

# Stress in the Workplace

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# Burnout Generating Factors

- Demand-Control Imbalance (Karasek, 1979)
- Jobs that are stressful with high demands and low control = found as risk factor for cardio-vascular diseases and psychiatric morbidity (Bosma, 1998)

## AT WORK:

- Even during times of a booming economy, in the U.S., employees show a significant level of anger.
- Two out of three workers (64%) feel at least somewhat strongly that new technology = frustrating, stressful, hurts morale.
- Two out of five (38%) are a little intimidated by new technology.

# GALLUP SURVEY (1999)

- 49% (1999) at least some anger at work compared to 42% (1998).
- 54% at least somewhat stressed at work + 24% at least a little stressed; higher in women, younger workers and those with job dissatisfaction.
- 46% needed help in managing stress.

# EARLY SIGNS OF STRESS

## C/O:

- More reactive than before
- Feeling worn down
- Irritability
- Sleep difficulties
- Depression + Anxiety
- Anhedonia
- Ruminative thinking, Obsessions, Cravings

## Most Common Medical Visits for:

- Exhaustion, Aches and Pains
- Anxiety Disorders: panic attacks; GAD
- Depressive Disorders: major depression
- Gastrointestinal Disorders
- +/- Substance Abuse

# Basic Biological Concepts

- Stress (Selye) = Diverse stimuli seem to result in similar changes. - Adrenal glands
- General Adaptation = Physiological changes in response to stressors.
- Stressors = “Events”- induce stress
- ANS (Langley, 1921). Also: “The Involuntary Nervous System” (Gaskell,1916)
- The Polyvagal Theory (Porges, 1995):
  - I) Myelinated (ventral)Vagus-nc. Ambiguus
  - II) The Sympathetic System
  - III) Unmyelinated vagus - Nc. of the solitary tract

# Basic Biological Concepts (cont'd)

- Cumulative effect of stress and traumatic stress = irreversible neuroendocrine changes - Cortisol levels
- Changes in the vagal and sympathetic tone
- Effects on brain: - changes in the hippocampus
  - changes in neurogenesis
  - amygdala-hyperarousal
  - Subcortical activation

# Physician Burnout-Prevalence

- 1970s- Freudenberg: “Burnout”
- Over past 20 years: 30% - 60% (academic faculty- 37% - 47% ; private practice- 55% - 67%) (Ramirez et al, 1995;Guntupalli, 1996)
- Increase in prevalence from 25.3% (1989) to 38.1% (1997) (Mirvis et al, 1999)



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