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# **Burnout Assessment among Pharmacist-Academic Detailers at the US Veterans Health Administration**

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# Disclosure statement

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I have no relevant financial or nonfinancial relationships to disclose.

During the development, analysis, and preparation of this presentation, I was an employee of the U.S. Veterans Health Administration, Department of Veterans Affairs.

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The views and opinions expressed in this presentation are mine and do not necessarily reflect the official policy or position of any agency of the U.S. government.

# Background

- Previous studies have highlighted the prevalence of **high levels of burnout for pharmacists.**
- **Academic detailing can add additional layers of stress.**
- Pharmacist detailers often **maintain a clinical practice**, contributing to burnout.

**Quality Improvement study** to assess extent of detailer burnout to further inform:

- Job satisfaction
- Staff retention
- Development of policies, tools, and guidance to combat burnout effectively.

## **Primary Aim:**

- Identify individual-level factors associated with burnout according to the **Oldenburg Burnout Index (OLBI)**

## **Secondary Aim:**

- Identify individual-level factors associated with burnout according to a **validated, single-item burnout measure.**

# Methods

**Design:** Cross-sectional study

**Time Period:** April 2023 and May 2023

**Selection:** Clinical pharmacist practitioners who were also detailers

**Data:** PBM ADS Salesforce data\*

**Detailers were considered “actively practicing” AD if they had:**

- At least **1 documented encounter** for any campaign between 01 January 2022 to 31 March 2023
- **Full time employee equivalent (FTEE) time** dedicated to AD duties.

*\*Pharmacy Benefits Management (PBM) Academic Detailing Service (ADS)*

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# Respondents

- **123 VHA Detailers** met inclusion criteria and were invited to complete online survey
  - *(at the time of this study, this was the entire workforce of academic detailers)*
- **50 VHA Detailers (41% response rate)** completed the online survey.

# Burnout Measure 1:

## *Oldenburg Burnout Inventory (OLBI)*

- 16-item validated instrument
- Focuses on two core dimensions of burnout:
  - **Exhaustion**
  - **Disengagement**
- **Incorporates aspects of exhaustion:**
  - **Affective**
  - **Physical**
  - **Cognitive**
- **Incorporates aspects of disengagement:**
  - **Depersonalization**
  - **Cynical**

# Burnout Measure 2:

## *Single-item measure of burnout*

- Non-proprietary
- From **Physician Work Life Study**
- Sound **reliability and validity** properties
- **Maslach Burnout Inventory Emotional Exhaustion (MBI:EE)** subscale.

Overall, based on your definition of burnout, how would you rate your level of burnout?

I enjoy my work. I have no symptoms of burnout

Occasionally I am under stress, and I don't always have as much energy as I once did, but I don't feel burned out

I am definitely burning out and have one or more symptoms of burnout, such as physical and emotional exhaustion

The symptoms of burnout that I'm experiencing won't go away. I think about frustration at work a lot

I feel completely burned out and often wonder if I can go on. I am at the point where I may need some changes or may need to seek some sort of help.”

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# Statistical Analysis Plan

## Aim 1:

3 Linear Regression Models to evaluate individual-level factors that were associated with:

- Total OLBI score (Model 1a)
- its dimensions [exhaustion (Model 2a) and disengagement (Model 3a)].

## Aim 2:

- Independent t test for continuous variables
- Chi square test for categorical variables.
- Individual-level factors were compared between:

detailers who reported having  
1 or more symptoms of burnout

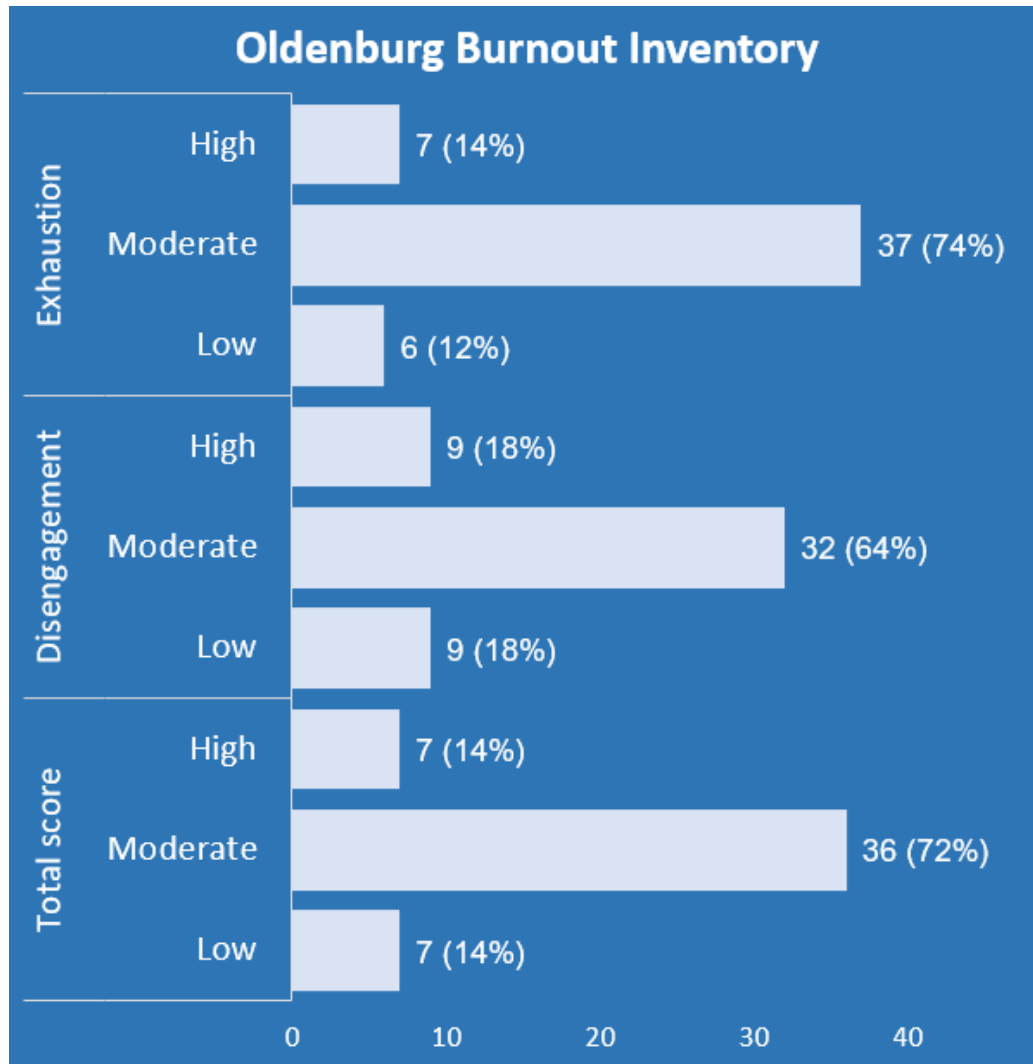
detailers who reported no  
symptoms of burnout using

# Results – Online Survey: 50 Detailers

**Table 1.** Demographics of academic detailers.

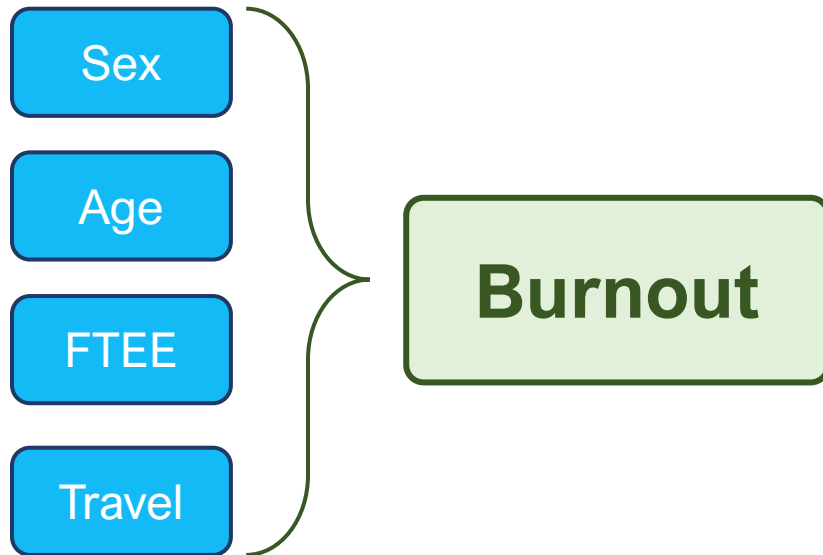
Variable	N = 50		
Sex, n (%)		Education attainment, n (%)	
Male	9 (18%)	Master and other doctoral degrees	3 (6%)
Female	39 (78%)	PGY1 residency	44 (88%)
Chose not to answer	2 (4%)	PGY2 residency	19 (38%)
Age categories, n (%)		Other post-doc training	2 (4%)
<= 30 years	5 (10%)	Telework, n (%)	
31 to 40 years	26 (52%)	Most of the time	43 (86%)
41 to 50 years	13 (26%)	Some of the time	6 (12%)
51 years and older	4 (8%)	None of the time	1 (2%)
Chose not to answer	2 (4%)	Training, n (%)	
Years worked as an academic detailer, n (%)		Basic	25 (50%)
<1 year	3 (6%)	Advanced	42 (84%)
1 to < 2 years	10 (20%)	Shadowing	9 (18%)
2 to < 3 years	7 (14%)	Other	8 (16%)
3 to < 4 years	8 (16%)	Travel amount, n (%)	
4 to < 5 years	5 (10%)	Most of the time	1 (2%)
5 or more years	17 (34%)	Some of the time	41 (82%)
FTEE amount, n (%)		None of the time	8 (16%)
0 to < 0.50 FTEE	14 (28%)		
0.50 to < 0.80 FTEE	15 (30%)	FTEE, full-time employee equivalent	
0.80 to 1.00 FTEE	21 (42%)		

# Results – OLBI findings



In total, 86% of academic detailers reported having Moderate to High levels of burnout on the total OLBI score

# Results – Individual level factors



For our base-case analyses, multivariable regression models were constructed to evaluate the associations between responder characteristics and study endpoints.

**None of the measured characteristics were associated with the total burnout score, disengagement domain, and exhaustion domain**

# Results – Single item measure of burnout

Overall, based on your definition of burnout, how would you rate your level of burnout?	N (%)
I enjoy my work. I have no symptoms of burnout	4 (8%)
Occasionally I am under stress, and I don't always have as much energy as I once did, but I don't feel burned out	32 (64%)
I am definitely burning out and have one or more symptoms of burnout, such as physical and emotional exhaustion	8 (16%)
The symptoms of burnout that I'm experiencing won't go away. I think about frustration at work a lot	4 (8%)
I feel completely burned out and often wonder if I can go on. I am at the point where I may need some changes or may need to seek some sort of help.”	2 (4%)

For the secondary aim, in the single-item burnout measure, **28% of academic detailers indicated that they experienced burnout.**

However, **no significant differences** were reported between academic detailers with or without symptoms of burnout for **individual-level factors.**

# Discussion

- VHA academic detailers appear to be **experiencing burnout**.
- These results provide **a much-needed measure of academic detailer burnout** among clinical pharmacist practitioners at VHA, which have **not been previously reported** in the literature.
- We sought to identify modifiable individual-level characteristics associated with burnout such as **FTEE amount, travel, and telework status**.
- However, in our analyses, **these factors were not significantly associated** with the OLBI total score, exhaustion domain, and disengagement domain.
- It is unclear how burnout among academic detailers **impacts retention**.
- Management and leadership **should consider incentives** for specially-trained clinical pharmacist practitioners to remain in their detailing roles.

# Limitations

- Used **a cross-sectional design** to capture the burnout level of academic detailers
- **Unable to determine** whether burnout was due to detailing or other factors
- **Small sample of VHA detailers** responded to our survey, and our non-significant findings may be due to type II error
- We used the OLBI instead of the Maslach Burnout Inventory due to **funding limitations**



# Conclusions

Burnout among clinical pharmacist practitioners who function as detailers is **poorly understood**

Although we have measured the burnout levels of VHA academic detailers, there is a large amount of **uncertainty in understanding this phenomenon**

**Further investigation is warranted:**

- **External factors**
- **System-level factors**

Focus should be on **understanding modifiable factors that healthcare systems can implement to mitigate burnout** among detailers.

# Acknowledgements

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Our nation-wide academic detailing programs

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