

Study: Nurses Were Burned Out Even Before the Pandemic Started, Correlating to Increased Medical Errors

Experts advocate for programs and policies that help critical care nurses better care for themselves and their patients

The Ohio State University Wexner Medical Center

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NEWS PACKAGE

SUGGESTED TEASE	TAKING CARE OF THOSE WHO TAKE CARE ALL OF US. HOW INVESTING IN THE WELL-BEING OF OUR HEALTHCARE WORKERS CAN LEAD TO BETTER PATIENT CARE, COMING UP.
ANCHOR LEAD	<p>COMMUNITIES RALLIED BEHIND HEALTHCARE WORKERS ON THE FRONT LINES THROUGHOUT THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC.</p> <p>BUT WHILE THE PAST YEAR HAS CERTAINLY BROUGHT IMMEASURABLE STRESS, NURSES HAVE CARRIED THE WEIGHT OF CARING FOR CRITICALLY ILL PATIENTS LONG BEFORE THE PANDEMIC.</p> <p>A NEW STUDY HIGHLIGHTS THE ONGOING ISSUE OF BURNOUT AMONG NURSES AND WHY INVESTING IN THEIR WELL-BEING SHOULD BE A PRIORITY FOR HOSPITALS ACROSS THE COUNTRY.</p> <p>BARB CONSIGLIO HAS THE DETAILS.</p>
(PACKAGE START) ----- CG: Courtesy: The Ohio State University Wexner Medical Center :00 - :03 Shots of staff in ICU during COVID	(Nats - Sound) :02
CG: Jessica Curtisi, RN Critical care nurse	FOR CRITICAL CARE NURSES, STRESS IS PART OF THE JOB, BUT THIS PAST YEAR TRULY TESTED THEIR RESILIENCE. :05
Shots of Jessica working in hospital	<i>"Without family visiting, oftentimes we were the last person holding someone's hand when they passed away. And that was ... It's hard to describe."</i> :10
Jessica Curtisi (CG'd earlier)	JESSICA CURTISI (ker-TEE-zee) FELT A DUTY TO PUSH THROUGH AND CARE FOR HER PATIENTS, BUT SHE KNEW IT WAS TAKING A TOLL ON HER HEALTH. :05
Shots of Jessica walking with friend	<i>"I'd have anxiety about my shift, about what I would see the next time I went to work."</i> :05
	LUCKILY, JESSICA DID ASK FOR HELP AND TOOK ADVANTAGE OF THE EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM AT THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY



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<p>CG: Bernadette Melnyk, PhD Ohio State Wexner Medical Center</p>	<p>WEXNER MEDICAL CENTER DESIGNED TO HELP CLINICIANS COPE AND PREVENT BURNOUT. :09</p> <p><i>They cannot pour from an empty cup.” :05</i></p>
<p>Shots of Bernadette working with nursing students</p>	<p>BERNADETTE MELNYK (MEL-nick), OHIO STATE’S CHIEF WELLNESS OFFICER AND DEAN OF THE COLLEGE OF NURSING, LED A NEW STUDY THAT FOUND THAT — EVEN BEFORE THE PANDEMIC BEGAN — ABOUT TWO IN FIVE CRITICAL CARE NURSES NATIONWIDE REPORTED DEPRESSIVE SYMPTOMS, WHILE MORE THAN HALF EXPERIENCED ANXIETY AND OVER SIXTY PERCENT RATED THEIR PHYSICAL HEALTH A FIVE OR LOWER ON A SCALE OF ONE TO TEN.</p>
<p>Graphic over shots of staff in ICU</p>	<p>AND THESE POOR HEALTH SCORES DIRECTLY CORRELATED WITH AN INCREASE IN SELF-REPORTED MEDICAL ERRORS. :22</p>
<p>Bernadette Melnyk (CG’d earlier)</p>	<p><i>“These errors are made by very dedicated, caring, committed people who are experiencing their own symptoms of depression or poor physical health.” :16</i></p>
<p>Shots of Buckeye Paws program</p>	<p>THAT’S WHY IT’S CRUCIAL THAT HOSPITALS OFFER SUPPORT SUCH AS COUNSELING, MINDFULNESS COACHING AND PET THERAPY TO HELP NURSES TAKE CARE OF THEMSELVES AND ALSO PROVIDE OPTIMAL CARE TO PATIENTS. :07</p>
<p>CG: Hunter Jefferis, RN Critical care nurse manager</p>	<p><i>“When the dogs come up it’s nice to see them let down their guard and kind of let out that emotion because that’s what’s needed.” :06</i></p>
<p>Jessica Curtisi (CG’d earlier)</p>	<p><i>“I want to be in healthcare for the rest of my career. So to me, it’s worth it to invest in my mental wellness, and continue to build resilience, so that I can do this for a long time” :13</i></p>
<p>Shots of Jessica taking a walk</p>	<p>AT THE OHIO STATE WEXNER MEDICAL CENTER, THIS IS BARB CONSIGLIO REPORTING. :02</p>
<p>(PACKAGE END) ----- ANCHOR TAG</p>	<p>UNFORTUNATELY, PROGRAMS LIKE OHIO STATE’S ARE FAR TOO RARE AND INSTITUTIONAL PRACTICES THAT ARE PROVEN TO LEAD TO BURNOUT CONTINUE TO BE THE NORM.</p> <p>EXPERTS ARE WORKING WITH HEALTHCARE LEADERS ACROSS THE COUNTRY TO IMPLEMENT MORE SUPPORT AND TO CHANGE OUTDATED PRACTICES TO HELP BETTER CARE FOR THE BRAVE INDIVIDUALS WHO TAKE ON THE TASK OF CARING FOR ALL OF US.</p>

SOCIAL MEDIA

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<p> Share it! Suggested tweet:</p> <p> Suggested post:</p>	<p>They’ve experienced huge challenges over the past year, but burnout was an issue among nurses long before the pandemic. A new study by @osunursing & @OSUWexMed highlights alarming levels of anxiety and depression reported by critical care nurses and how investing in their well-being can help them continue their lifesaving work and reduce medical errors. https://bit.ly/3e8CiOe</p> <hr/> <p>Nurses may appear to be superheroes, especially during the pandemic. But a new study by The Ohio State University College of Nursing and The Ohio State University Wexner Medical Center finds the stress and trauma of their work leads to alarming levels of anxiety and depression among critical care nurses. https://bit.ly/3e8CiOe</p>
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EXTRA BITES

<p>CG: Bernadette Melnyk, PhD Ohio State Wexner Medical Center</p> <p>CG: Jessica Curtisi, RN Critical care nurse</p>	<p>Melnyk says support programs protect nurses’ health: <i>“They have got to offer screening programs, offer evidence-based programs to equip their clinicians with resiliency because we know that’s a protective factor against depression, anxiety, and poor physical health.”</i></p> <p>Melnyk says hospitals must invest in the wellbeing of clinicians: <i>“An investment in the wellbeing of their healthcare professionals is going to lead to better quality, safety of care, less preventable medical errors.”</i></p> <hr/> <p>Jessica says she can still be tough and also let her feelings out: <i>“I can be tough and still feel sad, and cry, and grieve. And in fact, I think for me, it’s healthy to feel those things. Because when I don’t, I get burnt out, and then I don’t want to go to work, or I feel like I can’t, or I won’t be able to for much longer.”</i></p> <p>Jessica describes how her emotions affected her whole life: <i>“I pushed down my emotions so long and brushed them off. And when it finally started causing burnout, it would affect my sleep, and my home life, my life outside of work, as well as my life at work. I knew that I should look into seeking some help.”</i></p> <p>Jessica says she used the resources in the employee assistance program: <i>“I turned to the OSU Employee Assistance program, which I had heard about, but I didn’t know very much about it. And through them, I used a couple of different resources. I used counseling, which I was able to do virtually, and I did mindfulness coaching.”</i></p>
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CG: Jessica Curtisi, RN
Critical care nurse

Jessica describes how mindfulness helped her cope with grief:
“Mindfulness coaching has given me tools to help prevent the burnout, build my resiliency by allowing myself to feel my emotions as I go throughout the shift or as I go home in a healthy way, and not have such an aversion to just feeling that grief.”

Hunter says the pandemic provided a prolonged period of intense stress:

“It was the same patients coming in, sicker and sicker, I feel staff were running on adrenaline for a period of time, and then we’ve been caring for critically ill COVID patients for over a year now, so that adrenaline ran out long ago.”

Hunter describes how nurses cared for dying COVID patients:
“Our nurses had to take on that weight of caring for them, some of them at the end of life, FaceTiming families at end of life and making sure that the patients didn’t die alone.”

CG: Hunter Jefferis, RN
Critical care nurse manager

Hunter says he hit a breaking point in the height of the pandemic:

“The third or fourth time we’d been asked to do more, that’s when I reached my peak and I had to take a moment, step away, and just kind of close my eyes and breathe and before I came back to the table to give an answer on what else we could do.”

Hunter says his team is like family and they got through this together:

“We truly feel like family now. This is a time in their career that they will never forget and I will never forget the team that we have here and what we’ve been through together this past year.”

References

¹*Critical Care Nurses’ Physical and Mental Health, Worksite Wellness Support and Medical Errors, American Journal of Critical Care, Volume 30, Issue 3, May 1, 2020.* Online:
<https://doi.org/10.4037/ajcc2021301>

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