



The effect of burnout syndrome on the job satisfaction of employees in the municipalities of South Lima: a cross-sectional study

Alex Pacheco, PhD^{a,*}, Ana Alvarez, MSc^c, Cesar Peñaranda, PhD^b, Flor Pineda, MSc^c, Julio Quispe, PhD^a, Edwin Felix-Poicon, PhD^d, Mario Ruiz, PhD^e

Introduction and importance: Nowadays, improving the performance of employees is essential to increase productivity and achieve continuous improvement; therefore, it is necessary to achieve job satisfaction among all members of the organisation to avoid negative attitudes, professional burnout, health problems and a lack of commitment. Therefore, our objective was to determine the level of burnout and its relationship with the level of job satisfaction among employees in the municipalities of southern Lima.

Methods: The research is basic research, with a quantitative approach and a cross-sectional, nonexperimental, correlational design. The survey technique was used and the data collection instrument was a questionnaire addressed to 271 workers of the municipalities of South Lima on the variable burnout syndrome with the dimensions depersonalisation and emotional exhaustion, as well as on the variable job satisfaction with the dimensions work benefits, administrative policies and social relations, with a Cronbach's alpha reliability of 0.801.

Results: The results show that 50.2% of the employees state that they have an overload of mental effort that causes a high level of emotional exhaustion, 50.2% state that the work develops in them negative and insensitive attitudes that increase their level of depersonalisation and 77.9% state that the company is unable to satisfy the personal demands of the employees through the work benefits it offers.

Conclusions: These findings reflect that burnout is a common illness in organisations due to workload, poor organisational climate and neglect of employees' emotional health. Therefore, more research is needed on the role of organisations in reducing levels of occupational burnout in order to promote improvements in mental health.

Keywords: burnout syndrome, case report, job satisfaction, leadership opportunity, organisational climate

Introduction

In the current context, the burnout syndrome is a danger for the proper development of organisations, since it occurs in professionals who work directly with other people, which hinders the interaction, training and performance of employees^[1]. In this sense, it is defined as a psychological syndrome caused by chronic interpersonal stressors at work, which can be identified by its main characteristics such as emotional exhaustion, depersonalisation and lack of personal fulfilment^[2,3]. On the other hand, it is

HIGHLIGHTS

- A model of job satisfaction is proposed to reduce the levels of burnout syndrome.
- 50.2% of the workers maintain that the level of emotional exhaustion is high.
- 42.1% of the workers consider the level of social relations in the company is low.
- Emotional exhaustion and depersonalisation are indicators of burnout syndrome.

^aUniversidad Nacional de Cañete, ^bUniversidad Privada San Juan Bautista - UPSJB, Lima, ^cUniversidad Nacional San Luis Gonzaga - UNICA, Ica, ^dUniversidad Nacional de Jaen, Jaen and ^eUniversidad Nacional de Moquegua, Moquegua, Perú

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*Corresponding author. Address: Escuela Profesional de Ingeniería de Sistemas, Universidad Nacional de Cañete Av. Benavides 1370 (Casa de la Cultura), San Vicente de Cañete. Postal Code: 15701, Cañete, Lima, Perú. Tel/fax: + 51 993 159 249. E-mail: apacheco@undc.edu.pe (A. Pacheco).

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known that burnout syndrome is often associated with external factors of the person, specific to the company and the management of the occupational risks it presents. Likewise, the consequences are applied in the labour, personal and economic aspect, which implies high indirect costs for organisations due to increased absenteeism, loss of health and well-being of professionals who develop the syndrome^[4]. Therefore, in order to prevent professionals from suffering from burnout syndrome, a strategic plan should be implemented to improve the soft skills of staff in order to improve the management of emotions and teamwork.

In the business sector, job satisfaction is considered a positive emotion that corresponds to job fit, which influences the relationships between transformational leadership, ideology and internal communication with respect to work outcomes^[5,6]. Likewise, Chiang and Ojeda^[7] argue that job satisfaction,

supervisor satisfaction and recognition in particular have a statistically significant relationship with employee productivity. On the other hand, Gil^[8] and Uribe *et al.*^[9] mention that perceived self-efficacy, schedules, age, job status, continuity, assigned responsibility, job benefits and physical working conditions are factors that directly influence employees' job satisfaction. From this, Cercado^[10] and Holguin & Contreras^[11] indicate that job benefits refer to the respect of employees' rights by promoting fair and equitable control of compensation that increases economic benefits to improve employee performance.

The literature on the health sector recognises that burnout syndrome leads to absenteeism, staff turnover, physical and mental illness and burnout, resulting in reduced work effectiveness^[12]. Most of this research has focused on healthcare workers, as this is a sector with high levels of stress due to the daily pressures of medical interventions, and there are studies that highlight its importance, as a high percentage of medical errors have been attributed to high levels of burnout^[13–15]. However, more research is needed in other sectors to compare outcomes and to understand the importance of preventing burnout in workers in all sectors. The present work aims to fill this gap by analysing the relationship between burnout and job satisfaction in the local government sector. The study seeks to answer the following research question: What is the relationship between burnout syndrome and job satisfaction of employees in the municipalities of South Lima? Therefore, the objective of this research is to determine the level of burnout and its relationship with the level of job satisfaction among employees in the municipalities of southern Lima.

Background

A study conducted in Mexico showed that cognitive-emotional training had a positive effect on the job satisfaction of hospital medical staff, which is essential for reducing emotional exhaustion and depersonalisation^[16]. According to Pastor^[17] and Wilkinson *et al.*^[18], depersonalisation is conceptualised as a negative, impersonal and insensitive attitude towards clients and colleagues, as it implies a disconnection with the person's emotions of pain, showing a high degree of coldness and detachment in the work area, related to psychological tension and the search for escape from reality. Similarly, a study in Colombia argues that strategies to promote job satisfaction and psychological capital in the organisational context reduce the emotional exhaustion of employees affected by burnout^[19]. Regarding emotional exhaustion, Máñez *et al.*^[20] and Dominguez *et al.*^[21] point out that it is characterised by a feeling of tiredness, fatigue and lack of energy as a result of prolonged exposure to work stress, which promotes an attitude of indifference, distancing from work and a feeling of incompetence, often leading to a series of somatic difficulties such as colds, gastrointestinal problems, headaches and sleep disorders. In the same way that job satisfaction improves burnout, it can also cause complications by not meeting all the employee's expectations, as a study carried out in Portugal showed that role stress, conflicts, work overload and non-compliance with administrative policies reduce job satisfaction and increase employee burnout^[22]. In this sense, administrative policies are considered the fundamental pillar in organisations as they modulate the correct functioning of activities and the action plan elaborated to guide employees to have a better performance

through the improvement of the work environment, organisational culture, managerial and team leadership, communication, decision making and stress^[23,24]. Similarly, a research carried out in Chile showed that good social relations should be established among employees in order to create an appropriate organisational climate for the development of job satisfaction, which allows employees to work at ease in order to achieve better performance^[25]. Then, Rondón *et al.*^[26] and Nieves^[27] define social relations as the interpersonal bond that allows access to new knowledge in an unlimited way both inside and outside the company to improve innovation activities, develop communication skills, improve mood and health by having a more dynamic and developed life.

In some hospitals in Spain, the problem of burnout among internal medicine specialists has been identified, with 55% of specialists showing a high degree of emotional exhaustion, 61.7% a high degree of depersonalisation and 58.6% a low degree of personal fulfilment, due to a poor working environment, low remuneration, constant threats, advanced age and the perception of not progressing professionally^[28]. Similarly, the Polish Air Navigation Services Agency (PANSA) had difficulties with the productivity of its air traffic controllers, who were affected by job stress, burnout, dissatisfaction and perceptions of low job performance, so there is a need to improve the level of psychological comfort and strengthen employees' self-efficacy^[29]. Similarly, in Argentina, there was a significant increase in burnout syndrome among resident physicians due to accumulated work and emotional stress caused by the pandemic, increased workload, constant exposure to patients, poor working conditions and low quality of life^[30]. Finally, in some organisations in Mexico, the level of work adaptation was very low, while the level of demotivation, absenteeism and emotional exhaustion was very high, requiring better management of the work role, work distribution, interaction with clients and conflict situations^[31].

In Peru, organisations are unable to prevent the development of burnout syndrome among their employees in time due to the lack of monitoring of internal problems such as emotional exhaustion, fatigue and lack of energy, which cause employees to suffer from depersonalisation, low personal fulfilment and dissatisfaction with the professional role^[32]. As a result, the quality of the service provided by employees is negatively affected, errors in repetitive tasks and those that require sustained attention increase, which affects the productivity of companies^[33]. In this sense, organisations should aim to achieve job satisfaction through good pay, benefits, administrative policies, physical environment, relationships with colleagues and personal fulfilment to prevent employees from suffering from burnout syndrome^[34]. Therefore, this study aims to answer the following research question: What is the relationship between burnout syndrome and job satisfaction among employees in the municipalities of southern Lima? The objective of this research is to determine the level of burnout and its relationship with the level of job satisfaction among employees in the municipalities of southern Lima. This directly contributes to the performance of the employees and the achievement of the objectives of the companies to maintain their competitiveness in the market through the motivation, comfort, satisfaction, efficiency and commitment of the work team.

This article describes the importance of the burnout syndrome in the company, as it is responsible for the negative attitudes of the employees, such as emotional exhaustion, depersonalisation,

role dissatisfaction, lack of enthusiasm and motivation to achieve the goals of the organisation. A survey was carried out among the employees of an organisation, which revealed the need to promote job satisfaction through the dimensions of work benefits, administrative policies and social relations, in order to improve the bond between employees and their work environment, thus preventing burnout syndrome in terms of depersonalisation and emotional exhaustion.

Method

Design

This is a basic research study with a quantitative approach and a cross-sectional, nonexperimental, correlational design^[35]. The study population is considered infinite; therefore, the following formula was applied to find the sample size: $N = Z^2 \times p \times q / e^{2[36]}$ with a reliability level of 90% and a sampling error of 5% that resulted in a sample of 271 employees.

Inclusion and exclusion criteria

Inclusion criteria were as follows: being between 30 and 55 years of age, giving consent to participate in the study, and having at least 3 months of work experience in communities in southern Lima. Exclusion criteria were as follows: incomplete questionnaires and unwillingness to continue participating in the study.

Social history

Employees do not use tobacco, alcohol, or recreational drugs.

Employees are socially independent, have a driver's licence, and reside in a home of their own.

STROCSS 2021

This case report has been developed in accordance with the strengthening the reporting of cohort, cross-sectional and case-control studies in surgery (STROCSS) 2021 criteria to ensure the quality of the report, in addition to increasing the robustness and transparency of case study reports^[37].

Ethical approval

This study does not meet the definition of human subjects research and therefore an exemption was granted.

Procedure

The research was carried out during the period September–November 2022, in which the participants were recruited continuously, using convenience sampling, until the desired sample size was reached. The data collection technique was a survey, using a structured questionnaire with 22 statements to measure the opinion on the burnout syndrome according to its dimensions: depersonalisation and emotional exhaustion; and 22 statements to measure the opinion on the variable job satisfaction and its dimensions: job benefits, administrative policies and social relations, using the Likert scale according to the values: always, almost always, sometimes, almost never and never, represented by values from 1 to 5, where 1 is always and 5 is never. The Cronbach's alpha reliability test was used, which resulted in a value of 0.801 for the burnout

syndrome and job satisfaction variables, which shows that the Cronbach's alpha reliability is very high.

Data analysis

The techniques for processing and analysing the data were carried out taking into account the techniques for counting and tabulating the samples taken, using the Kolmogorov–Smirnov normality test, which determined that the Spearman's rho statistic should be used, since the significance level is less than 0.05, showing that the data are nonparametric. Likewise, inferential statistics (correlation coefficient) were used with the decision rule and its respective 95% CI ($P = 0.95$, with a 5% margin of error) and its interpretation based on the data obtained.

Results

Emotional exhaustion dimension of the burnout syndrome variable

The results for the emotional exhaustion dimension of the burnout syndrome variable show that 50.2% of employees say that work almost always causes emotional exhaustion, while 49.8% of them think that they always feel this way (1.1 of Table 1).

Depersonalisation dimension of the burnout syndrome variable

The results for the depersonalisation dimension of the burnout syndrome variable show that 50.2% of employees say that they sometimes feel depersonalised by their work, while 49.8% of them feel that they almost always feel this way (1.2 of Table 1).

Job benefits dimension of the job satisfaction variable

The results of the dimension 'job benefits' of the variable 'job satisfaction' show that 77.9% of employees say that they never receive job benefits from the municipality where they work, 14%

Table 1

Abstract of the survey results.

1.1. Emotional exhaustion			1.2. Depersonalisation		
Valid	Frequency	Percentage valid	Valid	Frequency	Percentage valid
1.00	135	49.8	2.00	135	49.8
2.00	136	50.2	3.00	136	50.2
Total	271	100.0	Total	271	100.0
1.3. Job benefits			1.4. Administrative policies		
Valid	Frequency	Percentage valid	Valid	Frequency	Percentage valid
3.00	38	14.0	3.00	21	7.7
4.00	22	8.1	4.00	114	42.1
5.00	211	77.9	5.00	136	50.2
Total	271	100.0	Total	271	100.0
1.5. Social relations					
Valid	Frequency	Percentage valid			
3.00	60	22.1			
4.00	97	35.8			
5.00	114	42.1			
Total	271	100.0			

of them think that they sometimes do and 8.1% of employees claim that this almost never happens (1.3 of Table 1).

Administrative policies dimension of the job satisfaction variable

The results for the administrative policies dimension of the job satisfaction variable show that 50.2% of employees say that they never agree with the administrative policies of the municipality where they work, 42.1% of them consider that they almost never feel this way and 7.7% of employees claim that they sometimes agree (1.4 of Table 1).

Social relations dimension of the job satisfaction variable

The results of the social relations dimension of the job satisfaction variable show that 42.1% of employees say that they never feel good social relations in the municipality where they work, 35.8% of them think that they almost never feel this way and 22.1% of employees say that they sometimes feel this way (1.5 of Table 1).

Correlation between burnout syndrome and job satisfaction

The result of the Spearman's Rho statistic showed that there is a high negative correlation ($Rho = -0.612$, Sig. (bilateral) = 0.000) between the variables burnout syndrome and job satisfaction. This result indicates that as the level of burnout syndrome increases in employees according to the dimensions of emotional exhaustion and depersonalisation, job satisfaction decreases (Table 2).

Discussion

Emotional exhaustion is a recurrent problem in local government, with 50.2% of workers reporting that they feel this way most of the time, as shown in Figure 1. This is due to the excessive mental effort involved in taking on increased responsibilities, resolving conflicts and dealing with complicated emotional and cognitive stimuli. This exhaustion is reflected in easy irritation, demotivation, panic or anxiety attacks, a lack of patience and constant homesickness. These results are similar to those obtained in previous studies of burnout in the education sector^[38,39], where it is observed that people affected by burnout have severe emotional and psychological health problems, exacerbated by the highly competitive nature of the sector. It follows

Table 2				
Correlation between the variables burnout syndrome and job satisfaction.				
Correlations				
			Burnout syndrome	Job satisfaction
Rho de Spearman	Burnout syndrome	Correlation coefficient	1.000	-0.612 ^a
		Sig. (bilateral)	.	0.000
	Job satisfaction	N	271	271
		Correlation coefficient	-0.612 ^a	1.000
		Sig. (bilateral)	0.000	.
		N	271	271

^aCorrelation is significant at the 0.01 level (bilateral).

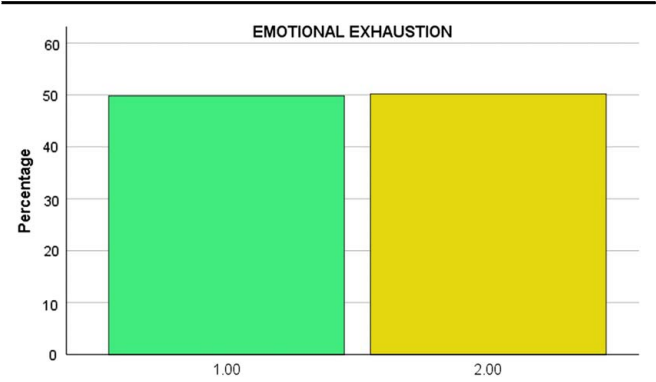


Figure 1. Emotional exhaustion dimension of the burnout syndrome variable.

that the nature of the work sector significantly increases the likelihood of employees suffering from burnout. To manage this situation, it is necessary to monitor burnout by conducting regular surveys, tracking absenteeism rates and analysing the quality of patient care. This can help to identify problems early and take action to address them^[40].

The depersonalisation of employees is a problem for local authorities, as 50.2% of employees indicate that it sometimes occurs, which is reflected in Figure 2, which shows that there is a high level of job burnout among employees, which develops in them negative and insensitive attitudes such as selfishness, mistrust, self-deception, defensiveness, resentment, among other attitudes that reduce work capacity, performance and quality of customer service. These results are lower than those reported in studies of depersonalisation in healthcare workers^[41,42], because this sector has a greater number of risk factors such as daily working hours, sleeplessness, workload, lack of exercise, stressful environment and monotony. These factors increase the disconnection with the emotions of pain, which generates a high degree of coldness, detachment and negative attitudes as a result of the high psychological tension and the need to escape from reality. It is suggested that companies provide communication skills training and psychotherapy for employees affected by depersonalisation, as this treatment helps them to understand and manage the feelings associated with their disorder^[43]. It is also recommended that they invest in technological tools such as customer relationship management systems to reduce the workload of employees. In addition, it is important to have trained staff to carry out exposure therapy with people affected by the

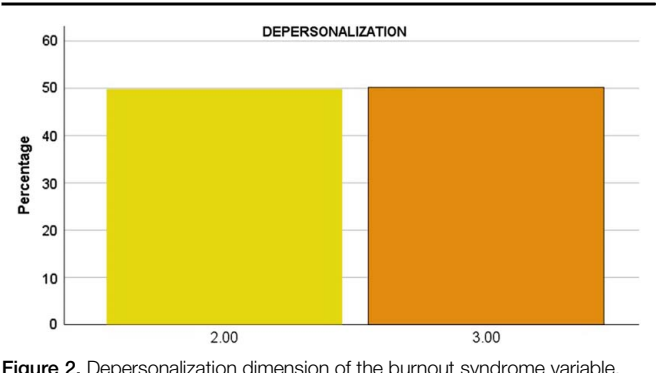


Figure 2. Depersonalization dimension of the burnout syndrome variable.

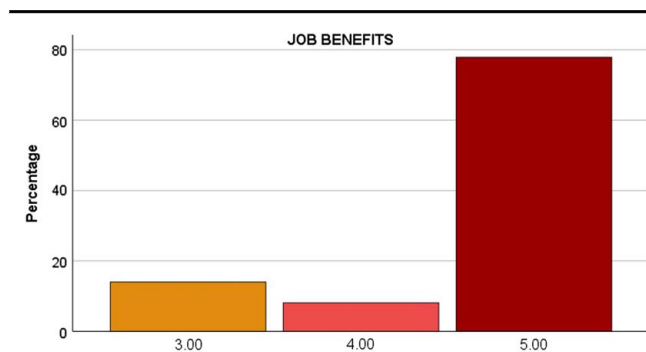


Figure 3. Job benefits dimension of the job satisfaction variable.

syndrome, so that they learn to cope with stress gradually^[44].

The level of fringe benefits is not good, as 77.9% of employees state that they never receive them, as shown in Figure 3, which shows that the organisation has problems in satisfying the personal demands of employees in terms of higher pay, special recognition, overtime pay, or encouraging more training among employees. On this dimension, a study found that employees who receive higher benefits have a lower probability of developing burnout (9%), while employees who do not receive benefits have a higher probability (14%)^[45]. This is because benefits increase employees' job satisfaction, which has a positive effect on motivation, commitment and job satisfaction. Therefore, companies need to improve the benefits they offer through competitive salaries, flexible working hours, retirement plans, medical benefits, training and development programmes, teleworking and days off.

The level of agreement of the employees with the administrative policies is a problem, since 50.2% of them state that they have never agreed with the policies of the municipality, as shown in Figure 4, which proves that there is a need to improve the beliefs, principles and norms of the organisation, which are responsible for regulating the working climate, the internal functioning of the company and the organisational culture followed by the employees. These results contradict the research of Saifur *et al.*^[46], where it is evident that public sector employees have higher job satisfaction than private sector employees because there is better management of administrative policies and benefits for employees.

The level of social relations is low, as 42.1% of the employees stated that they never perceived good social relations at work, which is reflected in Figure 5, which represents that a better

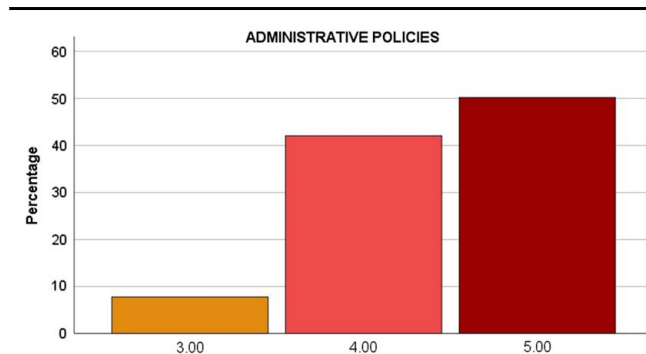


Figure 4. Administrative policies dimension of the job satisfaction variable.

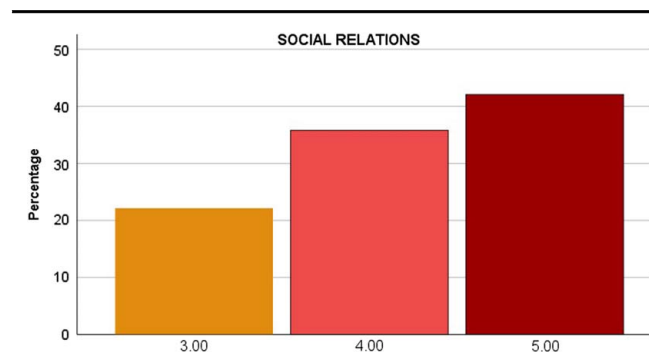


Figure 5. Social relations dimension of the job satisfaction variable.

interaction plan should be implemented among employees to motivate increased communication and teamwork to promote personal development along with the soft skills of the company's employees. These results are supported by some studies that have identified poor social relations as an influential factor in the development of burnout syndrome, so they suggest promoting interaction outside the work area^[47,48].

The results indicate that employees have a high level of burnout, therefore, it is necessary to seek medical attention to reduce its effects. Among the most recommended treatments is cognitive behavioural therapy, which allows people to identify and change negative thought patterns and develop skills such as organisation, calmness, problem solving, flexibility and emotional intelligence to cope with stress^[49]. In addition, biofeedback is a technique that uses sensors to measure physiological activity, such as heart rate and muscle tension and provides real-time feedback to help improve an individual's stress response^[50]. It is also important to mention that mindfulness programmes and meditation can be effective in reducing stress and improving the emotional well-being of employees with burnout symptoms^[51,52]. These programmes focus on teaching mindfulness and meditation techniques to help people manage their stress response and improve their ability to concentrate and make decisions^[53-55]. It is important to note that while the above treatments are effective in reducing the effects of burnout, it is necessary for the healthcare facility to take a holistic approach that addresses the underlying causes of work-related stress. This involves addressing issues such as workload, bullying and interpersonal relationships in the workplace, in order to propose treatment that is appropriate to the needs of the individual patient. It is important not only to treat the symptoms, but also to address the working conditions that generate them. In this way, the recurrence of burnout can be prevented and a healthy and productive working environment for employees can be promoted.

Limitations

The study has several limitations. Firstly, there was evidence of recall bias, as the data collection relied on employee self-reports rather than defined clinical diagnoses and objective methods to ensure the authenticity of the results. Secondly, it is possible that a large number of employees who refused to participate in the survey had burnout syndrome and refused because they believed that the results might have a negative impact on their work. Thirdly, employees who were less affected by the syndrome also refused to participate because they considered it a pointless

activity, leading to a selection bias. Finally, the cross-sectional design of the study is limited by its inability to account for the variability of symptoms experienced by study participants over time.

Conclusion

Most of the employees had low job satisfaction due to a lack of job benefits, disagreement with administrative policies and poor social relations, so the level of burnout is high as the employees show symptoms of emotional exhaustion and depersonalisation. In this respect, it is concluded that burnout and job satisfaction have a strong negative relationship.

This research allows us to argue that job satisfaction is important in reducing the risk of employees suffering from burnout syndrome, as it benefits the objective achievement of goals and maintains the competitiveness of the organisation. This helps to build strategies of satisfaction and integration of employees with the organisation to face the problems of professional burnout that threaten the productivity of the organisation.

In the same way, the benefits provided by the company allow for a regular level of economic satisfaction for employees who feel that their work, their efforts and their role in the company are recognised.

On the other hand, the improvement of the management policy should be promoted by renewing the principles and norms of the company in order to adapt them to the expectations of the employees in terms of internal functioning, organisational culture and working environment. In addition, it is necessary to promote the development of social relations between employees in order to increase the ability to share knowledge, develop communication skills and improve teamwork, thus increasing the organisation's innovation and creativity. Similarly, it is essential to achieve job satisfaction and the psychological capital necessary to reduce the emotional exhaustion felt by employees, as it limits the productive capacity in the work area due to constant irritation, lack of motivation or patience, tiredness, fatigue, panic attacks and nostalgia. Finally, it is necessary to reduce the level of depersonalisation of employees, as it reduces the working capacity, teamwork, performance and quality of service offered to customers, who are affected by the employee's bad attitude, coldness, resentment, mistrust and selfishness.

Recommendations

This section of the article details actions that organisations should consider in order to reduce burnout among their employees. Firstly, it is essential to set clear limits on the amount of work expected of each employee and their working hours to avoid work overload and to allow employees time to rest and recuperate. Second, foster a supportive culture based on open communication and empathy so that employees feel supported and valued. Third, personal and professional development should be encouraged through training, mentoring, wellness programmes and other initiatives that help employees stay motivated and engaged in their work. Finally, it is important to provide constructive feedback and recognition for a job well done in order to maintain employees' self-confidence.

In the healthcare field, there are several alternatives to treat burnout syndrome and improve the emotional well-being of healthcare professionals. Among these options are cognitive

behavioural therapy, biofeedback, mindfulness programmes and mobile apps and digital platforms to monitor and manage stress. It is important to take these options into account when implementing burnout prevention and treatment policies in Peru, as they can be useful in the fight against this syndrome.

Ethical approval

Does not involve any type of ethical approval.

Consent

Written informed consent was obtained from the study participant for publication of this case report and accompanying images. A copy of the written consent is available for review by the Editor-in-Chief of this journal upon request.

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Author contribution

A.P.: writing the paper; A.A.: study concept; C.P.: data collection; F.P.: data analysis; J.Q.: interpretation; E.F.-P.: writing the paper; M.R.: data collection.

Conflicts of interest disclosure

The authors declare there is no conflict of interest in publishing this research.

Research registration unique identifying number (UIN)

The present work does not have a Research Registry unique identifying number (UIN) as this is not the first time in man.

Guarantor

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Data availability statement

Research data are available upon request.

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