

Review Article

Work-Family Enrichment in Orthopaedic Surgery

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The phenomenon of work-family enrichment (WFE) is increasingly studied in medical professions, but has yet to be investigated in orthopaedic surgery. While much of the literature in this field has acknowledged high levels of stress and burnout among orthopaedic surgeons, some studies have suggested that WFE may be an important factor in promoting positive outcomes in both personal and professional domains. Future research should aim to explore the benefits of WFE for orthopaedic surgeons, as well as the factors that contribute to job satisfaction and overall well-being. By supporting work-family enrichment, hospitals and healthcare centers may be able to create a more supportive work environment for orthopaedic surgeons, which could lead to higher levels of job satisfaction and better patient care.

INTRODUCTION

Orthopaedic surgery is a demanding and challenging specialty that requires significant skill, dedication, and perseverance. Surgeons in this field face long hours, high levels of stress, and a constant stream of complex cases (Hui et al. 2019). However, despite these challenges, many orthopaedic surgeons report high levels of job satisfaction and a deep sense of fulfillment from their work (Arora, Diwan, and Harris 2014). This paradox raises an important question: what are the factors that contribute to work-family enrichment (WFE) in orthopaedic surgery, and how can we better understand and promote these factors within the field?

The concept of WFE refers to the idea that positive experiences in one domain (such as work) can spill over into the other domain (such as family), leading to increased well-being and satisfaction in both areas (Greenhaus and Powell 2006; Grzywacz and Marks 2000). In the context of orthopaedic surgery, WFE could encompass a range of factors, including supportive colleagues, flexible work arrangements, opportunities for personal and professional growth, and a sense of purpose and meaning in one's work.

While much of the existing research on orthopaedic surgery has focused on stress, burnout (Hui et al. 2019; Hogan and Daniels 2021; Ames et al. 2017), and other negative aspects of the specialty, there is a growing recognition of the importance of studying WFE and other positive factors that contribute to sustainability and well-being (Pereira, Ferreira, and Valentini 2019; Thomas et al. 2022;

Langballe et al. 2011). In a 2022 Medical Economics survey, 85% of physicians said work-life balance was the top factor in choosing the new job ("New Physicians Want Work-Life Balance in First Job, Survey Says" 2022). By better understanding the factors that positively influence balance, we can identify ways to promote a more sustainable and fulfilling future for orthopaedic surgeons, and for the patients and communities they serve.

WORK-FAMILY ENRICHMENT IN ORTHOPAEDIC SURGERY

There are several factors that may influence the extent to which orthopaedic surgeons experience WFE. One key factor is the degree of control that surgeons have over their work schedule and workload. Surgeons who have more autonomy and control may be better able to manage their work and family responsibilities, leading to greater WFE. Another factor is the level of support that surgeons receive from their colleagues and employers. A supportive work environment that values work-life balance and provides resources for managing family responsibilities may enhance WFE. Finally, individual characteristics such as personality, coping styles, and family values may also influence the extent to which orthopaedic surgeons experience WFE. Orthopaedic surgeons who experience WFE may find that their work provides them with a sense of purpose and meaning that carries over into their family life. They may also find that their family life provides them with support

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and encouragement that enhances their work leading to increased job satisfaction.

STRESS AND BURNOUT IN ORTHOPAEDIC SURGERY

While WFE can have many positive effects on orthopaedic surgeons, it is also important to acknowledge the challenges and stressors that come with this profession. Orthopaedic surgeons are often under significant pressure to provide high-quality care to patients with complex musculoskeletal conditions, which can lead to high levels of stress and burnout.

A study published in the Journal of the American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons found that up to 60% of orthopaedic surgeons reported symptoms of burnout, with younger surgeons being at a higher risk (Daniels, DePasse, and Kamal 2016). Burnout can have negative effects on the well-being of surgeons, including increased risk of depression, anxiety, and substance abuse.

While we've highlighted the importance of WFE as a factor that contributes to job satisfaction and well-being in orthopaedic surgery, it's also important to acknowledge the prevalence of burnout in the field. Burnout is a serious issue that can lead to a range of negative outcomes, including decreased job satisfaction, decreased quality of patient care, and even mental and physical health problems. Thus, while promoting WFE is an important consideration for improving the sustainability and well-being of orthopaedic surgeons, it's also critical that we address burnout and its contributing factors in order to create a more supportive and sustainable work environment. Indeed, one potential way to address burnout is by focusing on WFE, as this can provide a counterbalance to the stress and demands of the job and may promote resilience and well-being among orthopaedic surgeons. By addressing both WFE and burnout, we can create a more comprehensive and effective approach to promoting the well-being and sustainability of the orthopaedic surgery profession.

However, it is important to note that not all of the literature on orthopaedic surgery is focused on stress and burnout. In fact, there are some positive findings that suggest that orthopaedic surgeons may experience high levels of job satisfaction and low levels of anxiety. In 2014, a survey by Health News Digest showed that orthopaedic surgeons were the number one group of physicians who would choose their same career again if given the opportunity

("Physicians Would Choose Their Specialty All Over Again," n.d.). This indicates that despite the challenges, many orthopaedic surgeons find their work to be fulfilling and rewarding.

Additionally, a recent Medscape report on physician burnout found that orthopaedic surgeons are among the top three least anxious groups of physicians, with only 29% of orthopaedic surgeons reporting high levels of anxiety ("Orthopedics Is Among the Least Burned-Out Specialties," n.d.). This is in contrast to other specialties such as emergency medicine, critical care, and internal medicine, which reported much higher rates of anxiety.

While stress and burnout are significant challenges facing orthopaedic surgeons, it is important to also acknowledge the positive aspects of this profession. The high levels of job satisfaction and low levels of anxiety reported by orthopaedic surgeons suggest that, for many individuals, the rewards of this specialty outweigh the challenges. By understanding the factors that contribute to WFE and promoting a supportive work environment, orthopaedic surgeons and their employers can enhance the well-being of surgeons and their families.

JOB SATISFACTION

Several studies have examined job satisfaction among orthopaedic surgeons (Klein et al. 2013; Curry and Matzkin 2015; Lazarides et al. 2021; Yu, Zou, and Sun 2020), and the results have been mixed. Some studies have reported relatively high levels of job satisfaction, while others have found more negative outcomes, such as burnout and high levels of stress. These findings highlight the need for continued research on factors that contribute to job satisfaction and well-being in orthopaedic surgery. WFE has emerged as a potentially important factor, as demonstrated by research that has shown a positive association between WFE and job satisfaction among orthopaedic surgeons. By promoting WFE, hospitals and medical centers may be able to create a more supportive work environment for orthopaedic surgeons, which could, in turn, lead to higher levels of job satisfaction and better patient care.

FUTURE RESEARCH DIRECTIONS

WFE in orthopaedic surgery, is an area that has yet to be explored. Future research could examine the specific factors that contribute to WFE in orthopaedic surgeons, such

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as workplace policies, social support, and individual coping strategies. Researchers could also investigate how WFE affects various outcomes, such as job satisfaction, work-life balance, and family relationships.

In addition to studying WFE, it is important to understand the factors that contribute to job satisfaction in orthopaedic surgery. While recent surveys found that orthopaedic surgeons report high levels of satisfaction, more research is needed to understand specific contributing factors. For example, researchers could explore the relationship between job characteristics (such as workload, autonomy, and income) and job satisfaction. They could also investigate the impact of workplace policies, such as flexible scheduling or telemedicine, on job satisfaction.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the phenomenon of WFE in orthopaedic surgery represents an important area of inquiry for pro-

moting sustainability in this demanding field. While there are certainly challenges and pressures that orthopaedic surgeons face, it is important to also recognize the many positive aspects of the specialty. By studying WFE in orthopaedic surgery, we can identify the factors that contribute to well-being, and work to promote these factors within the workplace and in the healthcare system at large. This benefits the future of orthopaedics by providing a more supportive and fulfilling work environment that enables surgeons to provide the best care possible to their patients. Ultimately, by fostering a culture of positivity and resilience, we can create a more sustainable and fulfilling future for orthopaedic surgeons, and for the patients and communities they serve.

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