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### SATISFACTION WITH THE WORKING CONDITIONS OF KAZAKHSTAN PHYSICIANS

The survey of outpatient therapists showed dissatisfaction with working conditions, identified the main factors in the organization of the work process, both social and industrial, affecting the effectiveness of medical care and labor productivity.

**Keywords:** satisfaction, therapists, working conditions, outpatient clinic, Kazakhstan

#### Introduction

Currently, Kazakhstan is in the process of transforming the medical system, as evidenced by the required improvements in the quality of service. Patients set high requirements to the medical personnel. Medical workers, in addition to the high requirements to work set by patients and management, face unsatisfactory working conditions. Dissatisfaction with the work can lead to physical and mental disorders, and a decrease in the quality of life of health workers [1-3]. Such factors as constant increased workload, emotional tension, improper work process organization, low wages, inefficient resource and equipment supply affect the activity of medical personnel and their health [4-7].

Some sources examine the studies demonstrating a close relationship between satisfaction with working conditions and the psycho-emotional state of medical workers, which is considered the initial cause of the emotional burnout syndrome development [8-13]. Such employees demonstrate reduced work productivity, lack of concentration when establishing a diagnosis and choosing a treatment method, and increased irritability and impatience. All this leads to a decrease in the quality of medical care provided, and, as a consequence, the occurrence of medical errors. The presence of the emotional burnout syndrome in medical workers is an indicator of the state of health care. Among medical professions, the burnout syndrome occurs in 30–90% of workers [14–15].

Among medical specialists, therapists can be distinguished. The existing wages, conditions and organization of work, nutrition, medical care and rest of therapists do not ensure preservation of their mental and somatic health. The work of therapists, especially in outpatient clinics, is characterized by sedentary work with high psychologic stress, heavy workload and lack of work interruptions. Physicians are limited in time, have to make decisions quickly, do not have the possibility to monitor the patients day and night, etc. The surveys studying the health condition of physicians showed low indices. Chronic diseases were detected in more than half of specialists [16].

Working conditions and work process organization make up the concept of the quality of work life. The quality of work life reflects the employees' perception of their physical and mental health associated with their work. Improving the work process quality and working conditions leads to overall satisfaction with life [17].

#### Materials and methods

198 therapists from the city outpatient clinics of Kazakhstan were surveyed by method of simple random sampling. A one-stage cross-sectional study was conducted in several regions of the country: Central (n=85), Southern (n=61), and Northern (n=52). It was held from January to May 2019 in the cities of Nur-Sultan, Kokshetau, Taraz and Shymkent. The physicians were asked to fill in the specially developed questionnaire anonymously.

The questionnaire was presented on paper and included several sections. The first section contained questions regarding age, marital status, length of service, wage rate and general satisfaction with the working conditions. In the second section the respondents indicated the factors affecting their professional activities. The third section included the questions on the physicians' general health condition, presence of chronic diseases and risk factors. The fourth sections described the physicians' rights protection, their general awareness of their rights and obligations and cases of violation thereof.

At the final stage, the obtained data were processed using the statistical package SPSS version 20 (Chicago, IL, USA). The quantitative data were expressed as an average value, the and the qualitative data - as numbers and percentage. Descriptive statistics were used to analyze the data; significance was considered as a P value of less than 0.05. The relationship between satisfaction with working conditions and factors influencing it was analyzed by calculating Spearman's correlation coefficients.

#### Results and Discussion

The therapists participating in the survey were divided by sex, social status and age group (Table 1).

Table 1 - Age-sex and social characteristics of respondents, n=198

	Total		Age, years							
	abs.	%	20-29		30-39		40-49		50-59	
Men	23	11.6	6	6.1	4	7.4	8	4.8	5	21.7
Women	175	88.4	20	1.4	52	9.7	54	0.9	9	8.0
Married	124	62.6	19	5.3	37	9.8	46	7.1	2	7.8
Single	35	17.7	11	1.4	14	0.0	6	7.1	4	1.5
Divorced	28	14.1	3	0.7	7	5.0	10	5.7	8	8.6
Widowed	11	5.6	0	0	2	8.2	4	6.4	5	5.4

The physicians' length of service totaled: 1–9 years (23.2%), 10–19 years (30.8%), 20–29 years (26.8%), 30–39 years (17.2%), 40 years or over (2.0%).

The average percentage of the therapists' satisfaction with the working conditions amounted to 47.7 of 100. This answer considered such aspects as career development, accessible education, social support and psychological comfort.

The degree of work satisfaction in relation to the total length of service is shown in Figure 1.

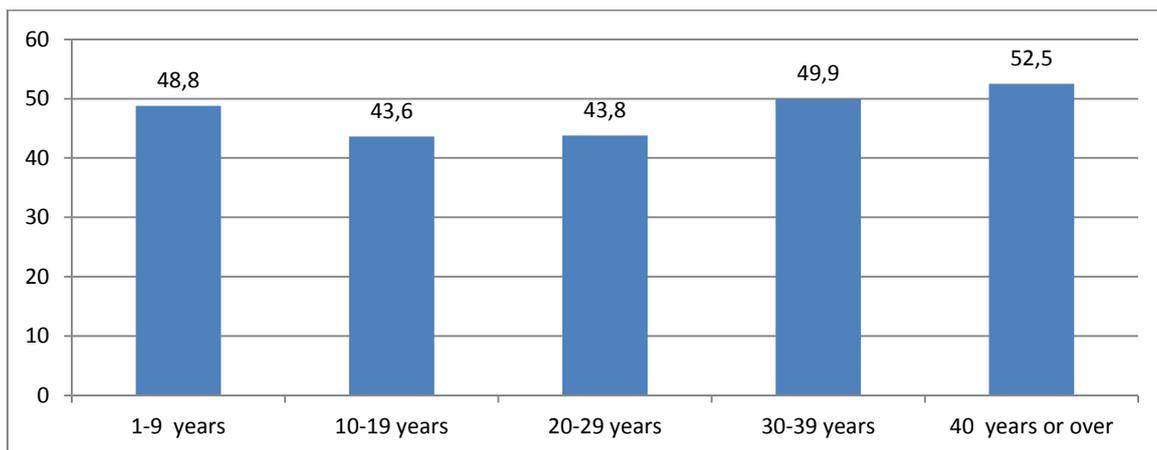


Figure 1 - Work satisfaction with the therapists' various length of service ( $p>0,05$ )

When studying the workload in outpatient clinics, it was identified that 43.9% of physicians consider it heavy; 47.5% noted it as medium and 8.6% of healthcare workers consider it insufficient. According to the survey conducted, the average wage of therapists is 380 USD.

Wage distribution by region is shown in Table 2.

Table 2 - Wages of therapists in the regions of Kazakhstan

Wage rate, USD	Central region,%		Southern region,%		Northern region,%	
	abs.	%	abs.	%	abs.	%
300- 400	23	11.6	16	8.1	13	6.6
400- 500	39	19.7	34	17.2	27	13.6
500- 600	23	11.6	11	5.6	12	6.1

The survey revealed that 16.2% of respondents had additional earnings. Whereas for the majority of therapists (83.8%), wages at the main place of work was the only source of income.

As one of the aspects characterizing work satisfaction, we reviewed the respondents' road to a healthcare organization. Most often, the physicians use public transport (51.5%); 35.9% of employees come by own car; 9.6% of therapists get to work on foot, and 3.0% by bicycle. At the same time, the majority of respondents arriving by car indicate a lack of specialized parking in the territory of the clinic.

When asked about the storage of outerwear, 60.1% of respondents answered that they left them in a common cloak-room. Some of the respondents (39.9%) pointed out the lack of specially equipped rooms, that is why they stored clothes in their work-rooms. A workplace preparation for the reception of patients is carried out by physicians themselves (30.8%) or by a district nurse (69,2%).

Figure 2 presents the work process and working conditions organization factors affecting the quality of medical care.

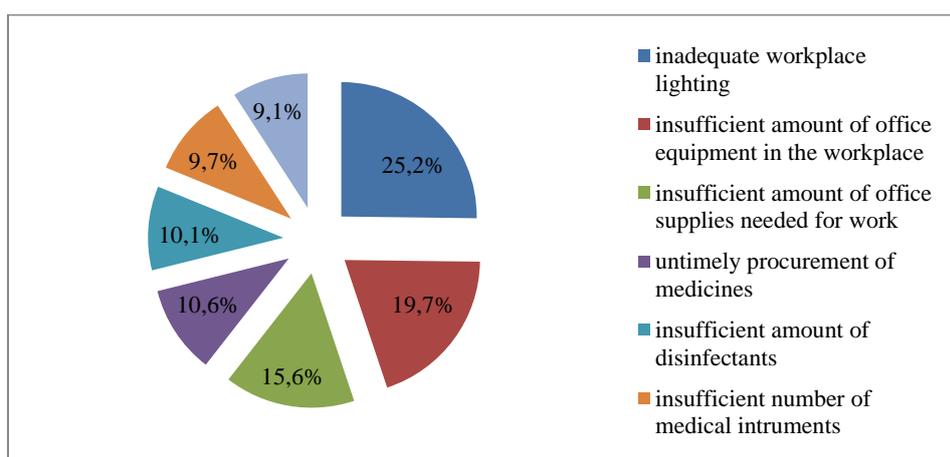


Figure 2 - Factors affecting the quality of medical care in outpatient clinics

The working day duration of 7-8 hours was noted by 59.6% of therapists. The same number of respondents (20.2%) indicated the work duration of up to 6 hours and over 9 hours. 64.1% of respondents have breaks for rest and meals, 35.9% of physicians pointed to the lack of breaks. Only 77.4% of therapists have the possibility to eat warm food. Of them 53.6% bring lunches from home, 23.8% have lunch outside the healthcare facility and 23.8% are content with snacks.

Based on the identified correlation relationships, conclusions can be made on the presence of a weak relation between work satisfaction and such indicators as age, working day duration, wage rate and work process organization (Figure 3).

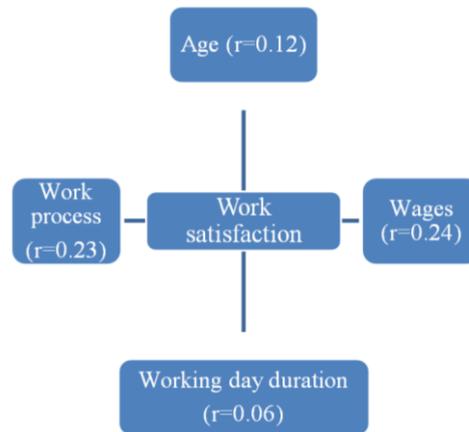


Figure 3 - Correlation relationships between satisfaction and certain components of working conditions ( $p < 0,05$ )

When assessing their health, more than half of the respondents (58.6%) consider themselves healthy, 27.3% have some chronic diseases, 14.1% of therapists found it difficult to answer. Moreover, among the risk factors affecting their health, stress and an increased workload were most often noted (24.2% and 21.7%, respectively). The therapists pointed out irrational or untimely nutrition, sedentary lifestyle and bad habits as factors less affecting the health condition.

In the light of the reforms of outpatient services in Kazakhstan, the number of complaints of the population has recently increased. More often, disputable cases began to arise between the patient and the healthcare worker. To study the general physicians' awareness of their rights, relevant questions were included in the questionnaire. It was found that 61.1% of the respondents believed that in conflict situations, the patient is legally more protected. In case of patient complaints, more than half of the physicians (56.6%) prefer to resolve the disputable issue by themselves.

Medical care quality improvement, increase in the efficiency of healthcare organizations is impossible without considering and solving the problem of satisfaction of healthcare workers. Work satisfaction is seen as one of the main components of performance and quality management. A healthcare worker, satisfied with his/her work, has high labor productivity and capacity for work, efficiently uses his/her working time. Most studies of work satisfaction identify a wide range of factors: emotional state, interpersonal relations, wages, personal and professional growth opportunities, decent working conditions, etc. The results of work satisfaction studies among healthcare workers in different countries show a steady dependence of satisfaction on many factors. Satisfaction is mostly influenced by relationships with patients and colleagues, opportunities for continuous professional growth and advanced training. Therefore, their work satisfaction determines the results of medical services provision, such as the quality of service, the relationship between the doctor and the patient, the productivity and efficiency of the organization.

Healthcare workers' satisfaction with the work has important implications for the sustainable development of basic healthcare in Kazakhstan. However, at present, health decision-makers have not paid enough attention to work satisfaction of local healthcare personnel. This situation is confirmed by the obtained results on the satisfaction of therapists in outpatient clinics (47.7%). In the context of the ongoing reform of outpatient service in the country, the study on the work satisfaction level should continue.

#### Conclusion

Therefore, a survey of physicians at the city polyclinic showed dissatisfaction with the working conditions, identified the main factors in the work process organization, both social and operational, affecting the effectiveness of medical services, work productivity and the successful completion of professional tasks by healthcare workers.

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#### **ҚАЗАҚСТАНДЫҚ ДӘРІГЕРЛЕРДІҢ ЖҰМЫС ЖАҒДАЙЛАРЫНА ҚАНАҒАТТАНУ**

**Түйін:** Бұл мақалада Қазақстан қалаларының емханалары дәрігерлерінің еңбек жағдайларына қанағаттанушылығын зерттеу ұсынылған. Терапевттердің Қазақстанның амбулаториялық ұйымдарындағы жұмыс жағдайларына орташа қанағаттануы 47,7% - ды құрады. Терапевттердің жұмыс жағдайларына қанағаттануына жоғары жүктеме әсер етеді (20,2%); жұмыс күнінің ұзақтығы 9 және одан көп сағат (20,2%); түскі үзілістің болмауы (35,9%); төмен жалақы (~380 АҚШ доллары), қажетті ресурстары бар жабдықтар (9,1% - дан 25,2% - ға дейін). Амбулаториялық ұйымдардың терапевттеріне сауалнама жүргізу еңбек жағдайларына қанағаттанғандығын көрсетті, көрсетілетін медициналық көмектің тиімділігі мен еңбек өнімділігіне әсер ететін әлеуметтік және өндірістік жұмыс процесін ұйымдастырудағы негізгі факторларды анықтады.

**Түйінді сөздер:** қанағаттану, терапевттер, еңбек жағдайлары, емхана, Қазақстан

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#### **УДОВЛЕТВОРЕННОСТЬ УСЛОВИЯМИ ТРУДА КАЗАХСТАНСКИХ ВРАЧЕЙ ТЕРАПЕВТОВ**

**Резюме:** В данной статье представлено исследование удовлетворенности врачей поликлиник городов Казахстана, условиями труда. Средняя удовлетворенность терапевтов условиями работы в амбулаторных организациях Казахстана составила 47,7%. На удовлетворенность терапевтов условиями работы влияет повышенная нагрузка (20,2%); продолжительность рабочего дня 9 и более часов (20,2%); отсутствие перерыва на обед (35,9%); низкая заработная плата (~ 380 долларов США), оборудование с необходимыми ресурсами (от 9,1% до 25,2%). Опрос терапевтов амбулаторных организаций показал неудовлетворенность условиями труда, выявил основные факторы в организации рабочего процесса, как социальные, так и производственные, влияющие на эффективность оказываемой медицинской помощи и производительность труда.

**Ключевые слова:** удовлетворенность, терапевты, условия труда, поликлиника, Казахстан