

**Correlates of job satisfaction in male physicians - perspective from Islamabad and Rawalpindi**

Madam, Job satisfaction of physicians leads to improved patient care and better outcomes.<sup>1,2</sup> Health services research on job satisfaction levels and its correlates is important for informed health policy planning process to attain improved health for all.<sup>3</sup> A cross-sectional survey based on convenience sampling was conducted among the male physicians working in various public and private sector hospitals in the twin cities of Islamabad and Rawalpindi from July 2004 to February 2005. A structured, self-administered, anonymous and pre-tested questionnaire was used to study the self-described stress and job satisfaction. Two hundred and two questionnaires were completed. Respondent's mean age was 41.9 years (range 25 to 69 years).

A question was asked about the number of days that respondent's mental health was not good in the past month; with bad mental health defined "to include stress, depression and emotional problems".<sup>4</sup> Sixty-two (30.7%) physicians reported one to seven such days; while another 3 (1.5%) reported more than seven such days in the past month, albeit this definition was open to subjective interpretation. Glass ceiling effect, defined as an invisible barrier blocking the professional advancement of qualified women physicians in their work setting/hospital was also inquired about. Ninety-eight (48.5%) physicians reported that glass ceiling effect existed in their work place.

Table 1 lists the various job satisfaction attributes and stresses inquired about, alongwith their frequencies, means and standard errors. Almost all of the physicians

reported to be generally satisfied with their job, although there was discrepancy between job satisfaction and its correlates. Current job-related stress was reported as moderate to high by 90 (44.6%) physicians, while 57 (28.2%) reported moderate to high level of stress in their personal life. Yet these stresses did not influence their perceived job satisfaction levels. Stress at work was perhaps seen as an integral part of life as a practicing physician. On the other hand, perceived control of professional work related activities was very high i.e. 97%, as 196 physicians reported usually to always be in control of work related activities. A previous study utilizing mail-survey methodology reported job satisfaction levels of male and female physicians working in teaching hospitals of Karachi with a sample size of 182; reported job dissatisfaction rate of 68%.<sup>5</sup> Higher job satisfaction levels in our study probably account for the work-setting differences, as working for teaching hospitals perhaps entails different and higher levels of stress.

There is a need in the country to develop and empirically determine validity and reliability of indigenous survey instruments for health services research in population based surveys.

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**Table 1. Attributes reflecting job satisfaction as a physician.**

Attribute	Frequency	n (%)	Mean	(SE)
Generally satisfied with one's job as a physician	Always/Usually	198 (98.0 %)	*5.2	(0.06)
	Sometimes	2 (1.0 %)		
	Rarely/Never	2 (1.0 %)		
Current level of job-related stress	None/Mild	112 (55.4 %)	**2.4	(0.05)
	Moderate	81 (40.1 %)		
	Severe/Profound	9 (4.5 %)		
Current level of stress at home/personal life	None/Mild	145 (71.8 %)	**2.1	(0.05)
	Moderate	49 (24.2 %)		
	Severe/Profound	8 (4.0 %)		
Perceived control of professional work-related activities	Always/Usually	196 (97.0 %)	* 5.1	(0.06)
	Sometimes	4 (2.0 %)		
	Rarely/Never	2 (1.0 %)		
Satisfaction with professional work as a whole	Very/Moderately Satisfied	170 (84.2 %)	*** 3.1	(0.05)
	Very/Moderately Dissatisfied	32 (15.8 %)		
Professional relationship with fellow physicians/colleagues	Very/Moderately Satisfied	128 (63.4 %)	*** 2.7	(0.06)
	Very/Moderately Dissatisfied	74 (36.6 %)		
Professional relationship with Superiors	Very/Moderately Satisfied	127 (62.9 %)	*** 2.7	(0.06)
	Very/Moderately Dissatisfied	75 (37.1 %)		
Would be a physician again, if had a chance to re-live life	Yes	173 (85.6 %)	****0.85	(0.02)
Prefer to change clinical speciality	No	108 (53 %)	****0.53	(0.03)

\* Answered on a six point Likert scale (1 = Never to 6 = Always), assuming equal intervals.

\*\* Answered on a five point Likert scale (1 = None to 5 = Profound), assuming equal intervals.

\*\*\* Answered on a four point Likert scale (1 = Very Dissatisfied to 5 = Very Satisfied), assuming equal intervals.

\*\*\*\* Proportion given as this question was answered as 'yes' or 'no' only.

## References

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