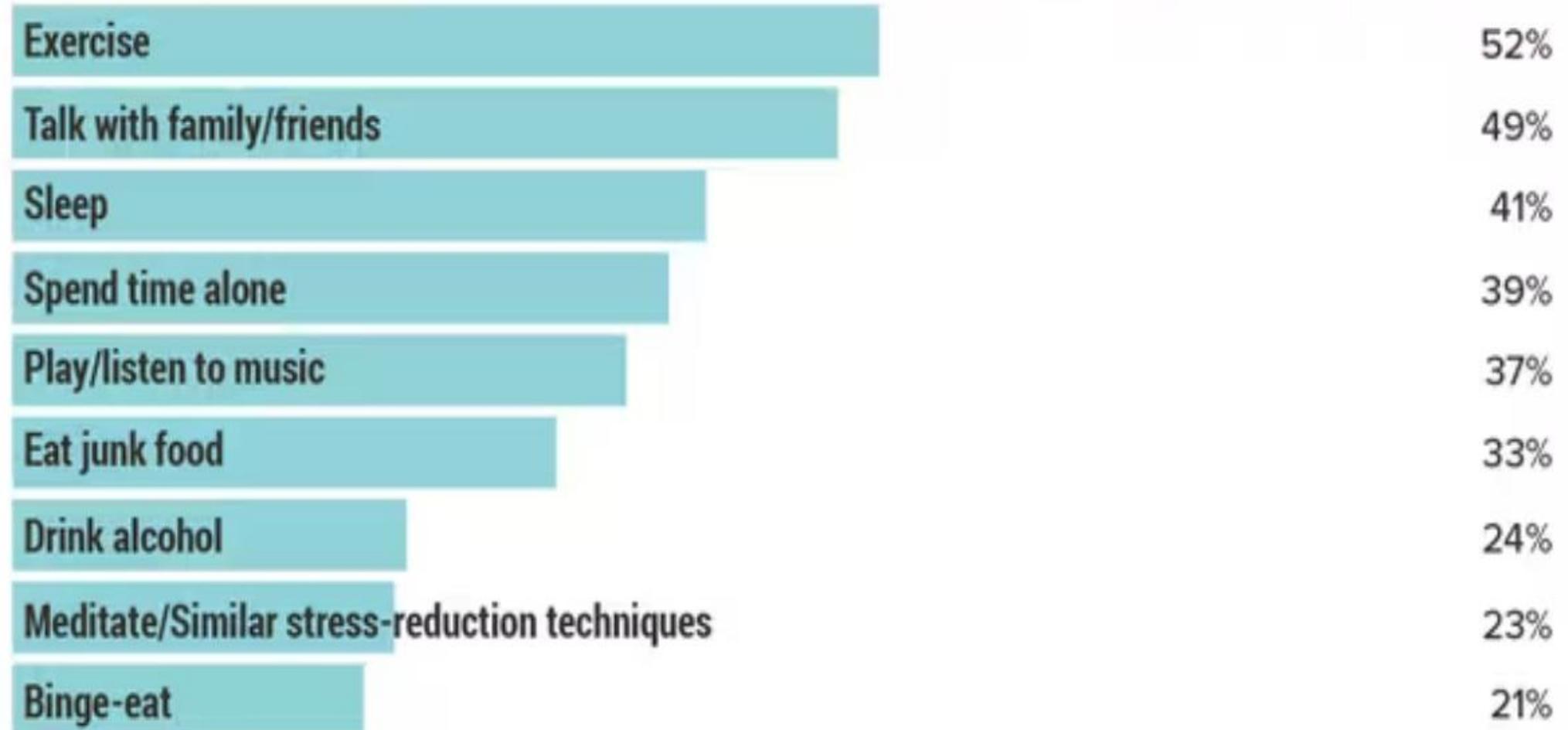
Findings In this cross-sectional study of 6512 US physicians, mistreatment and discriminatory behaviors by patients, families, and visitors within the previous year were common, especially for female and racial and ethnic minority physicians, and associated with higher burnout rates.

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



[Cureus](#). 2023 Jan; 15(1): e34102.

PMCID: PMC9946896

Published online 2023 Jan 23. doi: [10.7759/cureus.34102](https://doi.org/10.7759/cureus.34102)

PMID: [36843822](https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/36843822/)

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 Katta](#)^{3,4}

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Guest Blog

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?



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Author manuscript
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[Submit a manuscript](#)

[Behav Neurosci](#). Author manuscript; available in PMC 2015 Aug 1.

PMCID: PMC4518468

Published in final edited form as:

NIHMSID: NIHMS697561

[Behav Neurosci](#). 2015 Aug; 129(4): 389–398.

PMID: [26214213](#)

doi: [10.1037/bne0000074](#)

Oxytocin reduces amygdala activity, increases social interactions and reduces anxiety-like behavior irrespective of NMDAR antagonism

[Rosanna Sobota](#),¹ [Takuma Mihara](#),^{1,2} [Alexandra Forrest](#),¹ [Robert E. Featherstone](#),¹ and [Steven J. Siegel](#)^{1,*}

Under Our Control

- Doctor Thinking for Pain Points
- Strategic Thinking
- Energy management



For links to references:

[TheWorkDoctor.com](https://www.theworkdoctor.com)

