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WAYS TO OVERCOME STRESS IN THE PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITIES OF HIGHER EDUCATION INSTRUCTORS DURING WARTIME

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Abstract. This article is devoted to researching ways to overcome stress in the professional activities of instructors in higher medical education institutions during wartime, which creates additional negative psychological impacts and accelerates the pace of professional burnout. Prolonged exposure to high stress levels can lead to emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and a reduced sense of personal accomplishment. High stress levels can impair cognitive functions, leading to decreased productivity, errors in work, and a general decline in the quality of teaching. To overcome stress, comprehensive measures are proposed, including administrative support, establishment of collective interaction, personal responsibility of instructors for their health, and the development of professional skills. An important aspect is the creation of a safe educational environment and the provision of psychological support to instructors. Taking care of the psycho-emotional state of instructors is a key factor in ensuring the quality of education during wartime.

Keywords: war, stress, higher education institutions, medical education, professional activities, instructors, psychological support, professional burnout, distance learning.

Introduction

Stress is undoubtedly a part of the professional activities of instructors in higher medical education institutions, and it only multiplies during wartime. Military actions significantly affect the psycho-emotional state of educators, forcing them to adapt to new working conditions. Many students and instructors may be displaced from their homes, leading to disrupted routines and a lack of stable environments conducive to learning and teaching. Wartime conditions often lead to shortages of essential resources, including educational materials, technology, and even basic necessities like electricity and internet access. The emotional burden of dealing with loss, trauma, and uncertainty can lead to psychological issues such as depression, anxiety, and post-traumatic stress disorder. This article discusses the main factors of stress in the professional activities of instructors during wartime and suggests ways to overcome it.

The aim of the work was to investigate ways to overcome the stress faced by instructors in higher education institutions during military conflicts.

Material and Methods

To achieve the aim, a literature review was conducted in databases such as Scopus, Web of Science, PubMed Medline, and Embase. The main aspects considered included effective strategies for psychological support and assistance to instructors to reduce the impact of stress on professional activities during wartime.



Results *Consequences of Stress among Medical Educators.*

Work-related stress often leads to professional burnout, which is a state of emotional, physical, and mental exhaustion due to prolonged intensive work activities. Professional burnout is characterized as a psychological syndrome that arises as a result of long-term exposure to stress factors in the workplace [1]. This phenomenon includes emotional exhaustion, manifested in mental and physical fatigue of workers. It is not just a loss of energy and fatigue, but also a loss of interest and motivation to perform professional duties. Burnout is common among those working under constant pressure and experiencing prolonged stress, particularly in professions related to providing assistance, such as medicine or education. At the same time, emotional burnout can become a serious obstacle to effective teaching and interaction with students [2-4].

According to GoGlobal, research results conducted by Gradus Research showed that 54% of Ukrainian teachers have experienced professional burnout due to teaching during wartime. Meanwhile, 75% of school students show signs of stress due to challenging learning conditions [5].

Health Deterioration: Psychosomatic illnesses such as headaches, digestive issues, and cardiovascular diseases can result from prolonged stress. The impact of stress on cardiometabolic health is of particular significance [6]. Sleep problems, reduced immunity, and general exhaustion are also common consequences.

Decreased Productivity: Reduced emotional intelligence (self-awareness of one's own emotions or the ability to understand and regulate one's own and others' emotions), loss of concentration, mistakes in work, and decreased quality of teaching can be results of stress [7]. This can lead to a decline in student education levels and a general decrease in academic performance.

Ways to Overcome Stress among Instructors during Wartime.

According to GoGlobal, 46% of Ukrainian educators identified psychological support as the top need during wartime [8].

To ensure this, comprehensive measures need to be implemented [9]. One of the important components is support from the administration of higher education institutions, namely the creation of a safe environment for educational activities, organization of stress management training where instructors can learn relaxation methods and emotional management techniques; providing access to psychological support, including consultations with psychologists and therapists; creating a flexible work schedule that considers the individual needs and capabilities of instructors.

1. *Collective support*, including establishing effective communication among instructors for information sharing, support, and mutual assistance; holding regular meetings to discuss problems and share experiences, which helps create a supportive collective environment; implementing mentoring programs for young instructors where experienced colleagues can provide support and advice.

2. *Personal responsibility*, including maintaining a balance between work and personal life, which involves planning time for rest and personal matters; implementing relaxation techniques such as meditation, yoga, or breathing exercises that help reduce stress levels; regular physical activity and healthy eating that contribute to overall health and endurance; limiting news consumption to reduce anxiety and maintain positive thinking.



3. *Development of professional skills*, namely continuing education through online courses and webinars that allow instructors to stay updated on the latest teaching methods and technologies; mastering new technologies for effective remote learning, including the use of online communication and learning tools; participation in professional communities for experience sharing and support, which helps create a network of mutual assistance and support.

Conclusions Stress in the professional activities of instructors in higher medical education institutions during wartime is a multifaceted issue that requires comprehensive strategies to address. By focusing on creating supportive environments, promoting psychological well-being, and encouraging professional development, educational institutions can help mitigate the impact of stress and ensure the continuity and quality of education during these challenging times. It is important to realize that during wartime, caring for the psycho-emotional state of instructors is a key factor in ensuring the quality of education and supporting students. Only through joint efforts can conditions be created in which instructors can effectively perform their duties and support students during this difficult time.

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