



Press Release

Stress and burnout amongst young doctors warrant attention Hong Kong Academy of Medicine launches “Well-being Charter” for Fellows and specialist trainees

(Hong Kong, 5 October 2021) – A territory-wide cross-sectional study conducted by the Hong Kong Academy of Medicine (the Academy) reveals that over 70% of local young doctors who responded reported personal or work-related burnout, with a high prevalence of depression (21%). The Academy reiterates that maintaining the well-being of doctors is paramount in sustaining a healthy medical workforce and ensuring quality patient care.

The Academy announces today findings of a study, titled “Burnout and well-being in young doctors in Hong Kong: a territory-wide cross-sectional survey”. It was conducted in the first half of 2019 and led by Dr. Kenny Yat-hong Kwan, then Chair of the Academy’s Young Fellows Chapter. The aim of the study was to evaluate the level of burnout and health status of young doctors in Hong Kong, broadly defined as recent medical graduates undergoing specialist training (residents-in-training) or specialists whose Academy Fellowship was conferred within the past 10 years (young Fellows). Details of the survey results have been published in the *Hong Kong Medical Journal* (<https://doi.org/10.12809/hkmj219610>).

Of the 514 respondents, 284 were young Fellows and 230 were residents-in-training. Using a Copenhagen Burnout Inventory (CBI) subscale cut-off score of 50 and above (moderate and higher), 72.6% (n=373) reported personal burnout, 70.6% (n=363) reported work-related burnout, and 55.4% (n=285) reported client-related burnout. Among the responses analysed, 24% (n=125) and 4% (n=19) of the respondents were respectively “somewhat dissatisfied” and “very dissatisfied” with their present job positions. The prevalence of respondents suffering from depression was 21% (n=110). Imminent attention and actions are required to address the issues of concern.

“Doctors’ well-being is vital in providing quality healthcare services and linked to patient safety while physician stress and burnout are increasingly recognised worldwide as a serious threat to the medical practice across specialties with increasing prevalence. The Academy – through our Well-being Charter – pledges to promote the well-being of Fellows and specialist trainees by introducing a series of short- and long-term initiatives”, remarked Prof. Gilberto Ka-kit Leung, President of the Academy.

Promulgated in October 2021, the Academy’s Well-being Charter pledges to acknowledge, prioritise and promote the well-being of medical and dental practitioners in contributing towards high quality and effective patient care. It highlights the importance of fostering a caring and supportive culture and strengthen professionalism across disciplines among



healthcare professionals. A designated webpage has recently been launched to provide useful information and tips on how healthcare practitioners can attend to and improve their physical, mental and social health conditions. Mental health training will be organised, and sharing of good practices and advocacy of policy changes among institutions and policy makers will be promulgated.

The Academy advocates healthcare professionals to prevent stress and burnout through an “ASAP approach” – **A**wareness, **S**elf-care, **A**sk for help and **P**romotion of well-being. Healthcare professionals should watch out for early signs of stress and burnout, practise self-care, reach out for peer or professional support where necessary, build resilience through impactful ways and organisational support.

As well as maintaining professional competencies and autonomy, the Academy is committed to assuming a leading role in cultivating and promoting well-being among Fellows and specialist trainees to strive for a healthier community.

Higher resolution of the photos of the press conference can be downloaded from:
https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1Q48zGWKQaD2Y9e4_Wni7OvbM6ZuBKFhp





Stress and burnout amongst doctors warrant attention, Hong Kong Academy of Medicine promulgates “Well-being Charter”. Centre of the photos is Professor Gilberto Ka-kit Leung, President of the Academy.

About the Hong Kong Academy of Medicine

Established in 1993, the Hong Kong Academy of Medicine is an independent institution with statutory power to organise, monitor, assess and accredit all medical and dental specialist training, and the responsibility to oversee the continuing medical education and continuous professional development to maintain the standard of specialists practising in Hong Kong. There are now 70 specialties with more than 8,500 Academy Fellows, who are eligible for registration in the Specialist Register of the Medical Council of Hong Kong and Dental Council of Hong Kong on the recommendation of the Academy.

About the *Hong Kong Medical Journal*

The *Hong Kong Medical Journal* (HKMJ) is a bimonthly joint publication of the Hong Kong Academy of Medicine and the Hong Kong Medical Association. HKMJ is published by the Hong Kong Academy of Medicine Press.

This press invitation is issued by Muse Consultancy Group Limited on behalf of the Academy.

Media contact: Mr Benny Kwong Email: benny@muse-hk.com Tel: 2114 2071 / 9405 2112