

Occupational Health of Anaesthesiologists and Intensivists

Since 2009, the SMART Committee (Occupational Health and Wellness Committee for Anaesthesiologists and Intensivists) has been pursuing its discussions, proposing actions and putting into place practical tools to address the occupational health and wellness of professionals, physicians and nurses in our specialty, with other specialties earmarked as well.

This involves taking into account the various consequences of workplace malaise and how it is expressed through different pathologies, and identifying the conditions under which it occurs, especially in the professional setting.

Context:

Psychosocial and psycho-organizational risks in the workplace are a growing public health concern. They can lead to health problems, both physical (musculoskeletal problems, coronary syndromes) and mental (burnout, depression, addictions, suicide), and their consequences can be both individual and collective, in the family circle and in the workplace.

Overall, the medical community and, more broadly, the healthcare community constitute a population at risk. Anaesthesiologists and intensivists are not spared from this risk.

Like the others, physicians are often at a loss in the face of their own physical or psychological distress at work. Individual and collective denial (whether conscious or unconscious) gives rise to a multitude of questions:

- What to do in case of discovery of abusive, lawful or illicit consumption by a colleague at work?
- Are there appropriate organizations or individuals to contact?
- What is the degree of urgency? Is there a risk of suicide?
- How to deal with situations such as burnout or loss of control at work?
- What information about the risks of the profession
- Should be given to interns during their training?
- How to facilitate the return to work after a long period away?

Objectives: The SMART Committee builds upon what already exists in many countries, where services for healthcare professionals in distress have been set up to promote:

- rapid intervention for physicians in difficulty;
- the possibility of assisting a colleague in distress;
- an improvement in occupational health for healthcare professionals;

- an active policy of communication within the medical community. All the currently developed programs share some common features:
- anonymous access to a telephone hotline for support and orientation;
- preservation of confidentiality during the counselling process;
- organization and management by medical professionals;
- a free 24-hour support service;
- proposal of a care contract, accompanied by a system of evaluation;
- supervised assistance when resuming an activity.

Tools and actions

SELF-ASSESS:

Self-assessment tests to be taken individually or as a team

They do not in any way establish a medical diagnosis, but they may help to reveal a worrying state or behaviour and open the way towards receiving appropriate care.

Available tests*:

- Alcohol
- Anxiety
- Depression
- Burnout
- Cyberaddiction
- Fatigue
- Sleep
- Tobacco
- Harassment
- Workaholism
- Karasek
- PTSD

REACT:

+ An addiction network for referral and management of professionals

At the initiative of the SMART Committee, the CFAR is gradually putting into place a support network in France.

The addicto network is designed to accompany healthcare personnel who have problems with addiction. They can contact an addiction specialist in total confidentiality who, if necessary, can offer a secondary referral and/or specialist care.

This counselling service is also available to relatives or colleagues (family, friends, coworkers, department heads, managers, occupational physicians, directors) confronted with a problem of addiction.

+Downloadable fact sheets:

The SMART offers several downloadable and printable fact sheets that provide information on how to handle different situations of occupational distress.

- How to deal with bullying or sexual harassment at work
- Management of addiction among healthcare professionals in the anaesthesia-intensive care setting
- How to deal with a colleague who has suicidal thoughts
- Caregiver trauma after an anaesthesia/intensive care accident–What to expect from a health check-up at work

LEARN MORE

Online access to *bibliographic monitoring*

Online documentation and lists of websites addressing problems such as burnout, fatigue, professional errors or workplace harassment among healthcare professionals.

You can contribute to improving this service by contacting smart@sfar.org