Facing emotionally challenging interactions with patients: emotion transfer and its association with well-being in health-care providers

Department of Consultation-Liaison Psychiatry and Psychosomatic Medicine

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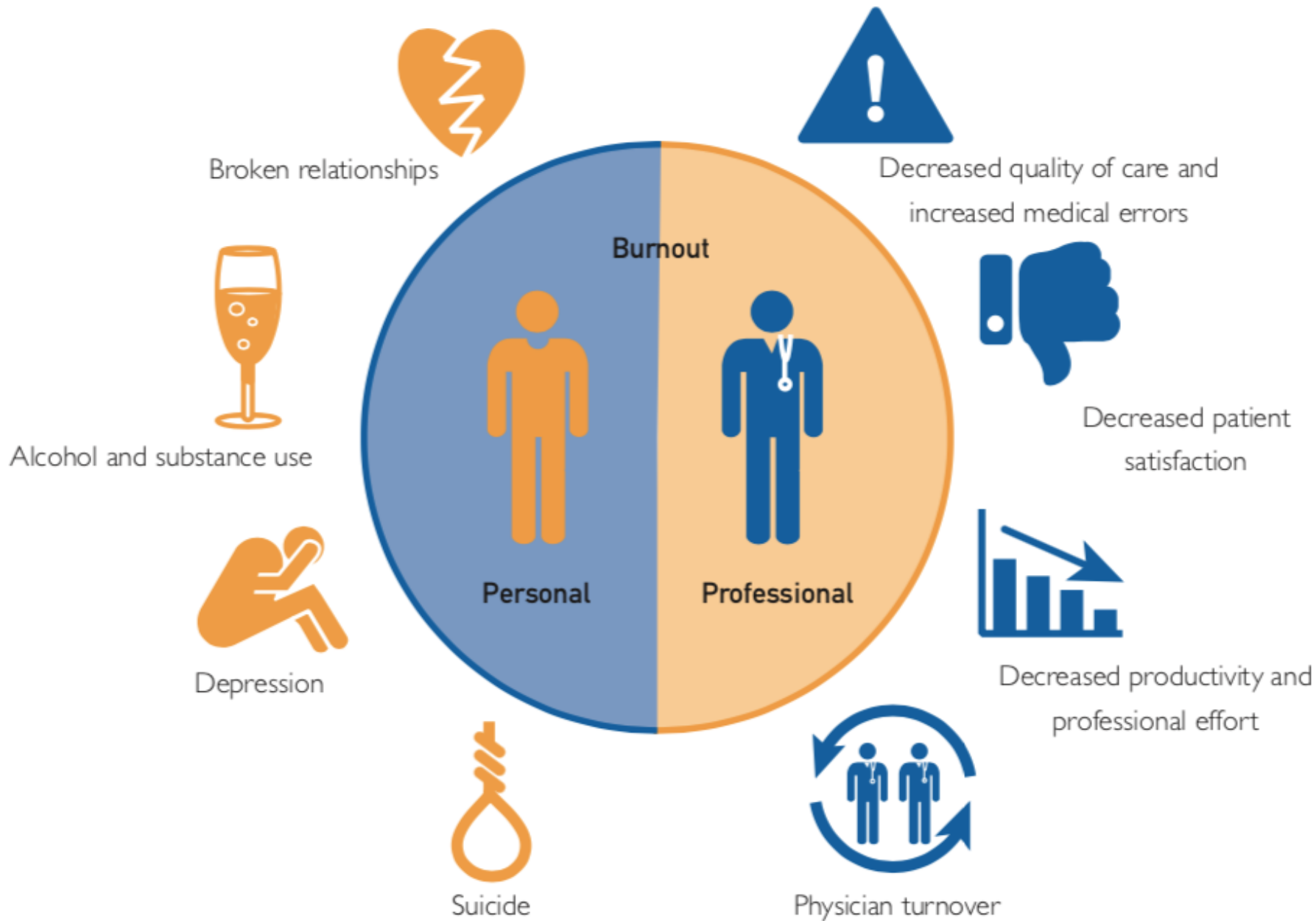
Burnout

Personal | Professional

Broken relationships

Alcohol and substance use

Depression

Suicide

Decreased quality of care and increased medical errors

Decreased patient satisfaction

Decreased productivity and professional effort

Physician turnover

Shanafelt & Noseworthy, 2017

Suffering Patients

Bad News

Difficult Patients

Patient's Death

Aims of the project

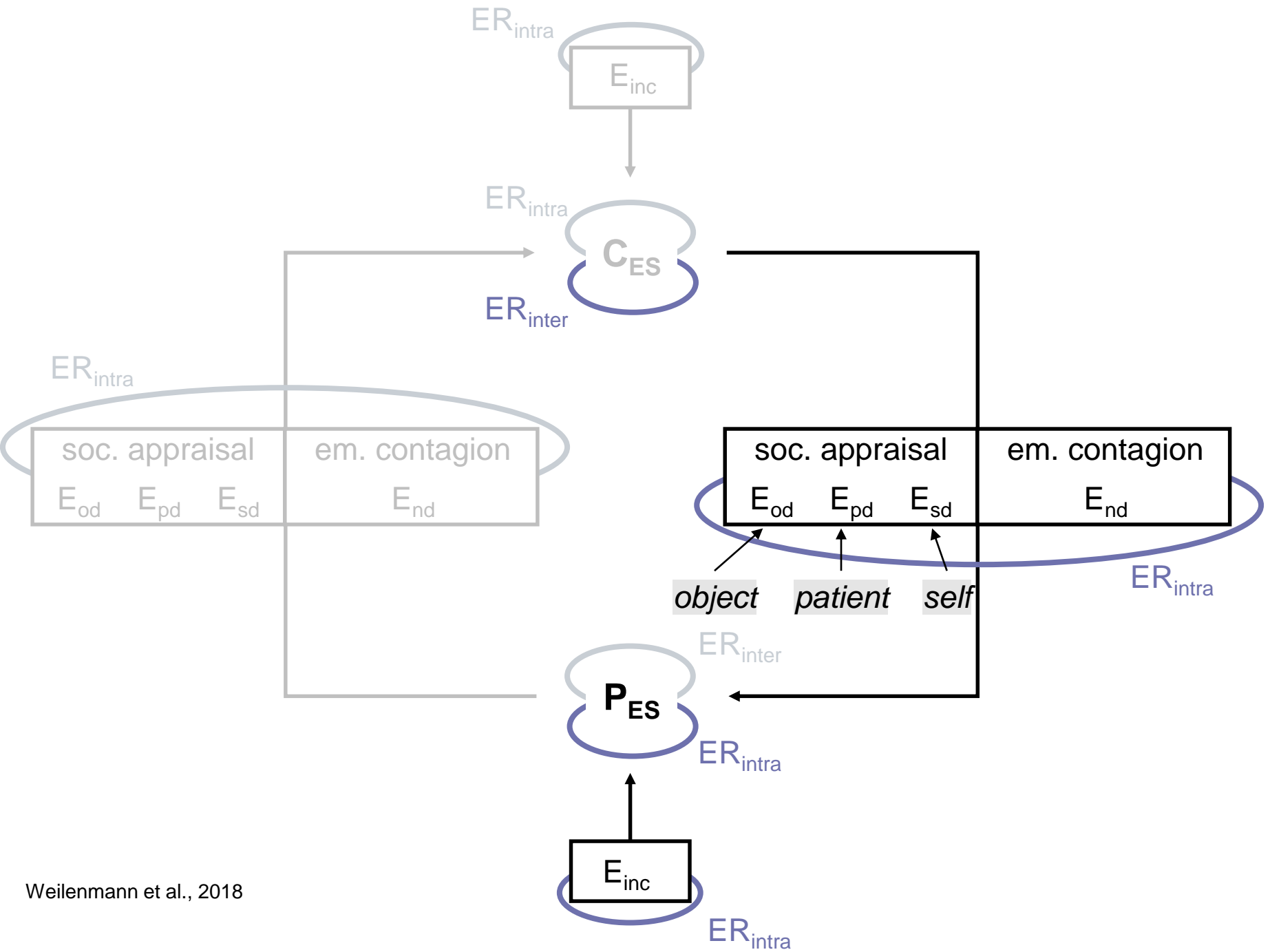|		Status
1)	Characterize emotional processes that enable well-being in health-care providers.	✓
2)	Investigate how these processes are affected by the work environment.	In prep.
3)	Identify how organizations can shape the work environments to enable optimal emotional processes and thus provider (and also, indirectly, patient) well-being.	Future step

Model

ER_{intra}

E_{inc}

ER_{intra}

C_{ES}

ER_{inter}

ER_{intra}

soc. appraisal

em. contagion

E_{od} E_{pd} E_{sd}

E_{nd}

soc. appraisal

em. contagion

E_{od} E_{pd} E_{sd}

E_{nd}

ER_{intra}

object   *patient*   *self*

ER_{inter}

P_{ES}

ER_{intra}

E_{inc}

ER_{intra}

Methods

Two studies with mixed methods design

Emotional state and emotion regulation

Qualitative Interviews (2h)

One exemplary emotionally challenging interaction

Questionnaires

Habitual

Sample 1

	n
Total	21
Women	11
Men	10
Psychiatrists	16
Psychiatric residents	5
Working in a psychiatric hospital	11
Working in a private practice	10

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Sample 2

		n
Total		58
Women		41
Men		17
Physicians	Total	24
	Hospital	8
	Private practice	16
Nurses	Total	17
	Hospital	14
	Home care	3
Psychologists	Total	17
	(Psychiatric) hospital	9
	Private practice	8

Heightened scores
- burnout: 34.6%
- depression: 30.9%
- anxiety: 43.6%

Selected findings

What is an optimal emotional state?

Category	Sub-category	Patient-directed emotions	n
Affection	Affection (32)	Compassion	16
		Liking	6
		Connectedness	5
		Benevolence	5
Joy	Cheerfulness (5)	Joy	5
	Zest (3)	Curiosity, interest	3
	Optimism (7)	Confidence	4
		Hope	3
Anger	Irritation (22)	Annoyance	18
		Incomprehension	3
	Exasperation (5)	Frustration	5
	Rage (14)	Anger	14
Sadness	Sadness (7)	Sadness	7
	Disappointment (10)	Consternation	6
		Disappointment	4
	Sympathy (9)	Pity	9
Fear	Nervousness (19)	Fear, worry	12
		Insecurity, uncertainty	4
		Helplessness	3

Category	Sub-category	Self-directed emotions	n
Joy	Contentment (9)	Contentment	9
	Pride (6)	Pride	6
	Optimism (8)	Confidence	8
	Relief (5)	Relief	5
Anger	Irritation (7)	Annoyance	7
Sadness	Neglect (5)	Insult	5
	Disappointment (4)	Disappointment	4
Fear	Nervousness (50)	Insecurity, uncertainty, doubt	13
		Fear, worry	12
		Tension, stress	9
		Helplessness	7
		Incompetence, insufficiency	5
		Unease	4

What is an optimal emotional state?

- ✓ - More positive than negative emotions (e.g., subjective well-being theories; Diener, Suh, Lucas, & Smith, 1999)

- ✓ - Having self-perceived useful emotions (Tamir & Ford, 2012; Tamir, Schwartz, Oishi, & Kim, 2017)

- ✓ - Being in a desired emotional state (ideal affective state; Tsai 2007, 2017)

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✓ - Being in a desired emotional state (ideal affective state; Tsai, 2017)

- Direction matters?

?
  - Emotions that enable bonding with patient (Weilenmann et al., 2018)

  - Emotions that strengthen own resources (learned helplessness theory; Abramson, Seligman, & Teasdale, 1978)

Variables

- Single emotions

  - Direction

  - Valence

  - Self-perceived usefulness

- Attainement of a desired emotional state

Category	Sub-category	Patient-directed emotions		n
Affection	Affection (32)	Compassion		16
		Liking	**Enable bonding**	6
		Connectedness		5
		Benevolence		5
Joy	Cheerfulness (5)	Joy		5
	Zest (3)	Curiosity, interest		3
	Optimism (7)	Confidence		4
		Hope		3
Anger	Irritation (22)	Annoyance		18
		Incomprehension		3
	Exasperation (5)	Frustration	**Impair bonding**	5
	Rage (14)	Anger		14
Sadness	Sadness (7)	Sadness		7
	Disappointment (10)	Consternation		6
		Disappointment		4
	Sympathy (9)	Pity		9
Fear	Nervousness (19)	Fear, worry		12
		Insecurity, uncertainty		4
		Helplessness		3

Category	Sub-category	Self-directed emotions		n
Joy	Contentment (9)	Contentment		9
	Pride (6)	Pride	**Resource-**	6
	Optimism (8)	Confidence	**strenghtening**	8
	Relief (5)	Relief		5
Anger	Irritation (7)	Annoyance		7
Sadness	Neglect (5)	Insult		5
	Disappointment (4)	Disappointment		4
Fear	Nervousness (50)	Insecurity, uncertainty, doubt		13
		Fear, worry		12
		Tension, stress	**Resource-**	9
		Helplessness	**depleting**	7
		Incompetence, insufficiency		5
		Unease		4

Well-being

- **Hedonic well-being** (*Comprehensive Inventory of Thriving*; Su et al., 2014)

- **Eudaimonic well-being** (*Flourishing Scale*; Diener et al., 2010)

What is an optimal emotional state?

❌ - More positive than negative emotions

❌ - Having self-perceived useful emotions

✓ - Being close to one's desired emotional state

- Direction

✓
- Emotions that enable bonding with patient

- Emotions that strengthen own resources

Regression analysis (forward selection)
Hedonic WB: β = .49, R^2 = .24, t = 4.09, p < .001
Eudaimonic WB: β = .30, R^2 .48, t = 2.25, p = .029 (with desired emotional state as predictor)

Limitations and future research

Limitations

– Only one interaction

– Recall bias

– Small sample size

→ Prospective studies in daily life (*ecological momentary assessments*)

→ Objective measures (HRV)

Aims of the project

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Questions?

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