

# Physician burnout significantly increased from 2020 to 2021

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A dramatic increase in burnout occurred in U.S. physicians between

2020 and 2021, according to a study published online Sept. 13 in *Mayo Clinical Proceedings*.

Tait D. Shanafelt, M.D., from Stanford University in Palo Alto, California, and colleagues evaluated the prevalence of [burnout](#) and satisfaction with work-life integration (WLI) in U.S. physicians at the end of 2021 versus 2020, 2017, 2014, and 2011. Survey responses from 2,440 physicians were included in the analysis.

The researchers found that mean [emotional exhaustion](#) and depersonalization scores were higher in 2021 than in all previous years. Mean emotional exhaustion scores increased 38.6 percent since 2020, while mean depersonalization scores increased 60.7 percent. The percent of physicians with at least one manifestation of burnout was higher in 2021 (62.8 percent) versus in 2020 (38.2 percent), 2017 (43.9 percent), 2014 (54.4 percent), and 2011 (45.5 percent). Trends persisted across nearly all specialties. From 2020 to 2021, satisfaction with WLI declined from 46.1 to 30.2 percent, while mean scores for depression increased 6.1 percent.

"Given the association of physician burnout with [quality of care](#), turnover, and reductions in work effort, these findings have [profound implications](#) for the U.S. health care system," the authors write.

**More information:** Tait D. Shanafelt et al, Changes in Burnout and Satisfaction With Work-Life Integration in Physicians Over the First 2 Years of the COVID-19 Pandemic, *Mayo Clinic Proceedings* (2022). [DOI: 10.1016/j.mayocp.2022.09.002](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.mayocp.2022.09.002)

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