Healthcare Workers on a Rotating Schedule Experiencing Burnout

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Introduction

Burnout is a syndrome resulted from chronic stress in the workplace that is not managed successfully. It is identified through mental distance from one’s job, feeling of negativity related to the job, reduced professional efficacy, feelings of exhaustion and energy depletion. Working a rotational schedule interferes with the body’s circadian rhythm. This amplifies feelings of exhaustion and energy depletion, increasing the prevalence of burnout syndrome in healthcare workers. The presence of burnout syndrome decreases overall patient safety and patient satisfaction. It leads to higher mental health issues in healthcare workers, reduced productivity at work, feelings of resentment towards work, decreased cognition and increased burnout symptoms within the first five years of employment.

Literature Review

Burnout

The re-occurring theme among the literature is the presence of burnout syndrome in healthcare workers. There are five stages of burnout: • **Honeymoon phase** – Optimism with work • **Onset of stress phase** – Healthcare worker begins to feel stressed out • **Chronic stress phase** – stress is more persistent, Quality of Care decreases • **Burnout phase** – can no longer function normally, obsess over work stress • **Habitual burnout phase** – if untreated, leads to anxiety, depression and chronic mental and physical fatigue

Rotational Shift

Healthcare workers experiencing fatigue from inadequate rotational shift recovery is significantly related to an increase in patient falls, patient mortality and medication errors. For nurses, fatigue is related to mental and physical health problems, incomplete personal care, and dissatisfaction. This not only effects the healthcare workers quality of life but also the quality of care provided to their patients.

Circadian Rhythm

Circadian Rhythm is a sinus type wave of a twenty-four-hour period. The amplitude is the maximum shift from a rest point and generally describes the waves strength. The stability of the circadian rhythm indicates the amount of its variability by changing other parameters such as the work-rest cycle (Hosseinabadi et al., 2019)

Results

Some studies show that when working a rotational schedule, healthcare workers interfere with their circadian rhythm, resulting in a decline in their personal health and the care they provide.

Other studies support that healthcare workers on a fixed schedule display more burnout compared a rotating schedule.

Methods

- Research articles were searched for through PubMed, CINAHL and Google Scholar
- The Key Phrases used in research: “Healthcare Burnout”, “Rotating Schedule”, “Nursing”, “Circadian Rhythm” and “Fixed Schedule”
- Articles required to be published between the years 2017-2022 and to include the key words; all others were excluded
- Eleven articles were chosen from the results that fell within the search criteria

Conclusion

- Burnout syndrome is prominently seen in the first 5 years of employment and negatively affects healthcare workers and patients
- Burnout Syndrome is linked to a decrease in job satisfaction, lower patient satisfaction, impaired quality of care, medical errors leading to potential malpractice and death
- Healthcare workers rotating shifts should be able to identify risk factors and are self aware of the change in their circadian rhythm
- Consecutive days off, personal care and keeping your circadian rhythm in balance all help decrease the incidence of burnout
- There are screening tools that are not used regularly to help identify the presence of burnout in healthcare workers (Maslach Burnout Intervention, the Burnout Measure and the Shirt Melamed Burnout Questionnaire)
- Studies to not support of disclaim that a rotational schedule compared to a fixed schedule decreases the presence of burnout syndrome in healthcare workers.

References


P/T: Healthcare workers in the past five years of employment

I: Evidence suggests rotating between night and day shift

C: Compared to a fixed schedule

O: Impacts the presence of burnout symptoms.
METHOD

- PubMed, CINAHL, Google Scholar
- Key Phrases:
  - "Healthcare Burnout"
  - "Rotating Schedule"
  - "Nursing"
  - "Circadian Rhythm"
  - "Fixed Schedule"
- Articles published between 2017-2022
- 11 articles were chosen
• Charts are from a study that reported their stress levels before (A), during (B), and after (C) work of healthcare workers on a rotational schedule
  • Stress levels increase as time on this rotational schedule continues

• Study highlighted the effect a rotational schedule had on the circadian rhythm
  • Resulted in decline in personal health and quality of care provided

• Other studies supported that healthcare workers on a fixed schedule display burnout symptoms more than those on a rotating schedule
• Burnout syndrome is prominently seen in the first 5 years of employment

• Burnout Syndrome is linked to:
  - Decrease in job satisfaction
  - Lower patient satisfaction
  - Impaired quality of care
  - Medical errors leading to potential malpractice and death

• Healthcare workers rotating shifts should be able to identify risk factors and are self aware of the change in their circadian rhythm

• Ways to decrease incidence of burnout:
  - Consecutive days off
  - Personal care
  - Balanced circadian rhythm

• Screening tools available to detect presence of Burnout but are not regularly used:
  - Maslach Burnout Prevention
  - The Burnout Measure
  - The Shirt Melamed Burnout Questionnaire

• Studies do not support of this claim that a rotational schedule compared to a fix schedule decreases the presence of burnout syndrome in healthcare workers.
References


