

The Introduction of regular group reflective practice sessions for junior doctors in a critical care setting during second wave of COVID-19 pandemic.

Background

The COVID pandemic necessitated the deployment of large numbers of junior doctors to the ICU setting.

Low morale and burnout have been highlighted as issues prior to the pandemic.

What are the issues?

Up to 2/3rds of junior doctors surveyed had experienced features of depression, anxiety and burn out.

Aims

To create a regular group reflective practice space for 'difficult or challenging cases' to support critical care doctors during the second wave of the COVID pandemic.

Methods

We completed a total of four group sessions (every two weeks); on average four junior doctors attended each session.

Each session led by a Balint group trained Consultant Psychiatrist.

Results

Common themes (both in sessions and questionnaires) included: guilt, cynicism, frustration and irritability, prolonged suffering, desensitisation, lack of understanding from other medical specialities and exhaustion.

Despite the challenges, many also identified the benefit of being at work during the pandemic.

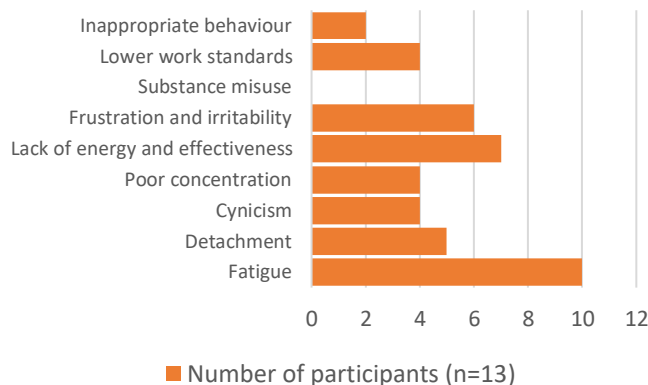
Universal positive feedback on reflective sessions.

Key Points

Features of low morale and burnout were identified in junior doctors working in ICU during the COVID pandemic.

Positive feedback was obtained following reflective practice sessions.

ITU wellbeing staff questionnaire December 2020



Conclusions

A wellbeing support package for junior doctors (including reflective sessions) within a critical care setting can be beneficial in identifying and supporting those with low morale and burnout.

Where Next?

Could this framework be transferable to non-COVID times?

Do we need to consider other speciality groups and their risk profile?