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# Journal of Arthroscopy and Joint Surgery

An official publication of International Society for Knowledge for Surgeons on Arthroscopy and Arthroplasty

#### (ISSN: 2214-9635)

Volume 4, Number 1, January-April 2017

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*Journal of Arthroscopy and Joint Surgery* (JAJS) is committed to bring forth scientific manuscripts in the form of original research articles, current concept reviews, meta-analyses, case reports and letters to the editor. The focus of the Journal is to present wide-ranging, multi-disciplinary perspectives on the problems of the joints that are amenable with Arthroscopy and Arthroplasty. Though Arthroscopy and Arthroplasty entail surgical procedures, the Journal shall not restrict itself to these purely surgical procedures and will also encompass pharmacological, rehabilitative and physical measures that can prevent or postpone the execution of a surgical procedure. The Journal will also publish scientific research related to tissues other than joints that would ultimately have an effect on the joint function.

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# Journal of Arthroscopy and Joint Surgery

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### Table of Contents

Indian Orthopaedic surgeons are less burned out than their Western colleagues Sunil H. Shetty, Yusuf Assem, Ravindra G. Khedekar, Stephen Asha, Manit Arora	1
Dimensions of distal femur in terms of total knee arthroplasty among different origins – A systematic review Surabhi Rohilla, Ruurd Jaarsma, Lalit Maini, Raechel Damarell, Govind Mawari, Jegan Krishnan	8
Quadriceps sparing (subvastus/midvastus) approach versus the conventional medial parapatellar approach in primary knee arthroplasty Nitin Mehta, Mohd Shafi Bhat, Ankit Goyal, Pallav Mishra, Deepak Joshi, Deepak Chaudhary	15
Comparing gait analysis and functional outcomes of short femoral metaphyseal stem and high functional hip arthroplasty (resurfacing and big femoral head): A pilot study <i>P.K. Karampinas, J.A. Vlamis, E.G. Papadelis, Sp. Pneumaticos</i>	21
Functional outcome of arthroscopic repair of full-thickness degenerative rotator cuff tears Amresh Ghai, C.M. Singh, Munish Sood, Sunit Kumar S. Wani	27
Functional outcome of partial arthroscopic repair for massive rotator cuff tears <i>R. Badge, J.A. Baxter, P. Monga</i>	31
A method of avoiding skin irritation from outside-in suture knots in wrist scope surgery Hui-Kuang Huang, Fang-Chieh Lien, Wei-Hsing Chih	36
Dermal burn: An unusual complication of radio frequency probe in shoulder arthroscopy Deepak Chahar, Ankit Chawla, Nikhil Verma, Anurag Mittal, Amite Pankaj	38
Recurrent intraarticular knee hemangiomas: A case report George Mathew Srampickal, Korula Mani Jacob, Koyeli M. Mahata	41
Spontaneous bilateral quadriceps rupture – A case report Deepak Chahar, Ravi Sreenivasan, Ankit Chawla, Nikhil Verma, Devendra Pathrot, Amite Pankaj	45
Total hip arthroplasty in neglected, obturator type, hip dislocation in a young adult – an unusual case and literature review Sandeep Patel, Ranganatha B. Thimmegowda, Rakesh John, T.R. Sunil Kumar, R.H.H. Arjun	50

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### Journal of Arthroscopy and Joint Surgery

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#### Research paper

# Indian Orthopaedic surgeons are less burned out than their Western colleagues

Sunil H. Shetty<sup>a,c</sup>, Yusuf Assem<sup>b,c</sup>, Ravindra G. Khedekar<sup>a,c</sup>, Stephen Asha<sup>c,d</sup>, Manit Arora<sup>a,c,\*</sup>

<sup>a</sup> Department of Orthopaedics, Padmashree Dr D.Y. Patil Hospital and Research Centre, Navi Mumbai, India

<sup>b</sup> Prince of Wales Clinical School, University of New South Wales, Australia

<sup>c</sup> University of New South Wales, Australia

<sup>d</sup> Department of Emergency Medicine, St George Public Hospital, Sydney, Australia

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#### ABSTRACT

*Background:* Burnout is a tridimensional psychological syndrome, the consequences of which in surgeons can be devastating. A preliminary review of the literature has demonstrated a paucity of validated studies measuring the levels of surgeon burnout throughout Asia. The purpose of this paper was to assess the prevalence and factors associated with burn out in Indian orthopedic surgeons and compare them to their western colleagues.

*Materials & methods:* This nationwide cross-sectional study was conducted at the Indian Orthopaedic Association Annual Meeting, via a validated burnout assessment instrument. Variables were compared using the chi-square, Mantel-Haenszel and Mann-Whitney-U tests. Variables associated with burnout subscales and overall burnout were explored using multiple linear and logistic regression.

*Results:* There were 299 responses to the survey, 23.1% of the surgeons were allocated burnout status. There was a significant (p < 0.001) association between burnout, all measures of satisfaction and health. This association also existed for half-days in public practice (p = 0.03) and marital status (p < 0.001).

*Conclusion:* This is the first study to assess burnout among orthopedic surgeons in Asia. The use of a validated instrument facilitates future cross study comparisons. There were low levels of burnout in the Indian orthopedic profession, when compared to western countries, albeit a variety of sociocultural factors may play a role. There was evidence to suggest that the number of half-day sessions per week in public practice was associated with burnout, possibly attributed to longer hours and less flexibility. Satisfaction with training pathway was consistently significantly associated with all burnout subscales, a focus for future interventions. A strongly significant association persisted with our previous Australian study between burnout and marital status, emotional support and family stability critical for burnout minimization.

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#### 1. Introduction

Burnout is a tridimensional psychological syndrome of emotional exhaustion, inter-personal depersonalization and a reduced self-evaluation of accomplishment.<sup>1</sup> Doctors and other allied health professionals are especially susceptible to burnout, when compared to the general population.<sup>2</sup> This was suggested as an "inevitable consequence" of the maladaptive adaptation to the

demands of working in the health care system.<sup>3</sup> The long hours, emotional patient interactions and high-pressure environment, responded to with low prioritization of self-care and denial of individuals own emotions.<sup>4,5</sup>

The principal symptoms of burnout in doctors are the objectification of patients and colleagues, emotional and physical exhaustion, poor judgment, cynicism and depersonalization in relationships.<sup>2</sup> Burnout in doctors, particularly surgeons is of critical importance as the consequences can be devastating for the individual, patients and institution.<sup>6</sup> Orthopedic surgeons were placed in the top five most burnout specialties when compared with other doctors and hospital staff.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>\*</sup> Corresponding author at: Department of Orthopaedics, Padmashree Dr D.Y. Patil Hospital and Research Centre, Navi Mumbai, India.

E-mail address: manit\_arora@hotmail.com (M. Arora).

A review of burnout<sup>7</sup> described the consequences for doctors to include emotional and physical illness, reduced satisfaction, drug abuse and poor health (such as hypertension, sleep disturbance and myocardial infarction). Manifesting institutionally as poor performance, increase turnover and medical errors and associated deficits in quality of medical care and safety for patients.

Previously the prevalence of burnout in surgeons has been reported as 30–38% and 50–60% in orthopedic surgeons, compared to 28% in throughout the general US working population.<sup>2,7</sup> This was found to be consistently higher in residents and trainees.<sup>7</sup> Our team has found that 53% of Australian orthopaedic trainees were burned out.<sup>2</sup> Analyzing the positive or negative association between work-related (including career position and satisfaction with work-life balance) and non-work-related (demographic data) factors with burnout.<sup>2</sup> A preliminary review of the literature has demonstrated a paucity of validated studies measuring the levels of burnout in doctors throughout Asia and the sub-continent. This study is the first to assess the prevalence and factors associated with burn out in Indian orthopedic surgeons.

#### 2. Methods

#### 2.1. Design, participants and setting

This nationwide cross-sectional study was conducted at the Indian Orthopaedic Association Annual Meeting, in December 2013. A hard copy survey was distributed to attendees throughout each session and completed forms collected at the end of each session. 2200 copies of the survey were distributed and there were 299 responses. All participants had complete data pertaining to burnout assessment. Ethics approval was obtained from the 'Institutional Ethics Approval of Dr. D.Y. Patil Hospital and Research Centre'.

#### 2.2. Data collection

In November 2013 a pilot survey was trialed by 10 consultants at our institution, assessing the overall ambiguity, comfort and feasibility of questions. Preliminary feedback was satisfactory and no modifications were made. The survey was divided into two sections; a self-developed questionnaire and a validated burnout assessment tool.

The self-developed questionnaire assessed a variety of work related and non-work related factors potentially associated with burnout (Table 2). It comprised of 12 questions related to participant demographics, four items measuring satisfaction with career, work-life balance, income and training pathway and a subjective self-assessment of overall health (adapted from the short-form-health survey – SF-36).<sup>2,8</sup>

The Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI)–Human Services Survey was the validated burnout assessment instrument of choice. It consists of three subscales and corresponding dimensions: nine items quantifying emotional exhaustion (stress dimension), five items measuring depersonalization (interpersonal context dimension) and eight items calculating personal achievement (self evaluation dimension).<sup>1,6</sup>

#### 2.3. Statistical analysis

The overall scores of participants in each subscale were categorized into low, medium and high levels of burnout, subject to a priori guidelines by MindGarden Inc. (Menlo Park, CA, USA). A correlation exists between burnout and high levels of emotional exhaustion and depersonalization, albeit personal achievement is inversely proportional. Consistent with previous studies, we have defined participant burnout as high emotional exhaustion or depersonalization subscale scores (Table 1).<sup>2</sup>

Characteristics of participants were first analysed according to final burnout status (Table 2). Nominal categorical variables were presented as proportions and compared using the chi-square test. Ordered categorical variables with >2 categories (age, current position, years worked as an orthopaedic surgeon, half-day sessions per week in public practice, half-day sessions per week in private practice, income bracket compared to peers in orthopaedic surgery) were analysed for evidence of a trend for increasing or decreasing proportions of the outcome from the first to the last category using the Mantel-Haenszel test for trend. Where a trend was confirmed this was then tested for significant departures from the observed trend. All continuous variables were non-normally distributed. These variables were presented as medians with inter-quartile ranges (IQR), and compared using the Mann-Whitney-U test.

Variables associated with each of the three-burnout subscales were explored using multiple linear regression. Variables evaluated are listed in Table 4. The univariate association between each of the three burnout subscales and these variables was first explored using simple linear regression. Dummy variables were created for categorical variables with more than 2 categories. Those variables whose association with the subscale had a p < 0.20 were then included in the multivariate model. Using stepwise backward elimination, variables were removed until only variables with p < 0.05 remained in the model.

Variables associated with burnout were explored using logistic regression. Those variables whose univariate association with burnout had a p < 0.20 were then included in the multivariate model. Using stepwise backward elimination, variables were removed until only variables with p < 0.05 remained in the model. Variables that had a significant association with burnout after controlling for the confounding effect of other variables are presented in Table 6. All analyses were conducted using IBM SPSS Statistics v21 (IBM Corp, Armonk, New York, USA). P values of <0.05 were considered statistically significant.

#### 3. Results

There were 299 (13.6%) responses from the 2200 copies of the survey distributed. Overall 15%, 17% and 38% of participants scored high levels of emotional exhaustion, depersonalization and low personal accomplishment respectively; resulting in 69 (23.1%) of the surgeons allocated a burnout status (Table 1).

The association between burnout status and participant demographics is illustrated in Table 2. There was a significant (p < 0.001) association between burnout and all measures of satisfaction and health. This association also existed for half-days

Rates of various levels for each subscale of the MBI - Human Services Survey.

Subscales of the Maslach Burnout Inventory	Low (% of participants)	Level Medium (% of participants)	High (% of participants)
Emotional Exhaustion	0–16 (58)	17-26 (27)	≥27 (15)
Depersonalization	0-6 (48)	7–12 (35)	≥13 (17)
Personal accomplishment	≥39 (38)	32–38 (30)	0-31 (32)

#### Table 2

Characteristics of participants according to burnout status.

	Burnout		
	Yes	No	
n (%) Total = 299	69 (23.1)	230 (76.9)	
	Median(IQR)	Median(IQR)	р
Number of children	1 (0-2)	1 (0-2)	0.26
How would you rate your health (scale 1–5: 1=poor, 5=excellent) <0.001	3 (2-3)	3 (3-4)	
Satisfaction with career (scale 1–5: 1=low, 5=high) <0.001	5 (3–5)	5 (4–5)	
Satisfaction with work-life balance (scale 1–5: 1=low, 5=high) <0.001	2 (2-4)	4 (3-4)	
Satisfaction with income (scale 1–5: 1=low, 5=high) <0.001	2 (2-4)	4 (3-4)	
Satisfaction with training pathway (scale 1–5: 1=low, 5=high) <0.001	2.5 (1-4)	4 (3-5)	
	n (row %)	n (row %)	р
Age bracket (years) 20–29 0.21ª	9 (15)	53 (85)	
30–39	22 (32)	46 (68)	
40-49	9 (13)	61 (87)	
≥50–59	29 (29)	70 (71)	
Sex Male 0.51 <sup>b</sup>	67 (23)	219 (77)	
Female	2 (15)	11 (85)	
Marital status Married or Defacto	41 (18)	181 (82)	
Never married	19 (31)	43 (69)	
Divorced	9 (60)	6 (40)	
Partner in medical profession			
Yes	32 (20) 37 (27)	131(80) 99 (73)	0.12
110	57 (27)	55 (75)	
Current position	10 (24)	50 (70)	0.00
Consultant	18 (24) 24 (20)	58 (76) 94 (80)	0.89
Head of department	7 (29)	17 (71)	
Assistant professor/lecturer	15 (25)	46 (75)	
Associate/full Professor	4 (22)	14 (78)	
Years worked as an Orthopaedic surgeon			
0-9 0.72ª	41 (22)	144 (78)	
10–19	23 (31)	51 (69)	
≥20	5 (13)	33 (87)	
Practice region			
North India	19 (23)	64 (77)	0.14
South India Fast India	16 (24) 15 (38)	52 (76) 24 (62)	
West India	15 (19)	66 (81)	
Central India	4 (15)	22 (85)	
Half-day sessions per week in public practice			
0-3	21 (19)	90 (81)	
0.03ª 4-5	16 (22)	58 (78)	
6-7	4 (15)	23 (85)	

#### Table 2 (Continued)

	n (row %)	n (row %)	р
8 or more	28 (34)	55 (66)	
Half day appaired an used in private prosting			
Hall-day sessions per week in private practice			
0–3	25 (29)	60 (71)	
0.13 <sup>a</sup>			
4–5	15 (27)	40 (73)	
6-7	4 (11)	31 (89)	
8 or more	25 (22)	90 (78)	
Income bracket compared with pages in orthogradic surgery			
income bracket compared with peers in orthopaedic surgery	(0.0)		
Bottom 25%	40 (33)	80 (67)	
0.07 <sup>d</sup>			
25-49%	10 (13)	67 (87)	
50-74%	10 (16)	54 (84)	
Top 25%	9 (29)	22 (71)	
Smoking status			
Non smoker	46 (22)	167 (79)	0.10
Non-shiokei	40 (22)		0.18
Smoker	23 (29)	56 (71)	
Considered leaving the profession in past year			
No	54 (21)	203 (79)	0.02
Yes	15 (38)	24 (62)	

<sup>a</sup> Mantel-Haenszel test for trend.

 $^{\rm b}\,$  Chi-square test may not be valid due to expected counts  ${<}5$  in one or more cells.

in public practice (p = 0.03) and marital status; 60% of divorcees were burnt out in comparison to burnout in 31% who were never married and 18% who were married or in a de facto relationship (p < 0.001). 38% of surgeons who had considered leaving the profession in the past year were burnt out, comparative to 21% who had not (p = 0.02). No other demographic variable was significantly associated to burnout.

#### 3.1. Regression modeling

Self-rated health, satisfaction with income, and satisfaction with training pathway were found to have a significant (negative) association with the emotional exhaustion score (Table 4). For each one unit increase in a variable, the emotional exhaustion score fell by the value of the corresponding regression coefficient. This model explains 28% of the variability in the emotional exhaustion score ( $R^2 = 0.28$ ).

Having a spouse in the medical profession, income bracket, satisfaction with career and satisfaction with training pathway were found to have a significant (negative) association with the depersonalization score (Table 4). For each one unit increase in a variable, the depersonalization score fell by the value of the corresponding regression coefficient. This model explains 19% of the variability in the emotional exhaustion score ( $R^2 = 0.19$ ).

Satisfaction with training pathway was the only variable found to have a significant association with the personal accomplishment score (Table 4). For each one unit increase in this variable, the personal accomplishment score increased by 1.21 points. This model explains 4% of the variability in the personal accomplishment score ( $R^2 = 0.04$ ).

The univariate association between variables of interest and burnout via logistic regression are listed in Table 3. Age, marital status, spouse in medical profession, years worked as an orthopedic surgeon, practice region, number of half-day sessions in public or private practice, income bracket, smoker and health status, satisfaction and considering leaving the profession were included in the multivariate analysis (p < 0.2 criterion). The only variables with significant association with burnout after controlling for confounding factors of all the other variables were Age (p=0.01), marital status (p=0.001), income bracket (p=0.05), health (p<0.001) and satisfaction with training pathway (p=0.02) (Table 4).

#### 4. Discussion

This is the first study to assess burnout among orthopedic surgeons in India. The use of a validated instrument allows for historical and future cross study, country and occupational comparisons. The results and trends observed in this study may be extrapolated to the surrounding regions with similar sociodemographic and medical institutional contexts.

An unexpected finding identified from the study is the low level of burnout in the Indian orthopedic profession (23.1%), when compared to western countries; Australia (53% of registrars) and USA (50% and 56% for orthopedic surgeons and trainees).<sup>2</sup> This result is consistent with another MBI burnout study in doctors and dentists in North India, who exhibited very low levels of burnout, which is surprising given the high levels of poverty, health care needs, shortage of health professionals and heavy work hours.<sup>9</sup> The reduced burnout may be attributed to three primary factors: Less litigation in India compared to western countries, albeit this trend is changing. More Indian surgeons working in private practice, therefore with more control over their work-life balance.<sup>9</sup> Finally the poor socio-demographic context may influence the selfperception of the burnout subscales, work related stresses dismissed as the norm. Carod-Artal and Vázquez-Cabrera encourage caution however when interpreting the MBI internationally as the values vary, subject to the diverse socio-cultural factors of differing countries. They continue to warn of the negative implications if validation of survey instruments in developing countries is not independent of those in developed countries.<sup>10</sup>

Bhugra et al. concluded that private practice provides surgeons with more control over their professional lives and may be responsible for low levels of burnout.<sup>9</sup> However our study did not demonstrate any significant association with the burnout and the number of half-day sessions in private practice (p = 0.13). Conversely there was evidence to suggest that the number of half-day sessions per week in public practice was associated with

#### Table 3

Univariate analysis of the association between Burnout subscale and each explanatory variable.

Explanatory variable	р
Emotional exhaustion	
Age	0.13
Number of children	0.30
Mdfildi Status	0.10
Years worked as orthopaedic surgeon	0.63
Spouse in medical field	0.14
Sex	0.47
Practice region	0.74
Number of half-day session/week in public practice	0.24
Number of haif-day session/week in private practice	0.66
Smoker	0.16
Self-rated health	< 0.001
Satisfaction with career	< 0.001
Satisfaction with work life balance	< 0.001
Satisfaction with income	< 0.001
Satisfaction with training pathway Considered leaving the profession	<0.001
considered reaving the profession	0.001
Depersonalisation	
Age	0.71
Number of children	0.02
Marital status	0.04
Verrein position Verrs worked as orthonaedic surgeon	0.46
Spouse in medical field	< 0.001
Sex	0.36
Practice region	0.14
Number of half-day session/week in public practice	0.67
Number of half-day session/week in private practice	0.24
Smoker	< 0.001
Self-rated health	< 0.001
Satisfaction with career	< 0.001
Satisfaction with work life balance	0.01
Satisfaction with income	< 0.001
Satisfaction with training pathway	< 0.001
Considered leaving the profession	0.001
Personal accomplishment	
Age	0.29
Number of children	0.44
Marital status	0.67
Verrent position Verrs worked as orthonaedic surgeon	0.08
Spouse in medical field	0.19
Sex	0.32
Practice region	0.28
Number of half-day session/week in public practice	0.19
Number of half-day session/week in private practice	0.42
Income Dracker	0.05
Self-rated health	0.78
Satisfaction with career	0.76
Satisfaction with work life balance	0.83
Satisfaction with income	0.18
Satisfaction with training pathway	< 0.001
Considered leaving the profession	0.31

burnout. This association took the form of a trend with increasing probability of burnout with increasing number of half-day sessions per week in public practice (p=0.03). There were no significant departures from this trend (p>0.25). The public sector is more demanding in terms of over time and less flexibility, thus possibly contributing to physician burnout.

Interestingly satisfaction with training pathway was the only variable to have a significant association to personal accomplishment (p < 0.001) and the other burnout subscales (Table 5). Correspondingly after controlling for confounding variables it

#### Table 4

Multivariate analysis analysis: variables associated each of the Burnout subscales.

	Regresssion coefficient	95%CI	р
Emotional exhaustion score			
Self-rated health	-2.98	-4.021.93	< 0.001
Satisfaction with income	-1.74	-2.660.83	< 0.001
Satisfaction with training pathway	-1.80	-2.59 - 1.00	< 0.001
Depersonalisation score			
Spouse in the medical profession	-1.8	-3.06-0.61	0.003
Income bracket	-0.97	-1.57 - 0.38	0.001
Satisfaction with career	-1.10	-1.74 - 0.47	0.001
Satisfaction with training pathway	-0.72	-1.20 - 0.23	0.004
Personal accomplishment Satisfaction with training pathway	1.21	0.54-1.88	<0.001
01 5			

maintained a significant association with overall burnout (p = 0.02).

Whereas satisfaction with income was only significantly associated with emotional exhaustion (p < 0.001). Thus surgeons self evaluation and personal accomplishment stems from factors external to monetary reward. Facilitation of training pathways perceived as less stressful, balanced and fulfilling to its recipients a plausible target to reduce burnout in the surgeons they produce. There is a deficit in the literature exploring the relationship between specific training modalities (independent research tie, professional development, mentorship programs) and burnout in orthopedic surgeons.

Marital status had a strongly significant association with burnout (p < 0.001). A similar correlation observed by Bhugra et al. was attributed to the Indian context wherein marriage and maintenance of a stable family are exceptionally valued.<sup>9</sup> We found that divorcees were twice as likely (60%) to be burnt out compared to individuals who had never been married (31%) and almost four times as likely as married people (18%). This substantiates the impact emotional turbulence in domestic affairs may have on burnout status. Sargent et al. described positive marital functioning and satisfaction as a powerful protective factor for physician burnout.<sup>11</sup> The provision of emotional support, family stability and a source of stress relief through a harmonious marriage are important factors in reduction of burnout and psychological distress, irrespective of context. However there was no meaningful relationship between having a spouse in the medical field and burnout, though it was significantly associated with depersonalization (p = 0.003).

Self-rated health had the strongest association to emotional exhaustion and is significantly associated to burnout (p < 0.001). In comparison to our previous study in Australian orthopedic surgeons who had a insignificant association (p = 0.47).<sup>2</sup> Thus stipulating a potential focus for current and future burnout prevention programs; access to gym and healthy eating facilities for time poor surgeons a recommendation for burnout minimization.

Contrasting previous studies, the relationship between current career position and burnout or any of its subscales was insignificant (p=0.89). Arora et al. described surgical trainees and residents to have higher emotional exhaustion and depersonalization scores and lower personal accomplishment when compared to senior faculty.<sup>7</sup> Sargent et al. study results show a surge in burnout and psychiatric morbidity in residents comparative to faculty members. Potential causes including increased work hours, poor work-life balance, debt load and professional relationships.<sup>12</sup> A potential cause for the disparity between our study and previous reports may be a differing hierarchal burden structure in the USA and India, in terms of roles and responsibility.

Table 5				
Univariate analysis of variable	s for their	- association	with	burnou

Category	OR	95% CI	р
Sex (female vs male)	1.68	0.36-7.78	0.51
Ago			
20-29	$1.0^{a}$		0.01 <sup>b</sup>
30-39	2.82	118-673	0.01
40-49	0.87	0 32-2 35	
>50	2.44	1.07-5.59	
Number of children <sup>c</sup>	0.89	0.68-1.15	0.36
Marital status			
Married or De Facto	$10^{a}$		0.001 <sup>b</sup>
Never married	195	103-369	0.001
Divorced	6.62	2 23-19 64	
Spouse in medical Profession (Yes vs No)	1.53	0.89-2.63	0.12
Current position			
Resident or senior resident	10 <sup>a</sup>		0 90 <sup>b</sup>
Consultant	0.82	0.41-1.65	0.00
Head of department	133	0 48-3 71	
Assistant professor/lecturer	1.05	0.48-2.31	
Associate/full professor	0.92	0.27-3.15	
Years worked as orthopaedic surgeon	1 04		0.10 <sup>b</sup>
10, 10	1.0	0.97 2.90	0.10
20-29	0.53	0.07-2.09	
20-25	0.55	0.20-1.45	
Practice region			
North India	1.0 <sup>a</sup>		0.15 <sup>b</sup>
South India	1.04	0.49-2.21	
East India	2.11	0.92-4.80	
West India	0.77	0.36-1.64	
Central India	0.61	0.19-2.00	
Number of half-day session/week in public p	ractice		
0-3	1.0 <sup>a</sup>		0.07 <sup>b</sup>
4–5	1.18	0.57-2.45	
6–7	0.75	0.23-2.39	
8 or more	2.18	1.13-4.21	
Number of half-day session/week in private r	oractice		
0–3	1.0 <sup>a</sup>		0.19 <sup>b</sup>
4–5	0.90	0.42-1.92	
6-7	0.31	0.10-0.97	
8 or more	2.2	0.35-1.27	
Income bracket			
Bottom 25%	1.0 <sup>a</sup>		$0.004^{b}$
25-49%	0.30	0.14-0.64	
50-74%	0.37	0.17-0.80	
Тор 25%	0.82	0.35-1.94	
Smoker(ves vs no)	0.67	0.37-1.20	0.18
Self-rated health <sup>c</sup>	0.42	0.30-0.59	< 0.001
Satisfaction with career <sup>c</sup>	0.58	0.45-0.74	< 0.001
Satisfaction with work life balance <sup>c</sup>	0.66	0.54-0.81	< 0.001
Satisfaction with income <sup>c</sup>	0.56	0.44-0.72	< 0.001
Considered leaving profession (Yes vs No)	2.35	1.15-4.79	0.02

<sup>a</sup> Reference category.

<sup>b</sup> Overall P value for the category.

<sup>c</sup> Odds ratio for a 1 unit change in the variable (higher vs lower).

#### 4.1. Recommendations for the future

Burnout in orthopedic surgeons may have devastating consequences for patient mortality and morbidity. The link between burnout and patient safety and medical errors is well established in the surgical literature, the depersonalization dimension associated with lower patient satisfaction and longer recovery times.<sup>3,13</sup> Past interventions to reduce burnout have targeted individuals rather than organizational and social contexts within which they practice.<sup>3</sup> Halbesleben and Rathert recommended implementation of proactive steps to reduce burnout through system wide

#### Table 6

Multivariate analysis: variables associated with burnout.

Category	OR	95% CI	р
Age			
20-29	$1.0^{\dagger}$		0.01*
30-39	3.44	1.15-10.33	
40-49	0.73	0.21-2.59	
>50	2.74	0.98-7.64	
Marital status			
Married or De Facto	$1.0^{\dagger}$		0.001*
Never married	2.59	1.04-6.47	
Divorced	17.34	3.02-99.55	
Income bracket			
Bottom 25%	$1.0^{\dagger}$		0.05*
25-49%	0.31	0.12-0.78	
50-74%	1.30	0.48-3.50	
Top 25%	0.49	0.11-2.07	
Self-rated health	0.42	0.28-0.64	< 0.001
Satisfaction with training pathway	0.73	0.56-0.85	0.02

<sup>•</sup>Overall P value for the category.

<sup>†</sup>Reference category.

<sup>‡</sup>odds ratio for a 1 unit change in the variable (higher vs lower).

intervention programs, which will ultimately result in and improvement in patient quality of care.<sup>13</sup>

Given then novelty of this assessment in Indian surgeons and the significant variability to previous western studies, similar research would be valuable throughout the region, enabling cross study comparisons, validation and assessment of whether similar trends and associations exist. Additionally, the Indian medical industry is changing structurally, particularly in regards to patient relations (increase in litigation) thus it would be worthwhile to repeat this study in five to ten years and evaluate the change.

#### 4.2. Limitations

The available published studies, including our own previous study in Australian Orthopedic Surgeons, utilize public forums such as annual conferences as an avenue to asses an unbiased large distribution of doctors. However this introduces inherent limitations including a relatively low response rate (consistent amongst all studies of this kind). There may be a predisposition for burnt out surgeons to respond, in hope of initiating awareness or change, conversely their time constraints may inhibit them from participating. The assumption is that the number of respondents is a sufficient sample size demonstrating the general distribution (299 participants). This enables cross-study comparisons with similar methodological sampling. Additionally, the assessment of only surgeons whom attended the conference, potentially eliminates a demographic of those who cannot afford to or do not have time to attend, particularly in India. Finally caution is advised when interpreting MBI results internationally as the values vary dependent upon the many socioeconomic and cultural between countries.

#### 5. Conclusion

Burnout is a critical syndrome, affecting individuals in the medical field, particularly orthopedic surgeons. 23.1% of Indian orthopedic surgeons were burnt out; significantly lower than the rates measured in developed western nations. Marital status, health and satisfaction with training pathway have strongly significant association with burnout. Thus this study provides a point of reference/baseline for future burnout research in orthopedic and in general surgeons in India and surrounding countries in the east. Clearly delineating the key associations to

burnout, which future minimization interventions can target. One must remain mindful to the epidemic of burnout and continued vigilance and pro-active policy initiatives are the need of the hour.

#### **Conflict of interest**

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