

Understanding Burnout in the Primary Healthcare Workforce: Prevalence and Risk Factors

Friday, 13 March 2026 13:30 (10 minutes)

Background:

Burnout syndrome is a major global challenge in healthcare, affecting physicians' well-being, job performance, and patient safety. Primary healthcare physicians are particularly vulnerable due to high cognitive, emotional, and organizational demands.

Aim:

To determine the prevalence of burnout and identify associated risk factors among physicians working in Family Medicine Centers (FMCs) in Saudi Arabia.

Methods:

A cross-sectional study was conducted among physicians in a Family Medicine Center in Jubail, Saudi Arabia, between February and June 2024. Data were collected via an online questionnaire including sociodemographic variables and the Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI), assessing emotional exhaustion (EE), depersonalization (DP), and personal accomplishment (PA).

Results:

A total of 160 physicians participated (response rate 65%). High levels of burnout were observed: 48.1% reported high EE, 28.5% high DP, and 14.7% low PA. Overall, 30.4% met criteria for high burnout across all three dimensions. Burnout was significantly associated with gender, marital status, having children, specialty, years of experience, and additional administrative workload.

Conclusion:

Burnout among primary healthcare physicians is highly prevalent, particularly emotional exhaustion. Targeted organizational and psychosocial interventions are urgently needed to support physician well-being and maintain high-quality patient care.

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Session Classification: Bioconvergence & Resilient Innovation Ecosystems

Track Classification: General sessions: Bioconvergence & Resilient Innovation Ecosystems