

**A national survey of pharmacist burnout and engagement measured using the Professional Fulfillment Index**  
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**Background**

- Professional burnout can be associated with work dissatisfaction, turnover, and the quality interactions
- The Professional Fulfillment Index (PFI) is a validated burnout measure that assesses work exhaustion, professional fulfillment, and interpersonal disengagement<sup>1</sup>

**Objective**

- To describe pharmacist burnout and fulfillment for a national sample of pharmacists using the PFI
- Test association between PFI and likelihood to leave job

**Methods**

- Analysis of 2019 National Pharmacist Workforce Survey (NPWS) data
- An electronic survey link was sent to a random sample of 96,110 licensed U.S. pharmacists using a 3-contact Dillman
- Variables for the analysis included the 16-item PFI which uses 5-point scales to measure burnout
- Likelihood to leave job in next year (5-point Likert)
- Chronbach alpha were calculated for PFI (each=0.92)
- Correlations were calculated between PFI dimensions and a 5-point item assessing likelihood to leave job next year

**Results**

- 4,715 usable responses for the PFI
- On average, pharmacists reported moderate levels of professional fulfillment (mean=3.05, SD=1.19) and work exhaustion (mean=2.83, SD=1.24)
- Over half (53.2%) of pharmacists reported their work is meaningful, however, 32% and 33% reported 'a lot or totally' for feeling emotionally and physically exhausted
- Interpersonal disengagement was less prevalent with only 13.4% reporting 'a lot or totally' less connected with patients
- Community pharmacists had PFI ratings consistent with greater work exhaustion and interpersonal disengagement, and less professional fulfillment compared to pharmacists practicing in hospitals and other settings (p<.001)
- Among community pharmacy settings, independent and small chain pharmacists reported lower work exhaustion and higher professional fulfillment compared to larger chains
- Pharmacists with greater work exhaustion, greater interpersonal disengagement, and less professional fulfillment reported a significantly higher likelihood they would leave their job in the next year (p<.001)

**Discussion**

- Reducing burnout appears meaningful for promoting pharmacist retention
- Larger pharmacy chains could seek to emulate independent pharmacy workplaces to boost fulfillment, lower exhaustion
- Interpersonal disengagement appears to be resilient, but could it be at risk with increasing burnout

<sup>1</sup>Trockel Academic Psychiatry. 2018 Feb 1;42(1):11-24.

**Pharmacists reported moderate levels of professional fulfillment**

**Work exhaustion was more prevalent than Interpersonal disengagement**

**Burnout in all domains was associated with greater likelihood to leave their job**



**Table 1: PFI Domain scores for different practice settings**

Mean by Setting	Personal Fulfillment <sup>A</sup>	Work Exhaustion <sup>B</sup>	Interpersonal Disengagement <sup>B</sup>
All Community	<b>2.79</b>	<b>3.21</b>	2.33
Ambulatory Care	3.36	2.54	1.99
Hospital	3.24	2.58	1.95
Other patient care	3.15	2.52	1.97
Not patient care	3.38	2.35	1.87
Overall	3.05	2.83	2.12

*NOTE: All items rated on 5-point scales. A: Higher is better. B: Lower is better*

**Table 2: Select items from PFI work exhaustion domain for community pharmacists**

Work Exhaustion (N % reporting feeling a lot, totally)	Independent (N=398)	Chain (N=1,009)	Mass Merch (N=380)	Supermarket (N=320)	Hospital (N=1,220)	Total (N=3,327)
Physically exhausted at work	83 (20.9)	564 (55.9)	214 (56.3)	159 (49.7)	260 (21.3)	1,280 (38.5)
Emotionally exhausted at work	81 (20.4)	506 (50.1)	196 (51.6)	155 (48.4)	278 (22.8)	1,216 (36.5)

*All items rated on 5-point scales. Lower percents = less exhaustion*

**Table 3: Select items from PFI professional fulfillment domain for community pharmacists**

Professional Fulfillment (N % reporting very true or completely true)	Independent (N=398)	Chain (N=1,009)	Mass Merch (N=380)	Supermarket (N=320)	Hospital (N=1,220)	Total (N=3,327)
I feel in control when dealing with difficult problems at work	182 (45.7)	242 (24.0)	91 (23.9)	71 (22.2)	385 (31.6)	971 (29.2)
My work is meaningful to me	259 (65.1)	400 (39.6)	164 (43.2)	118 (36.9)	746 (61.1)	1,687 (50.7)
I'm contributing professionally in the ways I value most	224 (56.3)	267 (26.5)	96 (25.3)	79 (24.7)	579 (47.5)	1,245 (37.4)

*NOTE: All items rated on 5-point scales. Higher percents = Greater fulfillment at work*

**Table 4. Correlations between burnout and likelihood to leave job in next year**

Burnout scale	Correlation coefficient (Kendall's tau)	Interpretation
Interpersonal Disengagement	0.22 (p < 0.001)	For Interpersonal Disengagement scale, higher values imply high burnout. Therefore, the positive correlation coefficient implies higher the burnout, more likely to report higher likelihood to leave their job in the next year
Work Exhaustion	0.29 (p < 0.001)	For Work Exhaustion scale, higher values imply high burnout. Therefore, the positive correlation coefficient implies higher the burnout, more likely to report higher likelihood to leave their job in the next year
Professional Fulfillment	-0.31 (p < 0.001)	For Professional Fulfillment scale, higher values imply lower burnout. Therefore, the negative correlation coefficient implies lower burnout and less likely to report higher likelihood to leave their job in the next year

Scale for likelihood to leave job in the next year: 1=Very unlikely 2=Unlikely 3=Neutral 4=Likely 5=Very likely