

DENTAL EDUCATION

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Stress among dentists

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Dentists are faced every day with many stressors. Stress is endemic and epidemic in the modern fast-paced world and dentists are not immune to it; in fact, dentistry has been considered the most stressful of all health care professions. According to Turley, Kinirons and Freeman, dentists in general practice experience more physical and mental illnesses than other health care workers. This opinion is based upon statistics collected almost three decades ago on dentistry, cardiovascular disease and drug abuse, as well as rates of suicide, which indicated that the practice of dentistry is stressful. Dentists today, more than ever, feel that they are subject to levels of stress that are unacceptably high. Certain factors can pose a serious threat to physical and psychological wellbeing. The very nature of dental practice has many of the ingredients which may potentiate occupational stress. As a result, dentists are subjected to many symptoms of stress that can be grouped broadly under four headings: physical responses, emotional responses, cognitive signs and behavioral signs and symptoms. Symptoms must be identified and managed in the early stages before serious physical and psychological consequences develop. There is no single all-encompassing method for managing stress. Each person must find their own way through the variety of methods that are available; doing so depends on an individual's personal preference in addition to a clear understanding of the sources of stress and the options available. Most people will find that several approaches must be utilized to manage their stress successfully.

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