

Metacognitive awareness in coping with mental health challenges and decision-making among emergency physicians

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Dear Editor,

We are writing to highlight the importance for emergency physicians to have metacognitive awareness to improve their ability to make decisions under pressure and cope with stressors. Improving well-being and enhancing resilience among emergency physicians and nurses is a critical concern due to heightened attrition rates and increasing psychological issues.¹

Emergency physicians frequently deal with severe stress and mental health issues. Because of the nature of their employment, they are more likely to experience depression, anxiety, burnout, compassion fatigue, and other mental health problems.² Metacognitive awareness has proven to be an effective stress-management strategy, particularly in decision-making. Research on decision-making in emergency departments emphasizes the importance of cognitive techniques such as metacognitive awareness and mindfulness in improving decision-making under stress.³

Metacognitive awareness is the capacity to introspect and control one's own thought processes. This self-awareness may greatly improve concentration, lessen cognitive overload, and help in decision-making, thereby reducing errors under stressful situations. Al-Azri's conceptual mental model demonstrates how combining analytical and non-analytic approaches in decision-making facilitated by metacognitive strategies may improve decision-making, which is paramount in emergency care.⁴

Emergency physicians who maintain metacognitive awareness handle challenging situations better and make well-informed judgments, which are essential for patient care. Improvement in emergency physicians' well-being and resilience can be achieved by creating an atmosphere that encourages metacognitive training. Research has shown that practicing mindfulness enhances decision-making and aids in coping with stress.⁵

In conclusion, we encourage healthcare organizations and policymakers to integrate metacognition- and mindfulness-based training sessions, workshops, and peer support networks to enhance the overall well-being of personnel working in emergency and critical care settings.

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