



Impact of Stress on Dentists and its Management

Swarnaprabha Ashok*

Independent Private Dental Practitioner, Chennai, Tamil Nadu, India

***Corresponding Author:** Swarnaprabha Ashok, Independent Private Dental Practitioner, Chennai, Tamil Nadu, India.

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Abstract

Stress is a type of psychological stimuli that affects the quality of work and life. A psychological well-being is equated to happiness and so bereavement from this, as in conditions of stress is equated to impaired psychosocial well-being. Every dental surgeon undergoes stress at some point of his career due to varied reasons and its effective management lies within the dentist himself.

Keywords: Stress; Dentistry; Stress Management; Psychological Stimuli

Introduction

Stress is defined as “a state of psychological and physiological imbalance resulting from the disparity between situational demand and the individual’s ability and motivation to meet those needs”. In other words, stress is a physical, mental, or emotional factor that causes bodily or mental tension. Stresses can be external (from the environment, psychological, or social situations) or internal, physiological or psychological or both, acute or chronic.

Stress is attributed to various reasons with the common stressors being:

- Peer and societal pressure
- Poor time management
- Financial pressure
- Poor working conditions like
- Prolonged working hours
- Poor personal care
- Medicolegal issues
- Lack of prospective opportunities.

Impact of stress on dentists

Dentistry is a highly stressful career and the effect of stress is not specified to the dental surgeons alone in dentistry, but the effect on dentists alone is discussed here. Stress is manifested in various forms which may be broadly categorized as physical and mental:

1. Physical manifestations

- Increase in blood pressure
- Abnormal weight loss/ gain
- More prone to illness
- Increased susceptibility to cardiovascular diseases.

2. Mental manifestations

- Loss of zeal in work
- Emotional fall out
- Anger
- Mood swings
- Depression
- Lack of concentration
- Detrimental effect on clinical performance.

Numerous studies have been conducted regarding stress affecting the dentists. One such systematic review of Impact of stress on dentists’ clinical performance, published in PubMed could not conclusively draw a conclusion as there was no sufficient empirical evidence. However the studies on stress and its related implications continue and we hope to obtain a critically evident result soon.

Management of stress

While the impact of stress is indispensable for a dental professional, its management solely lies within oneself. The major aegis includes:

- a) Acceptance: Acceptance of the fact that one is under stress and need guidance.
 - b) Self-analysis: A critical review of oneself aids in assessment of the situation
 - c) Understanding burnout: A major population of dentists refuse to accept the burnout phase and try to camouflage it.
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All of the above mentioned factors needs to be assessed and addressed, as evidently proved by:

- Time management
- Flexible working hours
- Improving the working conditions
- Attention to fitness
- Indulging in a hobby
- Yoga and/or other activities
- Seeking help, counseling
- Better financial management
- Taking breaks in between.

Conclusion

Stress is inevitable in the profession of dentistry but what makes one overcome this is, fathom and accept the countenance of stress and managing it suitably. It is pertinent to see that stress does not affect the quality of life and measures are taken before it ends up in complexities. The impact and management of stress is not limited to the data presented in this article but rather a curated content [1-7].

Conflict of Interest

None.

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