



Australian Orthopaedic Surgeons are Satisfied with their Jobs

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Job Satisfaction of Australian Orthopaedic Surgeons

Job satisfaction has recently featured in many journals and in the media, as our society grows more astute of the psychosocial well-being of health care professionals. Job satisfaction is a dynamic concept based on cognition and affect – two linked domains of the human psyche. It has been traditionally described as “a pleasurable or positive emotional state resulting from the appraisal of one’s job or job experiences” [1]. Put simply, it is a description of how happy one is with their jobs.

So why is job satisfaction important? Physician satisfaction has been associated with patient satisfaction, with better physician health and well-being, reduced physician turnover and improved quality of health care provided. Conversely, dissatisfaction is associated with poorer physician health, inappropriate prescribing behaviours, lower levels of patient satisfaction and decreased patient compliance [2].

It seems that Western countries continue to have high job satisfaction for orthopaedic surgeons despite high burnout levels. In their nationwide study, Shanafelt et al found that career satisfaction was high among American orthopaedic surgeons (80%) [3]. In our study of Australian orthopaedic surgeons [2], we also found high career satisfaction, with nine in 10 orthopaedic surgeons being either very satisfied or moderately satisfied. All these results are in the backdrop of high levels of burnout, with one in two orthopaedic surgeons being burned out [4].

So what is causing the high satisfaction? Is it the income? Is it the lifestyle? Is it just the status of being an orthopaedic surgeon? There

seems to be a multi-factorial answer with income, work hours, private practice and work-life balance being most important. This in turn leads to better health and less chance of leaving the profession.

Clearly, we are doing well. However, now, tackling the epidemic of burnout assumes even more importance for psychosocial well-being.

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