

Helping Yourself and Your Colleagues Maintain Wellness Through COVID-19

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April 14, 2020

ACOG Subcommittee on Physician Wellness

“Helping Yourself and Your Colleagues Maintain Wellness
Through COVID-19”

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NO CONFLICTS TO DECLARE

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Disclaimer

Inclusion of any product, procedure, or method of practice in this program does not constitute endorsement by ACOG.

Specific resources and management options described in this presentation may not be available in all locations and/or may not be applicable to all practices.

Recommendations concerning practice protocols should be evaluated in light of local medical expertise and local laws/regulations before implementing options discussed.

Key Objectives

After participating in this webinar, you should be able to:

- Identify the specific challenges that ob-gyns are facing in the wake of COVID-19 that could contribute to poor physician wellness.
- Access the resources available to physicians so they may continue monitoring and maintaining best wellness practices as the COVID-19 pandemic continues to unfold.
- Establish best practices that will help maintain wellness for yourself and for your colleagues, including ways to introduce those best practices within the broader hospital environment.

What can we do during this hour?

- We CAN go over the research and science behind physician wellness.
- We CAN identify some of the specific challenges that ob-gyns face normally and during COVID-19 that may affect their personal wellness.
- We CAN present wellness-centered methods, which will address some of these challenges, including best practices for individuals, for your colleagues, and for hospitals and systems.

What can we NOT do during this hour?

- We cannot provide a one-size fits all wellness routine for everyone.
 - We can only provide some best practices; each person and each system's wellness routine best be tailored to fit them.
- We cannot predict how long this pandemic will go on and what the long-term effect of it may have on physician wellness.

Physician Wellness Overview

What is physician wellness?

- High levels of job satisfaction, including feeling challenged and thriving in the workplace
- Healthy integration of professional life and personal life
- Well-rounded emotional, physical, and mental well-being

Why is physician wellness important?

- Because your health and wellbeing is inherently important.
- Poor wellness leads to burnout
 - Emotional exhaustion + depersonalization + low sense of personal accomplishment
 - 43.9% of all physicians reported at least one symptom of burnout (Shanafelt et al. 2019)

Why is physician wellness important?

- Physicians have a depression and suicide risk greater than the general population.
 - 51.2% ob-gyns report burnout; 32% ob-gyns report depression (Morgan et al., 2019)
 - Each year, approximately 400 physicians die by suicide
 - Risk of physician suicide is 1.1 - 3.4 in male physicians, and 2.5 - 5.7 in female physicians compared to the general population (Lindeman et al., 1996)

Other important reasons why physician wellness is important:

- Could further exacerbate physician shortage.
- Could lead to a decrease in productivity.
- Could lead to an increased risk of poor quality and clinical outcomes.

Burnout

- Ob-gyns ranked second highest in reporting burnout
- Ob-gyns ranked third lowest in satisfaction with work-life integration

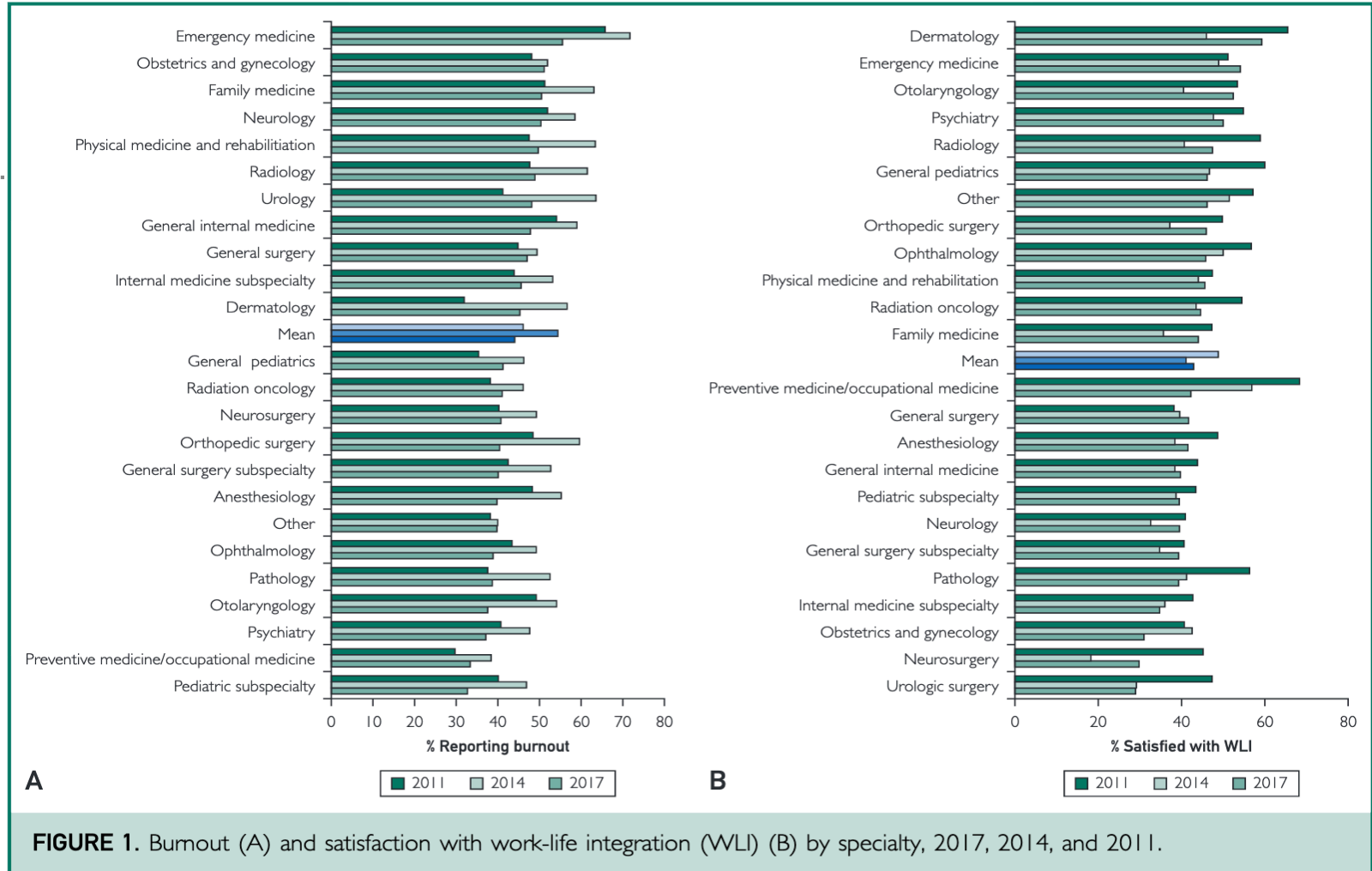


FIGURE 1. Burnout (A) and satisfaction with work-life integration (WLI) (B) by specialty, 2017, 2014, and 2011.

Physician Wellness During Pandemic

What challenges do ob-gyns experience during a pandemic that may contribute to poor wellness?

- Longer hours for some, shorter hours for some
- Financial uncertainty
 - Especially for GYN-only
- Worry of exposure
 - Health of self, family, friends, colleagues
 - Worry of spreading it in the workplace

What challenges do ob-gyns experience during a pandemic that may contribute to poor wellness?

- Shortage of necessary equipment, PPE
- Major changes in typical practice structure
 - Telehealth implementation
 - Spacing out visits
 - Deliveries

Research and Strategies

COVID-19 impact on well-being and how to help

- Research from COVID-19 pandemic just starting to be published
- Research from other disasters being used
- Strategies that are useful to counter increased stress response:
 - Stress First Aid
 - Psychological First Aid
 - Disaster Mental Health Resources
 - Structured Peer Support

April 7, 2020

Understanding and Addressing Sources of Anxiety Among Health Care Professionals During the COVID-19 Pandemic

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<https://jamanetwork.com/journals/jama/fullarticle/2764380>

1. Access to PPE
2. Personal exposure and taking it home to family
3. Not having rapid testing in case HCP starts experiencing symptoms -> spreading infection
4. Uncertainty that their organization will support HCP + family if they are infected
5. Access to childcare during increased work hours
6. General home + family needs (food, hydration, lodging, transportation)
7. Concern about providing competent medical care if deployed to new area/specialty
8. Lack of access to updated clinical information and communication

Best Practices

Basic Needs: Nutrition and Hydration

- Masking may increase likelihood of dehydration/hypoglycemia
- Healthy options if possible
- Take advantage of FeedTheFrontlines, delivery services, restaurant take-out

Basic Need: Sleep

- Optimize sleep environment
- Limit alerting activities (screens, exercise, news) before bed
- Create regular bedtime routine
- Try to keep regular sleep/wake hours
- Limit alcohol before bed
- Limit caffeine within 6 hours of sleep
- Use strategic napping
- Upon waking, get at least 15 minutes of bright light

Exercise

- Try to create a routine
- Added benefit if outdoors
- Mix of aerobic/stress reducing
- Avoid close to bedtime

Breaks

- Comforting, fun, and/or relaxing
 - Walking
 - Music
 - Reading
 - Writing
 - Meditation/mindfulness
 - Focused breathing

Maintain communication/stay connected

- Quality time with family within the home
 - *if you are not isolating
 - Game night, movie night, [nightly Met Opera streams](#), [Virtual museum tours](#)
- Video calls with family and friends outside the home
 - Zoom dinners, [Netflix Party](#)
- Check in with colleagues during the work day

Self check-in

- Monitor yourself for symptoms of increased stress and burnout
- Be vigilant for poor coping strategies and try to promptly address and alter
- Reach out to loved ones, friends, and colleagues and know when you need to seek out a mental health professional for help

Stay updated and honor your service

- Trusted sources of information
- Recognition of self/others

From: **Understanding and Addressing Sources of Anxiety Among Health Care Professionals During the COVID-19 Pandemic**

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Table. Requests From Health Care Professionals to Their Organization During the Coronavirus Disease 2019 Pandemic

Request	Principal desire	Concerns	Key components of response
Hear me	Listen to and act on health care professionals' expert perspective and frontline experience and understand and address their concerns to the extent that organizations and leaders are able	Uncertainty whether leaders recognize the most pressing concerns of frontline health care professionals and whether local physician expertise regarding infection control, critical care, emergency medicine, and mental health is being appropriately harnessed to develop organization-specific responses	Create an array of input and feedback channels (listening groups, email suggestion box, town halls, leaders visiting hospital units) and make certain that the voice of health care professionals is part of the decision-making process
Protect me	Reduce the risk of health care professionals acquiring the infection and/or being a portal of transmission to family members	Concern about access to appropriate personal protective equipment, taking home infection to family members, and not having rapid access to testing through occupational health if needed	Provide adequate personal protective equipment, rapid access to occupational health with efficient evaluation and testing if symptoms warrant, information and resources to avoid taking the infection home to family members, and accommodation to health care professionals at high risk because of age or health conditions
Prepare me	Provide the training and support that allows provision of high-quality care to patients	Concern about not being able to provide competent nursing/medical care if deployed to new area (eg, all nurses will have to be intensive care unit nurses) and about rapidly changing information/communication challenges	Provide rapid training to support a basic, critical knowledge base and appropriate backup and access to experts Clear and unambiguous communication must acknowledge that everyone is experiencing novel challenges and decisions, everyone needs to rely on each other in this time, individuals should ask for help when they need it, no one needs to make difficult decisions alone, and we are all in this together
Support me	Provide support that acknowledges human limitations in a time of extreme work hours, uncertainty, and intense exposure to critically ill patients	Need for support for personal and family needs as work hours and demands increase and schools and daycare closures occur	Provide support for physical needs, including access to healthy meals and hydration while working, lodging for individuals on rapid-cycle shifts who do not live in close proximity to the hospital, transportation assistance for sleep-deprived workers, and assistance with other tasks, and provide support for childcare needs Provide support for emotional and psychologic needs for all, including psychologic first aid deployed via webinars and delivered directly to each unit (topics may include dealing with anxiety and insomnia, practicing self-care, supporting each other, and support for moral distress), and provide individual support for those with greater distress
Care for me	Provide holistic support for the individual and their family should they need to be quarantined	Uncertainty that the organization will support/take care of personal or family needs if the health care professional develops infection	Provide lodging support for individuals living apart from their families, support for tangible needs (eg, food, childcare), check-ins and emotional support, and paid time off if quarantine is necessary

Table Title: Requests From Health Care Professionals to Their Organization During the Coronavirus Disease 2019 Pandemic

What can you implement in your organization?

- Input and feedback systems from physicians to top/VOP (hear me)
- PPE, rapid evaluation and testing for physicians (protect me)
- Rapid training, critical knowledge, access to experts (prepare me)
- Provide support for physical and emotional needs (support me)
- Provide support if a physician is sick or quarantined (care for me)
- Gratitude (honor me)

Formal Peer Support System

- Leader(s)
- Trained team of peer supporters
- Confidential system for referrals/counseling
- Script
- Resource list

QUESTIONS?



Resources

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Welcome to ACOG's
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Issues

Sign Up

Share your stories and challenges from the frontlines of the COVID-19 pandemic.

We know this is a particularly challenging time for you, your practices, and your patients. As the COVID-19 crisis continues to unfold across our nation, it is critical that your elected officials hear directly from you about the most urgent issues you are facing. Any legislation to address the pandemic must be informed by your experiences as physicians and the unique challenges of this moment. That's why we're urging you to share your firsthand stories of the COVID-19 crisis directly with your elected officials.

In the adjacent text box, please add in your personal story of how the crisis is impacting your practice as an ob-gyn on the frontlines of the health care system. Your elected officials need to hear from you about your most pressing needs – whether that includes the mounting shortage of personal protective equipment (PPE) or the financial strains on your practice. Your story will be sent to your officials with the

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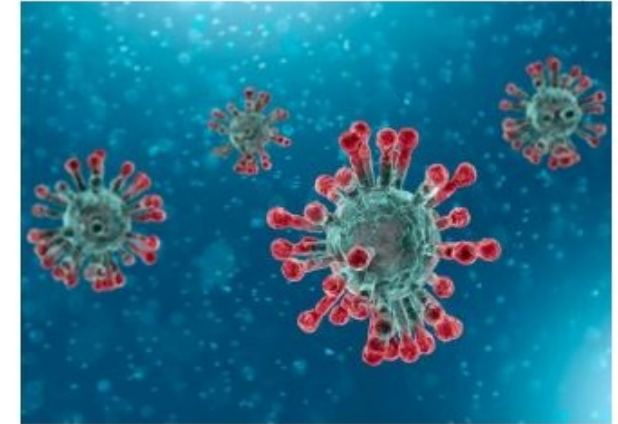
ACOG COVID-19 RESOURCES

Practice Advisory

Novel Coronavirus 2019

Latest practice guidance: Advisory on Novel Coronavirus 2019 (COVID-19) including an algorithm to aid in assessment and management of pregnant patients with suspected or confirmed COVID-19.

[Read More](#)



The Latest

Patient FAQ
Coronavirus (COVID-19),
Pregnancy, and
Breastfeeding

Simulation
COVID-19 Obstetric
Preparedness
Manual

Physician FAQ
COVID-19 FAQs for
Obstetrician-
Gynecologists,
Obstetrics

Assessment and
Management
Algorithm [↗](#)

CREOG Response
to Training during
COVID-19
Pandemic [↗](#)

Coding Resource
Managing Patients
Remotely: Billing for
Digital and
Telehealth Services

- www.acog.org/topics/covid-19
- [Physician Wellness during the COVID-19 Health Emergency](#)

Resources

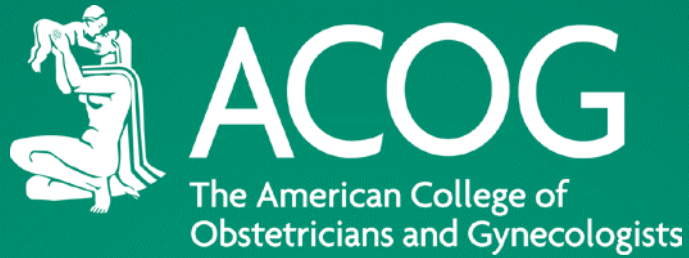
You may access the links by downloading the slides.

- [AMA: Caring for Our Caregivers During COVID-19](#)
- [Stanford Medicine WellMD Center](#)
- [NAM: Action Collaborative on Clinician Well-Being and Resilience](#)
- [National Center for PTSD:](#)
 - [Managing Stress Associated with the COVID-19 Virus Outbreak](#)
 - [Managing Healthcare Workers' Stress Associated with the COVID-19 Virus Outbreak](#)
 - [Stress First Aid Self Care / Organizational Support Model](#)

Resources

You may access the links by downloading the slides.

- [SAMHSA – First Responders and Disaster Responders Resource Portal](#)
- [For the Frontlines – Free Crisis Counseling for Health Care Professionals and Essential Workers](#)
- [Headspace – Free Headspace for US Healthcare Professionals](#)



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