ASSessment of mental health and perceptions among physicians of a secondary level government hospital in India

Introduction Several studies have suggested that doctors are more likely to be affected by psychiatric and related illnesses owing to multiple stressors like busy work schedule, role conflicts, unhealthy lifestyle and poor social life etc. in them. Poor mental health among doctors is detrimental to existing health care system.

Methods A cross-sectional study was conducted secondary level hospital in north-west district of national capital region (NCR). All 89 doctors working in the Hospital were encouraged to participate. Global mental health assessment tool – primary care version (GMHAT-PC) was used for conducting interviews. It is a validated and extensively used computer based tool for making a quick, convenient and comprehensive standardised mental health assessment. Prior consent was taken from each of study subject and confidentiality was maintained. Data was analysed using SPSS-17 version.

Result Mean age and job duration of the participants was 31.2±4.6 and 7.5±3.4 years. Participants had high prevalence of various psychiatric illnesses like- Anxiety-64%, Depression 32%, Personality disorders 22%, Obsessive compulsive disorder 18%. Alcohol intake and Drug abuse was present in 38% and 12% of participants respectively etc. Significant association was found between age and years of work with presence of mental illness (p=0.04), (p=0.01). Among the doctors interviewed 42.6% believed that they are susceptible to mental disorders. Only 21.3% found themselves capable enough in managing mental health screening and management.

Discussion The current cross-sectional study reflects high burden of psychiatric problems viz. anxiety, depression and alcohol consumption among doctors. There is a high demand for a basic training in identification and management of mental illnesses for health professionals and need for mental health promotion.