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The lived experience of GP burnout

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General practice, the foundation of our primary care in England, is in crisis. Over the last decade there have been a growing number of patients with increasing complex health needs - a trend of mounting workload for GPs which has failed to be matched by the necessary funding and workforce. Recently concern for the wellbeing of our GPs has risen, with over half of the GPs across Britain showing signs of burnout. Burnout has been described as a syndrome characterised by emotional exhaustion, depersonalization and a lack of personal accomplishment. The suggested associations with burnout for a GP are far reaching, from a reduced ability to listen and empathize with patients to increased rates of depression and suicide. To date, no research has tried to directly explore the shared personal experience of burnout for GPs within the current NHS climate. It is important to give voice to GPs working on the front line of healthcare to inform future research and healthcare policy. Therefore, the aim of this study is to increase our understanding of the experiences of GPs who self-identify as experiencing burnout. In person interviews were organized with GPs which explored topics such as overall experience of burnout and techniques the GP uses to maintain work quality. Transcribed interviews were analysed using interpretive phenomenology analysis, an approach within qualitative research which allows the researcher to gain insights into a subjective experience and interpret how the participant makes sense of their experience, in this case, the experience of GP burnout.

Biography

Philippa Shaw is in her second year of study working towards a PhD in Psychology. She is investigating the topic the impact of GP burnout on patient care, at the University of Westminster. The presented study is one of the pieces of research which will contribute to her PhD thesis.

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