

Results of emotional burnout study among oncologists in Russia

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Background: Emotional burnout (EB) is a syndrome caused by chronic work-related stress. This is a non-adaptive reaction to chronic stress resulting from professional activities and leading to the depletion of emotional and personal resources. Oncologists have high burnout risk, because involuntarily involved in the negative experiences of patients and get emotional stress. So it is important to develop measures to prevent EB for medical oncologists.

Aim: The aim is to study the prevalence and severity of EB among oncologists and to develop preventive measures. *Methods:* A screening survey of the Russian Society of Clinical Oncology (RUSSCO) was conducted among 389 oncologists in various regions of Russia. The Maslach Burnout Inventory and online self-administered questionnaire were used. The questionnaire was sent out in November 2019. The questionnaire was based on a multi-factor model, which includes the following components: emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, reduction of professional achievements.

Results: The average age of the respondents was 49.5 years, 61% of them were female. Chemotherapists made up 47.5%, 28% were surgeons, 8.5% were radiotherapists, 7% were diagnostic profile specialists, administrators made up 3%, 14.5% of the respondents had related specialties: clinical psychologists, pathologists, palliative care doctors. 30% of respondents had scientific degree. The results of the study were the following. 71.6% of specialists have expressed EB syndrome; 28% at EB formation stage, 1% have no signs of EB. There wasn't a significant difference in EB rates across oncologists of various specialties. All stages of EB were identified. Female specialists are more likely to have manifestations of EB. EB severity was the same for doctors of inpatient and outpatient care. The extreme mode of work did not show significant differences of EB among both male and female specialists. First 5 years and more than 15 years of professional activity are most vulnerable to development of EB. EB was least affected by specialists over 65 years old with extensive experience.

Conclusions: High level of EB was revealed among oncologists. Study results should be used during EB prevention, development of psychotherapeutic assistance and in educational programs.