



Burn Out Among Dentist's Post Covid-19 Pandemic

Praveena Raman*

Senior Lecturer, Department of Oral Medicine and Radiology, Sathyabama Dental College and Hospital, Chennai, India

***Corresponding Author:** Praveena Raman, Senior Lecturer, Department of Oral Medicine and Radiology, Sathyabama Dental College and Hospital, Chennai, India.

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German Psychiatrist Herbert Freudenberger in 1974, introduced the term Burnout and explained it as a state of exhaustion (emotional and mental) observed among volunteer workers with varied physical and behavioural outcomes [1]. Burnout is a mental and physical state that occurs when our mind-body system is consistently exposed to levels of stress it cannot handle. Though there is no uniformly agreed definition for burnout syndrome, it is both a process as well as a condition. Burnout is often mistaken as Stress. Stress is not the only main cause of Burnout, though it can intensify. Stress produces urgency and hyperactivity. Burnout, on the other hand, produces helplessness. As energy is depleted and decreases the immunity, a person might have a tendency to isolate more, procrastinate, and experience emotions like hopelessness and self-doubt apart from other physical symptoms like headache, fatigue, heartburn and gastrointestinal issues. Burnout of a person results from a combination of multiple dimensions which unite to deteriorate the efficiency of the person. Feeling of being depleted of one's emotional resources is referred to as emotional exhaustion. Depersonalizing refers to a negative, callous, or excessively detached response to the recipients of one's service or care. Reduced personal accomplishment refers to a decline in one's feeling of competence. For successful achievement in one's work, emotional exhaustion is the key dimension that shows robust relationship with various job stressors, such as work overload, role problems, or lack of social support.

Corona virus disease-19 (Covid-19) has caused significant impact on every human on earth specifically to all the health care professionals. Dentists are not the least affected among them. Every week a practicing Dentist is served with multiple recommenda-

tions and guidelines from various National and International bodies across the globe and they are introduced to numerous Covid-19 related Jargons [2,3]. They strive for perfection even in upgrading themselves with the current management options available for Covid-19 [4]. Most of the practicing dentists are still in a dilemma. They often feel, what if I take the infection to my home? how do I invest overnight in my clinical practice? Where on the other hand a Dentist attached to an institution often feel, how will I be able to manage my work stress with long working hours? They are being overloaded with online classes with timely documentation and submission, multiple webinar sessions, academic and research works with lack of timely recognition and appropriate reward, lack of social support, a never-ending workplace management instruction, loss of connectivity with colleagues, students, family along with domestic duties/responsibilities during lockdown, managing online classes for their kids, economic burden, thus stress is piled-up under a single roof; with dentist's landing in disturbed work schedules, depression, altered sleep pattern, anxiety, memory problems, alcohol consumption and musculoskeletal problems. These work factors and external factors have definite psychological and behavioural consequences which reduces the Quality of working life. Thus, post pandemic, Dentist's might be in a state of burn out, facing emotional exhaustion with feelings of energy depletion, a state of low personal accomplishment and depersonalization with increased mental distance from one's job, or feeling of negativism or cynicism to one's job or reduced professional efficacy [5].

The recognition of burnout is important for prevention by means of a feedback or a self-check questionnaire. The first question to initiate self-care is what causes burnout, then trying to combat them

individually. A dentist should inculcate valuable time, energy and money on self-care. It could be relaxing in front of television, hitting a gym, book reading, spending quality time with loved ones, making sure they get a break in the middle of the day to 'switch off' to get a dedicated lunch break, re-creating one self, showcasing talents in social media, continuing to learn and explore, a short walk, meditation, connecting with online communities and colleagues, managing time, creating a self-reward system, scheduling work plan, indulging into religious thoughts and prayers including chanting Veda or reading ancient scriptures. Few burnout management strategies include Person directed like cognitive behavioural measures, organisation directed, combined approaches, experiential and psychoanalytic group therapy. Interventions can either be etiological and/or symptomatic.

Burnout is an occupational health issue as well as a public health concern and an over stressed dentist today might burnout in the long run. Its ignorance might contribute negative implications. Hence there is a need to discover innovative individualised preventive strategies by each dentist's in this pandemic era to improve their quality of working life.

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