Muffins and Meditation: Combating Burnout in Surgical Residents

George Burnet (MD, SOM), Carson Platnick (MD, SOM), Kshama Jaishwal, MD, Caitlin Robinson, BS, Angela Suaia, MD PhD, Abbie Beacham, PhD, Clay Cothren Burlew, MD, Barry Platnick, MD

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

Department of Surgery, Denver Health Medical Center, Denver, CO and Department of Surgery, University of Colorado School of Medicine, Aurora, CO