Burnout and scope of practice in new family physicians

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Among physicians, family physicians report some of the highest levels of burnout. According to a new study, however, early career family physicians who provide a broader scope of practice report significantly

lower rates of burnout.

The study—a secondary analysis of the 2016 National Family Medicine Graduate Survey—found that those who practiced in more locations and performed a greater variety of procedures and clinical work were significantly less likely to report feeling burned out once a week or more.

The strongest associations were in the practice of obstetrics and inpatient medicine, two areas with a decline in practice by family physicians in recent years.

Specifically, the odds of reporting feeling burned out were 36 percent lower among those family physicians practicing obstetrics and 30 percent lower among those practicing inpatient medicine compared to their peers. Making house calls was also significantly associated with lower burnout.

If future research confirms a causal relationship between scope of practice and physician wellness, the authors suggest, it would allow for new policy levers and incentives for systems and physicians to improve health care as well as their own health.

More information: Amanda K. H. Weidner et al. Burnout and Scope of Practice in New Family Physicians, *The Annals of Family Medicine* (2018). DOI: 10.1370/afm.2221

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