

Workplace culture and employee turnover: Predictors of PA intentions to disengage, reduce hours, or quit

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Is the interpersonal environment of a PA's workplace associated with feeling more disengaged, putting in fewer hours, or reducing work commitment?

Background

PAs (physician assistants) are committed to team-based healthcare. Safety and quality of patient care is dependent on teamwork and communication. A negative workplace culture includes disrespectful behavior, incivility, and interpersonal toxicity and can lead to medical errors and higher costs of care. Furthermore, this may lead to providers to disengage or seek a new employer which adds a burden to employers in terms of turnover and lost productivity. The purpose of the study is to determine whether the interpersonal environment of a PA's workplace has caused them to feel more disengaged, put in fewer hours, or reduce their work commitment.

Participants

The AAPA Salary Survey was administered in February 2019 to all PAs in the US with a valid email and not opted out of surveys. Over 18 000 PAs responded to the survey; 7,377 responded to questions pertaining to this research.

Procedure and Instrument

The survey included whether the interpersonal environment of their workplace caused them to become more disengaged, put in fewer hours or reduce their work commitment, or to quit.

A multinomial logistic regression was conducted to predict the intention to disengage, reduce their hours or work commitment, or to quit.

Gender, race, ethnicity, years of experience, major specialty area, leadership roles, employer satisfaction, relationship with collaborating physician, and three subscales (professional fulfillment, work exhaustion, and interpersonal disengagement) the Professional Fulfillment Index (PFI) were included in the model to predict odds of considering or intending to become more disengaged, reduce hours, or quit a job, relative to PAs who said the interpersonal environment or culture of their workplace has not caused them to feel more disengaged, put in fewer hours, or reduce their work commitment.

The interpersonal environment in the workplace is associated with PAs becoming more disengaged, reducing hours, or quitting job (or considering one of these).



Higher Odds if a PA ...
 Is interpersonally disengaged
 Has work exhaustion
 Is in leadership (formal or informal)
 Is female



Lower Odds if a PA...
 Has higher employer satisfaction
 Has a more positive relationship with collaborating physician

Consider becoming disengaged, reducing work hours, or quitting				Become disengaged			
Higher Odds				Higher Odds			
Factor	Odds Ratio	95 CI LL	95 CI UL	Factor	Odds Ratio	95 CI LL	95 CI UL
Formal ldrshp	2.0	1.51	2.63	Experience	1.011	1.003	1.02
Informal ldrshp	1.62	1.34	1.96	Formal ldrshp	1.48	1.14	1.90
Exhausted	2.82	2.34	3.41	Informal ldrshp	1.59	1.35	1.88
Disengaged	1.73	1.39	2.17	Exhausted	2.23	1.89	2.63
				Disengaged	3.22	2.66	3.90
Lower Odds				Lower Odds			
Factor	Odds Ratio	95 CI LL	95 CI UL	Factor	Odds Ratio	95 CI LL	95 CI UL
Satisfaction	0.47	0.43	0.52	Satisfaction	0.56	0.51	0.62
MD relation.	0.60	0.53	0.67	MD relation.	0.57	0.52	0.63
Gender (male)	0.79	0.64	0.94	Gender (male)	0.58	0.49	0.68
				Ethnicity (Hispanic)	0.60	0.39	0.91
Reduce work hours				Quit			
Higher Odds				Higher Odds			
Factor	Odds Ratio	95 CI LL	95 CI UL	Factor	Odds Ratio	95 CI LL	95 CI UL
Experience	1.05	1.04	1.06	Experience	1.03	1.02	1.04
Informal ldrshp	1.63	1.32	2.03	Exhausted	1.56	1.24	1.96
Exhausted	2.46	1.96	3.08	Disengaged	2.37	1.84	3.07
Disengaged	2.64	2.07	3.39				
Lower Odds				Lower Odds			
Factor	Odds Ratio	95 CI LL	95 CI UL	Factor	Odds Ratio	95 CI LL	95 CI UL
Satisfaction	0.48	0.43	0.54	Satisfaction	0.39	0.35	0.44
MD relation.	0.63	0.56	0.72	MD relation.	0.53	0.47	0.59
Gender (male)	0.47	0.37	0.59	Gender (male)	0.53	0.42	0.68
Prof. fulfilled	0.70	0.49	0.995	Prof. fulfilled	0.51	0.36	0.71

Note: 95 CI=95% confidence interval; LL=lower level; UL=upper level; ldrshp=leadership, compared to those not in leadership; MD relation.=relationship with collaborating physician; Hisp=Hispanic, compared to non-Hispanic.

Health care Organizations must address the behaviors that lead to a negative workplace environment to ensure the best outcomes for (1) their patients; (2) their providers; and (3) their bottom line.

Statistical Analysis and Results





To assess the relationship between gender, race, ethnicity, experience, satisfaction with employer, relationship with collaborating physician, and subscales of the PFI have with a PA's odds of considering or becoming disengaged, reducing work hours, or quitting, the independent variables were included in a multinomial logistic regression model with "have not considered becoming disengaged, reducing work hours, or quitting due to the interpersonal environment of the workplace" as a reference group for the dependent variable.

Employer satisfaction and relationship with collaborating physician were measured on five-point scales. Years of experience was measured on a continuous scale, and PFI subscale cut-points were dichotomous.

Odds ratios and their 95% confidence intervals for significant predictors are noted below and are interpreted as the odds a particular group or factor engaging in the behavior of interest relative to the reference, while holding all other independent variables in the model constant. Race was not a significant predictor of the dependent variable in the omnibus test of significance.

For example, in the table to the left, men have lower odds of considering to become disengaged, reduce work hours while controlling for all other independent variables.

Future Research

-  Understand related systems factors
-  Explore the interactions between personal and professional factors
-  Investigate the relationship to well-being, patient outcomes, and healthcare systems performance
-  Confirming if intent predicts behaviors

References

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