



What Are the Causes of Burnout?

- 1** **Paperwork.** The #1 reason doctors burn out (58 percent of them) is bureaucratic tasks. Doctors spend more time on paperwork than patients. It's discouraging, because helping patients is why they became doctors.
 - On average, doctors spend 11.61 hours per week on "non-clinical [paperwork] duties" (Physicians Foundation, 2018).
- 2** **Electronic Health Records.** There was a measurable spike in burnout rates after EHRs were adopted. Doctors average sixteen minutes on EHRs per patient.
 - Digitization contributes to 30 percent of burnout among physicians. Many say they'd like to quit just because of the admin.
- 3** **Higher Female Physician Burnout.** Female physicians burn out 25 percent more often than men. (Motherhood takes its toll.)
 - Female practitioners seek assistance less than men.
 - Only 6 percent of women get professional help.
- 4** **Online Reviews.** Ensuring patient reviews stay positive is a job in and of itself. Staking your reputation and compensation on digital reviews makes life hard, adding stress to more patient interactions.
- 5** **Lack of Resources.** Doctors and medical staff get upset when they can't deliver top-quality care. About 40 percent of doctors lack the necessary resources, which increases their frustration and despair.
- 6** **Productivity VS. Compassion.** Productive doctors are usually happy doctors. However, productivity as defined by the physician is often at odds with production as defined by the medical organization.
 - Task management, profit management, and regulatory compliance—all necessary and good in their own right—create stress and overwork doctors.



7 **Low Reimbursement.** More doctors burn out in hospitals and practices located in lower-reimbursable areas. They have lower compensation, less resources, and more stress as a result.

8 **Student Loans.** The average medical school debt is \$200k. This adds a significant burden other professions don't have.

9 **Compensation.** Physicians measure compensation in terms of both income and time off. They're not in a vacuum; doctors talk numbers with each other. They study the market. Often, they conclude that they're underpaid and undervalued.

10 **Too Many Working Hours.** The medical culture of working too many hours in a row on too little sleep has a big downside.

- While it's part of the residency experience and worn as a badge of honor, sleep research shows that 90 percent of people need 7–9 hours of sleep a night, while 90 percent of people think they're part of the 10 percent of people who need less.
- When doctors habitually overwork themselves, it keeps them from family and friends, reducing their ability to do what they enjoy.

11 **Lack of Work-Life Balance.** Doctors with children at home are 54 percent more likely to burn out. In a recent study by the National Academy of Medicine, every physician under the age of forty-three said *better work-life* balance is a factor in where and how they practice medicine.

- Not giving proper time to family makes it even harder for doctors to maintain a balance between their emotional and clinical responsibilities.

12

Patients Require More and More. Evolving patient demands can make it difficult for doctors to keep them cheerful and returning. More than 50 percent of patients say that accessibility and convenience are the main factors in choosing their physician, *not* the quality or relationship (NRC Health, 2019).

- One-third of doctors say their non-clinical tasks are decreasing their efficiency in patient care, and they would like 50 percent more time to spend with them (Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality).

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COVID-19. The pandemic has caused a huge spike in exhaustion and burnout among healthcare professionals.

- We've suffered over a million deaths in the pandemic.
- Doctors were anxious and discouraged by the lack of an identifiable cause.
- They felt they were failing their patients.
- Doctors had a growing sense of insignificance.
- Protocols and precautions had to be implemented and endured.
- Long hours, isolation, lack of quality time with family and friends, and the compelling drive to keep their families safe caused high degrees of depression, anxiety, and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).

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Loss of Autonomy. Many doctors are discouraged about losing their freedom after leaving independent work to join hospitals, joint practices, and companies.

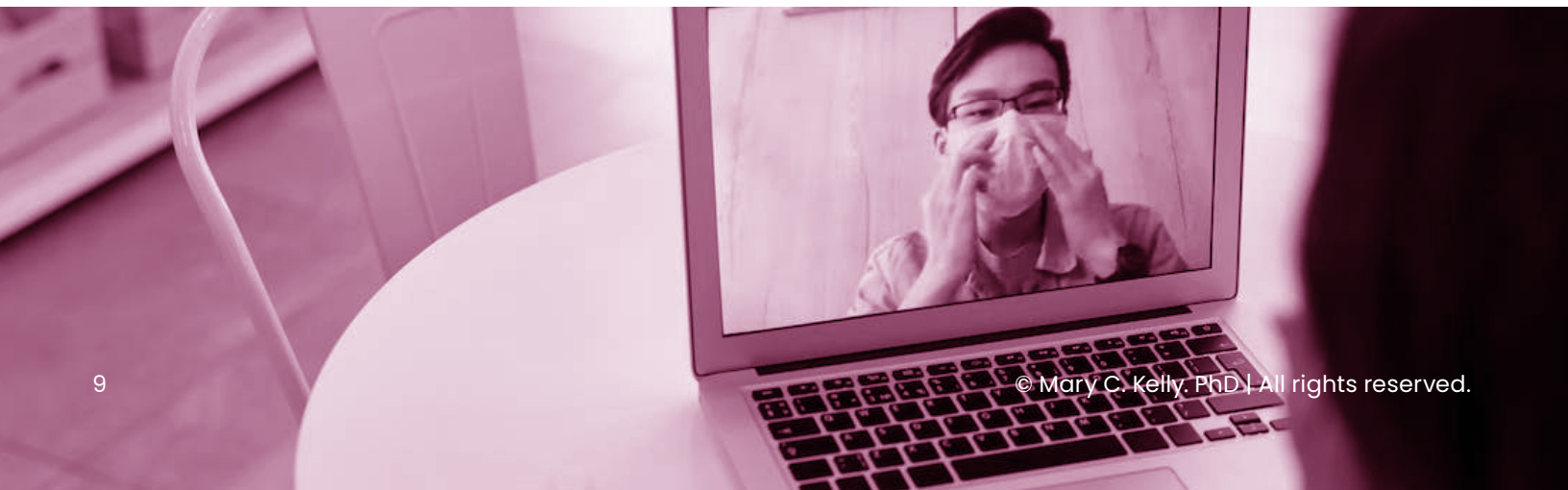
- They can no longer define their work schedule.
- They must comply with organizational procedures.
- Their patient interaction is monitored and timed.

This loss of autonomy can lead to burnout and prove fatal for physicians (Bendix, 2019).

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Patients Are Losing Trust in the Medical Industry. Many patients believe doctors are putting their own interests first. This trust gap between doctors and patients is devastating.

- Doctors blame the documentation and procedural process for sacrificing the good of the patient on the altar of what's good for the establishment.
- Patients blame their doctors and the medical system.



16 **Cost Management.** How do physicians improve their already high standards, while *reducing* costs? These are business optimization questions—not patient care questions. This tension contributes significantly to the anxiety and stress that leads to burnout (Brayan Bohman)

17 **Regulatory and Insurance Requirements.** Health insurance is not only a hectic process for patients, but for medical professionals as well. Insurance creates a lot of work for doctors.

- Upholding regulatory and insurance requirements are the tasks most hated by doctors.
- Doctors retire and leave *specifically* because of these requirements. 40 percent of doctors say regulation and insurance requirements are a complete waste of their time and energy (Physicians Foundation, 2018).

18 **Insurance Companies Can Profit over Patients.**

- Insurance companies seek profit to the detriment of medical professionals and their patients.
- They usurp medical authority and undermine the doctor’s credibility when denying a patient’s suggested medical treatment.
- Having taken an oath to help their patients, and feeling helpless to do so, such recurring incidents with insurance can lead to burnout (Gopalakrishna, 2020).

