

EVALUATION OF HAPPINESS AMONG SPECIALITY MEDICAL DOCTORS WORKING IN PRIVATE HOSPITALS IN INDIA: A QUALITATIVE RESEARCH

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ABSTRACT

Aim of the study: This study aimed to investigate factors that affect happiness among various speciality medical doctors in the departments of ENT, Gynaecology, Ophthalmology, General Medicine and General Surgery working in private hospitals in India.

Methodology: Our study consisted of 800 speciality doctors working in 45 private hospitals in India. An closed-ended questionnaire was sent to the survey participants by Email. Responses of 654 doctors were received which included 108 ENT surgeons, 112 Gynaecologists, 103 Ophthalmologist, 172 General Physicians and 159 General Surgeons which were then subjected to descriptive statistical analysis. The questions were based upon various factors which affected the quality of life as well as job satisfaction and happiness in general in the survey participants.

Results: Our study showed that the ENT specialists were far more work-loaded than desired with around 55 % of them were not satisfied with the salary. In the case of Gynaecologists, Job satisfaction overall coped better with around 70% of them gave positive responses. Whereas in case of Ophthalmologists, they were not satisfied with the increased workload that they endured; around 51 % gave negative responses. Data on General surgeons showed that they had physical health issues with around 57 % of negative responses. Most of the General Physicians were not satisfied with their salaries (58%).

Conclusion: Present study depicted that our speciality doctors need more of salary satisfaction as well as better mental health strategies to cope with the increased amount of stress in the medical professional life.

Keywords Happiness, Job Satisfaction, Mental Health, Quality of life.

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I. INTRODUCTION

Happiness has different meanings including; momentary joy, long-term joy, and joy at total life. It is among the most basic human needs, the most central motives for human efforts, and the most important strengths of human beings. It promotes creativity, helps individuals more easily attain their goals, improves decision making ability, life satisfaction, and quality of life, alleviates negative emotions, promotes physical and mental health, and enables individuals to enjoy their lives. It also helps them achieve success in different aspects of life such as working life and reduces job burnout, absence from work, and intention to leave job.¹ Healthcare system is a labour-intensive sector. Over the years, it has undergone a dramatic change as a result of razor edge competition, technological advancement, knowledge transfer, escalating cost and concomitant demand for better-patient care services. Job satisfaction is one of the most important determining factors of enhanced efficiency, productivity and also quality of work within an organization. The phenomenon of job satisfaction has been inversely associated with absenteeism, stress, exhaustion, and increased turnover. Dissatisfaction affects patient rated quality of care and is strongly related to early retirement and cutback of working hours. Studies on this subject matter remain scanty in the Indian settings where shortage of health manpower and high burden of disease are prevalent.² For a healthcare organization to survive, the key resource is a doctor. A doctor's place in the healthcare industry may be regarded as important healthcare gatekeepers and custodians. It can, therefore, be stated that approaching a healthcare organization and deriving benefits directly means consulting a doctor. The healthcare sector increasingly depends on the doctors for their patients. They are the senior members who provide expert supervision, diagnosis and guide their juniors in developing their expertise. These doctors and dentists, therefore hold high stresses occupation apart from the police, pilots, miners as well as the social workers Caplan et al, has rightly given the reason for this, stating that doctors are responsible for people and not any object. More so, a doctor's knowledge and behaviour have a profound effect on the quality of patient care.³ Privatization has taken the Indian health care market by storm, with 75% of our doctors employed in the private sector.⁴ Currently, there are many tools to measure medical staff satisfaction and patient satisfaction worldwide. Each tool has its own characteristics, target population, and usage focus, and they are not completely uniform. Tools for measuring work satisfaction in medical staff include universal scales (such as those used for all service staff, healthcare service staff, etc., and specific scales (such as those used for hospital doctors, hospital nurses, dentists, nursing home nurses, etc.). The measurement populations for these scales may be broad or have a finer professional classification.⁵ Taking into account the opinion of health professionals about their work environment, the public policies that regulate their work and the deficiencies of the system from the inside is a key aspect of the governance within a health system.⁶ As part of the 'Strategy on Human Resources for Universal Access to Health and Universal Healthcare Coverage' approved by the 29th Pan American Sanitary Conference on 2017, it is necessary to research the interests, motivations and required working conditions for health personnel in underserved areas in order to attract and retain human resources in such areas.⁷

II. AIM OF THE STUDY

This study aimed to investigate factors that affect happiness among various speciality medical doctors in the departments of ENT, Gynaecology, Ophthalmology, General Medicine and General Surgery working in private hospitals in India.

III.METHODOLOGY

Our study consisted of 800 speciality doctors working in 45 private hospitals in India over a period of 6 months. A closed-ended questionnaire was sent to the survey participants by Email. (Table 1) The questions were in English Language with a binary response pattern of – positive response or negative response. Replies of 654 doctors were received which included 108 ENT surgeons, 112 Gynaecologists, 103 Ophthalmologist, 172 General Physicians and 159 General Surgeons. The questions were based upon various factors which affected the quality of life as well as job satisfaction and happiness in general in the survey participants. The responses were recorded on a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet and then subjected to descriptive statistical analysis.

IV. RESULTS

Our study showed that in case of ENT surgeons, they were far more work-loaded than desired with around 55 % of them were not satisfied with the salary. However, co-operation with their colleagues were more on the optimistic side with around 68% of survey participants having a positive response. However, due to increased workload (53%), as well as family issues (66%), the speciality doctors suffered from great amount of stress as well as less job satisfaction. (Table 2) In case of Gynaecologists, Job satisfaction overall coped better with around 70% of them gave positive response. However, they suffered from issues with mental health (63%) and their family life satisfaction also had a dip, where only 49 % happy with their personal life. (Table 3) Whereas in case of Ophthalmologists, they were not satisfied with increased workload that they endured; around 51 % gave negative response and they also dealt with more mental stress with 52% of the above said speciality bearing the brunt of the issues. (Table 4) In case of General Physicians, they (58%) were not satisfied with their salaries as well as increased work load that they had to undertake (58%). However, in totality they still coped with the job pressures as they had a positive response towards overall job satisfaction (56%).(Table 5) Data on General surgeons showed that they had physical health issues with around 57 % of negative responses which showed the amount of physical burden they have to endure while performing surgeries. They also had the maximum workload as compared to others with around 68% of participants showing negative response. However, they were satisfied with facilities at hospitals; with 70% of them giving a positive response. (Table 6)

Table 1- Questionnaire utilized in our study.

S.No.	Questions included in the survey
1	Satisfaction with physical health
2	Satisfaction with mental health
3	Satisfaction with salary

4	Satisfaction with workload
5	Satisfaction with welfare facilities at workplace/hospital authorities
6	Satisfaction with the conduct and the performance of colleagues
7	Engagement in recreational activities
8	Satisfaction with the conduct and the performance of hospital nursing office authorities
9	Personal satisfaction in relation to family life
10	Overall job satisfaction/ interest in the profession

Table 2- Data obtained in our survey on ENT Surgeons

Ques. No.	Areas addressed in the questionnaire	Percentage of responses received	
		Positive response	Negative response
1	Physical health satisfaction	76%	24%
2	Mental health satisfaction	42%	58%
3	Salary satisfaction	45%	55%
4	Work-load satisfaction	47%	53%
5	Satisfaction with facilities at workplace/hospital authorities	79%	21%
6	Co-ordination with colleagues	68%	32%
7	Recreational activities	57%	43%
8	Co-operation from nursing staff	77%	23%
9	Family life satisfaction	34%	66%
10	Job satisfaction	55%	45%

Table 3- Data obtained in our survey on Gynaecologists

Ques. No.	Areas addressed in the questionnaire	Percentage of responses received	
		Positive response	Negative response
1	Physical health satisfaction	71%	29%
2	Mental health satisfaction	37%	63%
3	Salary satisfaction	48%	52%
4	Work-load satisfaction	41%	59%
5	Satisfaction with facilities at workplace/hospital authorities	79%	21%
6	Co-ordination with colleagues	71%	29%
7	Recreational activities	53%	47%
8	Co-operation from nursing staff	77%	23%
9	Family life satisfaction	49%	51%
10	Job satisfaction	70%	30%

Table 4- Data obtained in our survey on Ophthalmologist

Ques. No.	Areas addressed in the questionnaire	Percentage of responses received	
		Positive response	Negative response
1	Physical health satisfaction	81%	19%
2	Mental health satisfaction	48%	52%

3	Salary satisfaction	72%	28%
4	Work-load satisfaction	49%	51%
5	Satisfaction with facilities at workplace/hospital authorities	60%	40%
6	Co-ordination with colleagues	79%	21%
7	Recreational activities	57%	43%
8	Co-operation from nursing staff	74%	26%
9	Family life satisfaction	74%	26%
10	Job satisfaction	75%	25%

Table 5- Data obtained in our survey on General Physicians

Ques. No.	Areas addressed in the questionnaire	Percentage of responses received	
		Positive response	Negative response
1	Physical health satisfaction	61%	39%
2	Mental health satisfaction	42%	58%
3	Salary satisfaction	42%	58%
4	Work-load satisfaction	47%	53%
5	Satisfaction with facilities at workplace/hospital authorities	72%	28%
6	Co-ordination with colleagues	59%	41%
7	Recreational activities	67%	33%
8	Co-operation from nursing staff	57%	43%
9	Family life satisfaction	61%	39%

10	Job satisfaction	56%	44%
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Table 6- Data obtained in our survey on General Surgeons

Ques. No.	Areas addressed in the questionnaire	Percentage of responses received	
		Positive response	Negative response
1	Physical health satisfaction	43%	57%
2	Mental health satisfaction	32%	68%
3	Salary satisfaction	45%	55%
4	Work-load satisfaction	32%	68%
5	Satisfaction with facilities at workplace/hospital authorities	70%	30%
6	Co-ordination with colleagues	68%	32%
7	Recreational activities	32%	68%
8	Co-operation from nursing staff	46%	54%
9	Family life satisfaction	65%	35%
10	Job satisfaction	63%	37%

V. DISCUSSION

The World Health Organization (WHO) has stated that an efficient health system consists of all organizations, people and actions whose primary goal is to promote, restore and maintain good health. An adequate number of properly trained health professionals in the workforce are needed in order to achieve service goals. Worldwide, health care providers are constantly exposed to a number of different service delivery challenges including high levels of stress, long working days with fewer adequate break times, crumbling or unfit infrastructure, limitations within their practices and overcrowded health services with waiting times always on the increase. Although these problems vary from country to country, most of the health systems struggle in some degree with administrative and political issues, regardless of the income level or the standard of living of their citizens.⁸ The work satisfaction of medical staff (doctors, nurses, medical technicians, etc.) is related to healthcare service quality and outcomes. Low satisfaction is a major cause of psychological and social stress in

medical staff and correspondingly of employee turnover. Many studies have demonstrated that healthcare staff with high satisfaction provide higher quality medical services, resulting in better healthcare outcomes and higher patient satisfaction.⁵ A study conducted on Norwegian doctors in 1998 showed that 50% of the sample studied was satisfied with their jobs.⁹ Similar studies in Turkey, Kuwait have also shown that nearly 2/3rd of their working population of doctors is content with their work place.¹⁰ A similar project in three private hospitals of Karachi is a study in contrast, with 68% of the medical doctors expressing their dissatisfaction with their work.¹¹ Interestingly, the proportion of medical doctors in the Indian armed forces to have expressed satisfaction with their jobs is only ~40%, as borne out by studies by Chaudhury et al.¹² In our study we noticed that all the speciality doctors were able to cope up with the job pressures which was an optimistic sign. However, they did suffer from low salary packages as compared to government hospitals. Mental health issues were also a major hurdle for them as they had to handle the brunt of cases at the hospitals, which does put them under a lot of undue stress. In a nutshell, if the concerns of these doctors are attended by the hospital authorities, then it will prove to be a boon for the healthcare system in private hospitals as well.

VI. CONCLUSION

Present study depicted that our speciality doctors need more of salary satisfaction as well as better mental health strategies to cope with the increased amount of stress in the medical professional life. Please ask to add a few more lines to conclusion, it's too short. This should reiterate the reason why we did the study and summarize the paper in that light giving a final message

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