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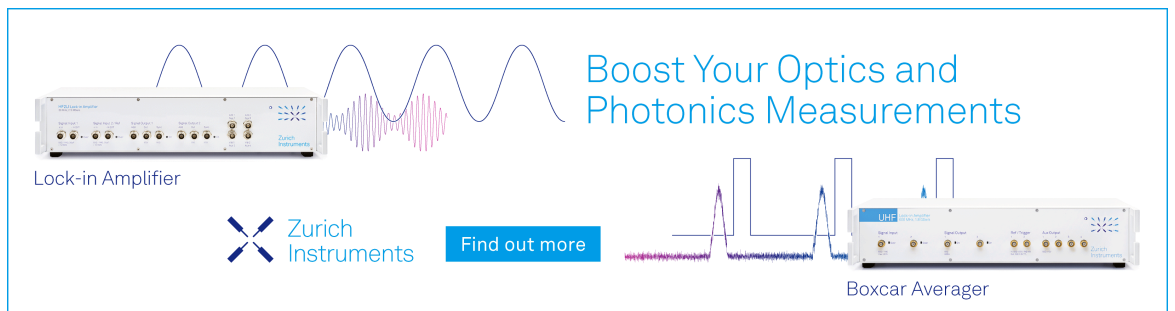
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A Preliminary Study on The Prevalence of Work-Related Stress Among House Officers in Malaysia

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Abstract. Background : The mental health status among the house officers (HOs) in Malaysia is at an alarming level in which nearly one-third of the HOs are suffering depression and anxiety during their housemanship. This study aims to identify the work-related stress (WRS) domains which affect the mental health of the HOs in Malaysia from the view of the resigned HOs. Method : The questionnaire used in this study is the UK Health and Safety Executive (HSE) Management Standards Indicator Tool. A total of 30 respondents consisting of resigned HOs from hospitals all over Malaysia participated in this study. Results : Most of the respondents (63.3%) are female and nearly half of the respondents (46.7%) are married. Majority of respondents (60.0%) had a duration of 1- 4 months of working experience as HOs before developing mental health outcomes leading to resignation, in which most respondents (56.7%) are being diagnosed with both depression and anxiety. The mean score for the resigned HOs is 2.36 ± 0.54 indicating high stress level perceived during their housemanship period. For the WRS domains, Control has the lowest mean score of 1.66 ± 0.39 indicating Control has the highest level of WRS perceived by the resigned HOs during their housemanship. Conclusion: This study demonstrated high prevalence of WRS among the HOs. The management of the hospital should be more aware and take prompt interventions such as early detection and monitoring on the mental wellbeing of the HOs, promote constructive working environment, encourage proper task delegations and consider their opinions for any changes in the system.

INTRODUCTION

The mental health issue among house officers (HOs) has been receiving substantial critical attention from many researchers with an abundant amount of published studies both locally and abroad on burnout and stress among HOs [1,2,3]. The definition of 'housemanship' given by the Malaysian Medical Act 1971 is the mandatory training period of medical practice in order to be a fully registered medical practitioner which aims to produce doctors who are competent, professional and patient-oriented for a better healthcare service [4]. The early phase in this period is a crucial time in the career development for HOs, where they have to develop new roles of having responsibilities and expectations. HOs will have many memorable encounters which provide them insight into their professional identities' development [4]. However, during housemanship, HOs will experience many intense and unfavourable scenes which might affect their mental health, well-being and quality of life [4]. The newer generation of medical doctors are facing major differences in challenges and trials from the previous generation [5]. While juggling with the workloads and