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Letter to the editor regarding
2022 publication by
Dr Melnyk et al titled,
"Associations among
infection prevention
professionals' mental/
physical health, lifestyle
behaviors, shift length, race,
and workplace wellness
support during COVID-19."



Dear Dr Stone,

It is time for Infection Preventionists to seek joy in their work and lives to support their mental and physical well-being. We are grateful for the recent study by Dr. Melnyk et al (2022)¹ that is highlighting the challenges Infection Preventionists faced during COVID-19. This survey study reported that 65% of their sample were experiencing burnout, 21% screened positive for depression and 30% for anxiety. Add to this the recent report by the US Surgeon General on Addressing Health Care Worker Burnout² that indicated 52% of nurses and 20% of physicians are planning to leave their fields. All signs are pointing to a major crisis in health care that will impact the health and safety of our workplaces, patients, and communities for decades. This is the time for major changes, but this often happens at a glacial pace. There are simple things Infection Preventionists can do, right now, for their well-being if they have the internal resources.

At the 2022 APIC Annual Conference³, we spoke about how Infection Preventionists can seek joy in work and address burnout through paying attention to what matters most to themselves and their team. This can occur while health care leaders are working towards better staffing levels, more balanced workloads, and better organizational cultures. The Institute for Health Care Improvement Joy in Work

Framework⁴ outlines actions teams can take. These include celebrating the little wins, removing the "Pebbles in Our Shoes" which sap the joy from work, connecting with colleagues, and integrating gratitude moments into meetings so staff can express appreciation for moments of kindness. By adopting these simple practices, IPs can take control of their path towards healing and recovery. We acknowledge that big changes are needed in the US health care system. One of those big changes is learning to seek out and savor the simple, joyful moments of work and life.

Sincerely,

References

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Conflicts of interest: None to report.

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<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ajic.2022.07.025>