Muffins and Meditation: Combating Burnout in Surgical Residents

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How does a weekly mindfulness practice and wellness conference impact mindfulness, self-compassion, flourishing, and burnout among surgical residents?

Background
- Non-traditional topics are seldom taught in surgical residency
- Confidential “safe-space” conversations are not typically available for trainees
- High prevalence of burnout among surgical trainees has a deleterious effect on physicians, health systems, and patients

Hypothesis
Participants with more frequent attendance at the conference will:
- Be more mindful and self-compassionate
- Experience less burnout and more flourishing

Methods: Conference Structure
1. Create safe and confidential environment with TRANCE principles
   - Tolerance
   - Respect
   - Anonymity
   - Non-retaliation
   - Compassion
   - Egalitarian
2. Mindful Meditation
   - 10 minutes of guided silent meditation
   - Practice of drawing attention to a single focus
   - Practice of recognizing distractions and returning to a single focus
3. Facilitated Discussion
   - Focus on aspects of professional development
   - Allow space for residents to share their experiences with burnout, adverse outcomes, substance abuse, depression

Methods: Analysis
Demographics and attendance self reported. Used validated tools to measure:
- Mindfulness (CAMS-R)
- Self-compassion (SCS-SF)
- Positive and Negative Affect (PANAS)
- Burnout (MBI)

Results
- 83% attended at least one conference
- On multivariate analysis, the sole predictor of burnout was not being married / in a committed relationship
- Qualitative feedback was overwhelmingly positive

Conclusions
- Surgical residents value a protected time and safe space to focus on wellbeing
- Marginally significant trends indicate more recent and frequent attendance was protective
- Improved individual attendance rates may result in a greater impact on burnout

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