

ORIGINAL ARTICLE

Association Of Burnout Syndrome with Social Factors in Physical Therapists

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Abstract

Background: Burnout syndrome is a psychosocial syndrome that develops when chronic work - related stress interacts with personal characteristics that have an impact on a person's QOL. It is common in helping professionals of the medical field and causes exhaustion, decreased work productivity, chronic fatigue, stress and emotional exhaustion.

Objective: The aim of this study is to evaluate the association of burnout syndrome with social factors in physical therapist

Method: This cross-sectional study was conducted on 195 participants. For the collection of the data, Maslach Burnout Inventory Survey was used to evaluate its three components emotional exhaustion (EE), depersonalization (DP) and personal assessment (PA) among physiotherapists working in both government and private sectors. The participants were of both gender (111 males and 84 females) between 25-55 years of age. To examine the relationship between participant and social factors and burnout, Pearson's chi square test was used. Before the participants filled out the survey questions, written permission was obtained from them and the significance of the research was discussed.

Results: According to the study, the average + SD score for mental fatigue was 2.16+0.87, mean +SD score for depersonalization was 2.39+ 0.71 and mean +SD score for personal assessment was 1.60+ 0.77. Out of 195 physiotherapists including 111 males and 84 females, 93 physiotherapists (47%) results showed high degree of emotional exhaustion, 103 physiotherapists (52%) showed high degree of depersonalization (DP) and 112 (57%) showed low degree of personal assessment (PA). The standardized P value was 0.05.

Conclusion: This study concluded that physical therapist of Pakistan was at high risk of developing burnout syndrome. Being young and male were the main predisposing factors for the burnout syndrome. Male and younger physical therapists were more likely to suffer elevated degrees of emotional exhaustion and depersonalization compared to females and female's physiotherapists were more likely to suffer elevated degree of personal assessment as compared to males.

Key words: Burnout syndrome, Physiotherapists, emotional exhaustion, depersonalization and personal assessment, Maslach Burnout-Inventory.

Introduction

American psychologist Herbert Freudenberg is credited with coining the term "burnout." By placing unreasonable demands on one's power, endurance, and resources, he defined burnout as "to fail, wear out, or to become tired."^{1,2}

A psychosocial syndrome called burnout develops when continuous job stress interacts with personal circumstances that impact a person's overall QOL.³

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Maslach and Jackson also describe Burnout syndrome and divide it into 3 main dimensions for evaluation. These were emotional exhaustion (EE), depersonalization (DP) personal accomplishment/assessment (PA). Emotional exhaustion refers

to a state of complete emotional fatigue where an individual does not have the energy to participate on an emotional level⁴. Depersonalization is developing a negative attitude toward the people requiring care and being cynical and isolated from even their colleagues⁵. Some factors for burnout syndrome include (b) The younger generation working for a year or above, such as medical doctors and midwives, are at a greater risk. (c) Marital status also affects burnout; unmarried individuals are at a greater risk. (d) Individuals with fragile or submissive personalities are also at a greater risk. Occupational burnout in physiotherapists is prevalent and is linked to lower job satisfaction^{6,7}.

Physical therapists are more likely to have burnout syndrome because they cope with their patient's physical and psychological distress as they experience different levels of impairment and are constantly in contact with them^{8,9}. Burnout symptoms can reduce a physiotherapist's workload capacity, resulting in doubts about their professional choice and a deterioration in performance work quality¹⁰.

Physiotherapists reported experiencing burnout due to the stress and uncertainty of carrying out professional duties. Burnout is frequently associated with decreased self-esteem, aversion to work, and loss of concern^{11,12}. Some factors associated with burnout in health care professionals are drug or alcohol abuse, low concentration levels, depression, and suicide, leading to poor quality of life^{13,14}. Feelings or conditions involving mental fatigue and frustration at work may result in psychological issues that cause burnout. ¹⁵.

The most significant stressors contributing to a decline in physical therapists' emotional and physical well-being are time mismanagement, working on pointless patient data documentation, a lack of therapists working in physiotherapy units, and inadequacy of financial resources^{16,17}. Short temper, inappropriate behavior with patients and coworkers, a sense of exhaustion, a loss of sensitivity to patient needs, and a refusal to accept new patients are just a few of the behaviors displayed by therapists¹⁸. This study aims to find the frequency of burnout syndrome in physical therapists and its association with social factors.

Material & methods

This cross-sectional study was conducted on 195 participants. For the collection of the data, Maslach Burnout Inventory Survey was used to evaluate emotional exhaustion (EE), depersonalization (DP), and personal assessment (PA) among physiotherapists working in both government and private sectors. The participants were of both genders (111 males and 84 females) between 25 and 55. This survey evaluated the participants' job-related stress. Pearson's chi-square test evaluated the correlation between burnout and particular participant and social factors. Before the participants filled out the survey questions, written permission was obtained from them, and the research's significance was discussed.

Results

One hundred ninety-five physiotherapists (111 males and 84 females) participated in this study to check the frequency of burnout syndrome in physical therapists and its association with social factors. The mean age is 1.159, ranging from 25-55 years old. One hundred sixty-nine physiotherapists had an age range of 25-35, 21 had an age range of 36-45, and 5 had a range of 46-55. The mean +SD score for emotional exhaustion was

2.16+0.87, the mean +SD score for depersonalization was 2.39+0.71, and the mean +SD score for personal assessment was 1.60+0.77.

Table 1 Descriptive statistics of Demographic data

Demographic Data	Frequency	Percentage
Age		
25-35	169	86.7%
36-45	21	10.8%
46-55	5	2.6%
Gender		
Male	111	56.9%
Female	84	43.1%
Work setting		
Government Hospital	28	14.4%
Private Hospital	73	37.4%
Private Clinic	94	48.2%
Hours Worked		
1-5	63	32.3%
5-8	87	44.6%
8+	45	23.1%
Experience of years		
1-2	81	41.5%
2-6	80	40%
7-10	20	10.3%
10+	14	7.2%
Patients treated daily		
1-4	43	22.1%
4-8	80	41%
8+	72	36.9%
Patients treated in		
OPD	37	19%
Indoors	30	15.4%
Both	128	65.6%
Quality of life		
Excellent	68	34.9%
Good	97	49.7%
Poor	30	15.4%
Quality of sleep		
Excellent	44	22.6%
Good	107	54.9%
Poor	44	22.6%

Table 2 Frequency distribution of Burnout Syndrome Components

Burnout Syndrome Components	Frequency
Emotional Exhaustion (EE)	
Low degree	61
Moderate degree	41
High degree	93
Depersonalization (DP)	
Low degree	26
Moderate degree	66
High degree	103
Personal Assessment (PA)	
Low degree	112
Moderate degree	48
High degree	35

Of the 195 physiotherapists, 93 physiotherapists had a high degree, 61 physiotherapists had a low degree, 41 had a moderate degree of emotional exhaustion, 103 physiotherapists had a high degree, 66 physiotherapists had a moderate degree, 26 had a low degree of depersonalization, and 112 physiotherapists had a low degree, 48 physiotherapists had a moderate degree, and 35 had high degree personal assessment among physiotherapists.

Social factors	Emotional Exhaustion (EE)	Depersonalization (DP)	Personal Assessment (PA)
Work setting			
Chi square	14.335	5.459	5.920
P value	0.006	0.243	0.205
Hours worked			
Chi square	6.656	6.167	13.502
P value	0.015	0.187	0.009
Experience of years			
Chi square	6.477	9.607	38.000
P value	0.372	0.142	0.000
Patients treated daily			
Chi square	8.142	2.633	7.975
P value	0.047	0.023	0.093
Quality of life			
Chi square	3.644	8.453	4.545
P value	0.034	0.076	0.337

There was no significant association of emotional exhaustion (EE) with years of experience, while there was a significant association of emotional exhaustion (EE) with work setting, quality of life, working hours, and the patient treated daily. Depersonalization (DP) had no significant association with social factors except

for patients treated daily. And there was a significant association of Personal assessment (PA) with hours worked and experience of years, while there was no association of personal assessment (PA) with work setting, a patient treated daily quality of life.

Discussion

The main goal of this study was to quantify the prevalence of burnout syndrome, its relationship to social parameters, and the probability that it would occur. This study discovered no connection between gender, years of work experience, or emotional exhaustion (EE). At the same time, emotional exhaustion (EE) was significantly associated with work setting, quality of life, working hours, and the patients treated daily. There was no significant association of depersonalization (DP) with gender and social factors, while depersonalization (DP) has a significant association with a patient treated daily. And there was a significant association of Personal assessment (PA) with gender, hours worked, and experience of years, while there was no association of personal assessment (PA) with work setting, a patient treated daily quality of life.

It is more common in males than females because, in hospitals, more men were working than women. Additionally, more men worked as home visitors, who were required to ride a bike for a prolonged time, which increased the risk of burnout. Therefore, BOS has a high risk of developing in physiotherapists who work in Lahore. Out of the 195 physiotherapists, 93 physiotherapists (47%) had a high degree, 61 physiotherapists (31%) had a low degree, and 41 physiotherapists (21%) had a moderate degree of emotional exhaustion among physiotherapists, 103 physiotherapists (52%) had a high degree, 66 physiotherapists (33%) had a moderate degree, and 26 physiotherapists (13%) had a low degree of depersonalization among physiotherapists, 112 physiotherapists (57%) had a low degree, 48 physiotherapists (24%) had a moderate degree, and 35 physiotherapists (17%) had a high degree of personal assessment among physiotherapists.

A study conducted in 2019 on 118 Italian physical therapists have a higher-than-average chance of getting burnout syndrome; compared to other groups from other nations, their mental condition is one of the worse. A BMI survey was used, and the data was collected from both males and females. Men, younger, and focusing on cognitive disorders were the main aggravating characteristics for burnout syndrome¹⁹. According to this research, 195 participants, both male (111) and female (84), to check BOS, there is a high risk of developing burnout syndrome the male was more prevalent.

In her study, Saima Jabbar et al. in 2022 indicated mild to moderate burnout among physiotherapists. According to study findings, emotional exhaustion had a mean+SD score of 16.55 + 5.07, personal satisfaction had a mean+SD score of 44.73 + 1.54, and depersonalization had a mean+SD score of 0.75 + 0.93²⁰. In contrast with our current study, the mean age is 1.159, ranging from

25-55 years old. One hundred sixty-nine physiotherapists had an age range of 25-35, 21 had the age range of 36-45, and 5 had a range of 46-55. The mean +SD score for emotional exhaustion was 2.16+0.87, the mean +SD score for depersonalization was 2.39+ 0.71, and the mean +SD score for personal assessment was 1.60+ 0.77.

Saif Ullah et al. in 2020 the study revealed that Physical therapists experienced severe levels of burnout in 35.6%, moderate levels of burnout in 26.7%, and low levels of burnout in 37.6% of cases overall (EE+DP). 67.3% of respondents reported having low levels of EE burnout, 26.7% reported having moderate levels, and 5.9% reported having high levels. Regarding DP, 27.7% reported a low level of burnout, 35.6% a moderate level, and 36.6% a severe level of burnout. 58.4% of respondents reported having low levels of PA burnout, 24.8% had moderate levels, and 16.8% had high levels. ⁽²⁰⁾In contrast to our study, out of the 195 physiotherapists, 93 physiotherapists (47%) had a high degree, 61 physiotherapists (31%) had a low degree, and 41 physiotherapists (21%) had a moderate degree of emotional exhaustion among physiotherapists, 103 physiotherapists (52%) had a high degree, 66 physiotherapists (33%) had a moderate degree, and 26 physiotherapists (13%) had a low degree of depersonalization among physiotherapists, 112 physiotherapists (57%) had a low degree, 48 physiotherapists (24%) had a moderate degree, and 35 physiotherapists (17%) had a high degree of personal assessment among physiotherapists.

Līga Barone et al. 2022 stated in a concluded study finding physiotherapists have low Secondary Traumatic Stress (M=27,544,65), moderate Burnout (M=17,686,89), and moderate Compassion Fatigue (M=36,377,23). Only the EE dimension had a high value (M=24,5212,84), but physiotherapists also have moderate Depersonalization P (M=7,36,06) and low Personal Accomplishment (M=38). All of these occurrences have statistically significant correlations with one another. Additionally, among physiotherapists with varying lengths of employment, statistically significant variances in these occurrences are also confirmed²¹. In contrast with our current study, the mean age is 1.159, ranging from 25-55 years old. One hundred sixty-nine physiotherapists had an age range of 25-35, 21 had an age range of 36-45, and 5 had a range of 46-55. The mean +SD score for emotional exhaustion was 2.16+0.87, the mean +SD score for depersonalization was 2.39+ 0.71, and the mean +SD score for personal assessment was 1.60+ 0.77.

Conclusion

This study concluded that physical therapist in Pakistan was at high risk of developing burnout syndrome. Being young and male were the main predisposing factors for burnout syndrome. Male and younger physical therapists were more likely to suffer elevated degrees of emotional exhaustion and depersonalization than females, and female physiotherapists were more likely to suffer elevated degrees of personal assessment compared to males.

Author Contributions

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