

INVESTIGATION OF PHYSICIANS' PSYCHIATRIC CHARACTERISTICS AND ATTITUDES TOWARD THE MEDICAL PROFESSION

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BACKGROUND AND AIM: In recent years, it has been reported that physicians' susceptibility to mental illnesses and suicide attempts have increased due to the increase in workload and psychosocial burdens of the medical profession. In this study, the psychiatric and occupational characteristics of physicians were analyzed.

METHODS: The research was conducted with 315 physicians working in Denizli. Data were collected via online platforms. Physicians completed a sociodemographic data form and the Patient Health Questionnaire-4. The study was approved by the Ethics Committee (decision number E-60116787-020-510938).

RESULTS: The rates of depression and anxiety were approximately 45% and 40% for residents, 38% and 32% for specialists, and 50% and 45% for academicians, respectively. The rate of seeking psychiatric help was 52% and antidepressant use was 23%. 42 physicians had suicidal ideation and 4 attempted suicide. There was a significant correlation between hesitation to seek psychiatric help and suicidal ideation, depression and anxiety ($p=0.000$,

$p=0.020$, $p=0.000$). One-third of the physicians hesitated to consult a psychiatrist because of feelings of inadequacy and one-tenth of them because of fear of being recorded. 42% of the participants stated that they were thinking of quitting the medical profession, 21% were planning to go abroad, and 42.7% stated that they would not choose medicine if they had a second chance. Those who stated that they wouldn't choose medicine again had significantly higher depression and anxiety symptoms ($p=0.000$, $p=0.010$). It was reported that the most fundamental problems of medicine were poor working conditions with 34% and inadequate salaries with 25%. Almost 80% of the physicians stated that they had been subjected to verbal or physical violence by patients or their relatives.

CONCLUSIONS: The mental health of physicians can be protected and public health strengthened by improving working and living conditions through appropriate health policies and by providing regular psychiatric support.

Keywords: Medicine, mental health, physician, profession