

Clinician responses to the challenges of working with compensable patients

A qualitative exploration of clinician responses to working with the clinically complex challenges of compensable care systems

INTRODUCTION

- Working with patients whose injury is covered by a compensation claim adds significant layers of complexity to the clinical experience.
- Research suggests that this cohort of patients experience higher levels of distress than other groups of patients.
- In order to understand how best to support clinicians, it is important to explore and understand their experiences and responses to working with these challenges

METHODS

We interviewed 26 clinicians from six states in Australia.

A reflexive thematic analysis was undertaken and themes were constructed from the data.

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RESULTS

Interviews revealed five themes

- Clinicians experience vicarious injustice when exposed to negative claimant experiences
- Emotional exhaustion and emotion coping
- Self-doubt prompts upskilling and support seeking
- Helping this clinical population can be meaningful
- Clinical mastery was nurtured through experience but was stifled by systemic constraints

DISCUSSION

- Clinicians responded to the challenges of working with this clinical cohort in both positive and negative ways.
- Positive responses that appeared to support clinician's wellbeing included seeking further education, mentoring, peer support and encouraging a supportive workplace culture
- Emphasising these support structures is important for clinician wellbeing, reducing burnout and maintaining the workforce.

Vicarious Injustice

"I get angry on behalf of the client that they're having to go through this" Clinician #2

Emotional Exhaustion

"I just often have this profound sense of exhaustion... at the end of my day." Clinician #8

Self-Doubt

"Often I'm second guessing if I'm doing the right thing. Is it a failure on my part? Am I missing certain elements?" Clinician #18

Meaningful work

"You do have some days when you walk out and think, yes, I've made a real difference to people's lives." Clinician #19

Mastery

"I've gone through postgraduate then specialization training...I gravitated towards this type of work because it's more of a challenge." Clinician #13



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