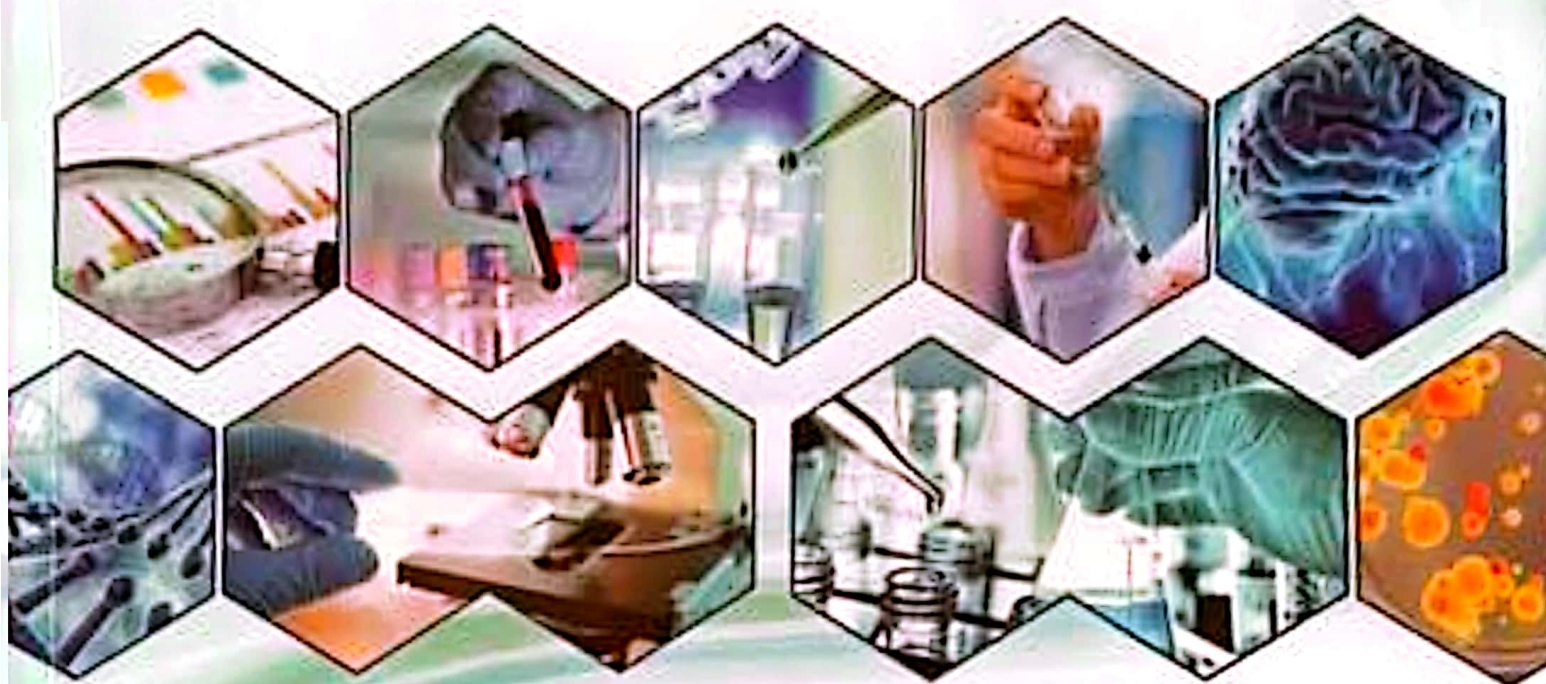




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ORIGINAL ARTICLE

Relationship of Occupational Stress with Psychosomatic Symptoms and Mental Wellbeing in Medical Professionals: An Exploratory Study

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ABSTRACT

Objective To determine the relationship of occupational stress with psychosomatic complaints and mental wellbeing among medical professionals at private hospitals in Rawalpindi.

Methods: Hospital based exploratory study was conducted at Maryam Memorial hospital, Bilal Hospital and Al-Shafi Hospital from January 2022 to June 2022. The study included 150 registered medical practitioners of both genders with a valid Pakistan Medical Commission license and 2-3 years of clinical experience. Subjects were accessed via convenient nonprobability method. A semi structured Work stress questionnaire, as well as a somatic symptom and mental wellbeing scale, were used to collect data.

Results: Out of 150 medical professionals there were 75 (50.0%) females and 75 (50.0%) males in which 118 (78.7%) were married. Majority of medical professionals were house officers 59 (39.3 %), 54 (36.0 %) were consultant specialist and were 37 (24.7%) emergency/ward assistants. A significantly positive correlation was found between occupational stress and psychosomatic symptoms score (p-value <0.001). Whereas a significantly negative correlation was observed between occupational stress and mental wellbeing score (p-value <0.001). Psychosomatic symptoms score was found to be a significant predictor of having occupational stress this association was confirmed even after adjusting for other variables ($\beta=1.10$, 95%CI = 0.91 to 1.28).

Conclusion: The study concluded that occupational stress is the cause of psychosomatic complaints which deteriorates the mental wellbeing of medical professionals resulting in poor patient care.

Keywords: Medical Professionals, Mental Wellbeing, Occupational Stress, Private.

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INTRODUCTION

Medical practice is a demanding profession. This is due to the fact that medical workers must respond to the demands of patients and their families in a timely manner. Medical knowledge and techniques, on the other hand, frequently have restrictions and uncertainty. Any medical mistakes or errors can be expensive, dangerous to a patient's life, and sometimes irrevocable. In addition, night work, shift work, and lengthy work hours are all typical in the medical field and hence leads to occupational stress.¹

Occupational stress is described by the National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) as "harmful physical and emotional reactions that arise when the requirements of the job do not meet the talents, resources, and needs of the worker".² Occupational stress has been on the rise recently as a result of globalization and the global financial crisis, which has affected practically all countries, all professions, and all types of workers, as well as families

and societies. As a result, it has become a critical issue in every workplace.³ The workplace stress affects all workers or employees, but it is especially prevalent among health-care professionals, who are a particularly vulnerable group due to the nature of their work environment.⁴ However, Healthcare professionals may experience occupational or work-related stress due to organizational issues, an imbalance of demands, their abilities, and social support networks, or any combination of these. Under certain circumstances, this might result in significant distress, burnout, or psychosomatic illnesses, which can worsen quality of life and service delivery.⁵

Thus, Medical practitioners' jobs are well-known for being exceedingly stressful. As a result, it was essential to consider how workplace pressures are linked to somatic problems and poor mental health. We conducted this research study with the goal of assisting policymakers in better understanding the situation and implementing appropriate interventions for lowering occupational stress in health facilities in developing