

Study looks at pandemic changes, health care worker burnout

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A survey of health care providers at a regional pediatric health care network found that the practice changes made in response to the pandemic may contribute to burnout among health care professionals.

The study abstract, "The Impact of COVID-19 and the Rapid Adoption of Telehealth on Provider Burnout in a Pediatric Healthcare Organization," to be presented during the virtual American Academy of Pediatrics 2021 National Conference & Exhibition, found that those experiencing [burnout](#) are more likely to have negative perceptions about telehealth visits.

This may be because the switch to telehealth was done on an emergency basis during the pandemic, and there may not have been enough policies in place to support health care providers, especially for those already experiencing burnout, the authors write. The study also found that institution-level policies to reduce burnout are more likely to be perceived as insufficient by those experiencing burnout.

"Change is hard. The pandemic created the necessity for a massive shift to the adoption of telehealth in health care organizations. There was no time to follow all the rules of change management. Survival and leadership strength fueled change. Recovery must include awareness of the burden of rapid change, plus a crisis, placed on the health care team," said study author Kenneth Grant, MD, a pediatric gastroenterologist at Children's Health Orange County.

Previous research on burnout among [health](#) care providers has shown that it can have serious negative consequences for [health care providers](#) and patients, with clinicians experiencing burnout being more likely to make medical errors, the authors note.

For this study, a brief questionnaire was designed by a multidisciplinary team and sent to all 378 providers at Children's Health Orange County in June 2020. Eighty-four responded. The survey found that 56% of respondents reported that they were experiencing burnout. The survey also found that 84.5% of respondents believed that their patients seem satisfied with service provided through telehealth. However, more

[negative perceptions](#) of telehealth increased the odds of reporting burnout by 47%.

The data show that, when controlling for the other variables in the model, the self-reported experience of burnout is predicted by three perceptions: COVID-19 has exacerbated provider burnout, the benefits of [telehealth](#) do not outweigh the challenges, and there is insufficient institutional support to reduce burnout.

Adequate institutional resources for promoting provider well-being, and combating provider burnout, during these difficult times are important, the authors note.

Dr. Tera Reynolds will present the study abstract on Oct. 9, 2021, at 9:55 a.m.

More information: Abstract Title: The Impact of COVID-19 and the Rapid Adoption of Telehealth on Provider Burnout in a Pediatric Healthcare Organization

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