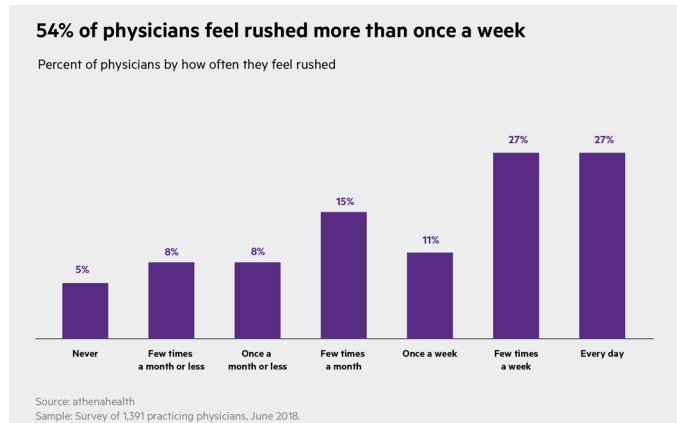


Not enough time: Feeling rushed drives burnout

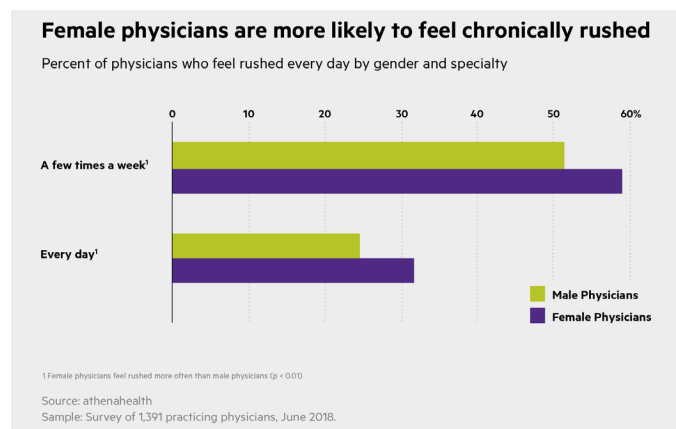
By Chris Hayhurst | March 7, 2019

The more rushed physicians feel at work, the more likely they are to report signs of burnout, according to a 2018 athenaResearch survey of nearly 1,400 physicians across all practice specialties.

The survey also revealed how prevalent harried physicians are in health care today: More than half (54%) of practicing physicians say they feel rushed more than once a week, while only 13 percent feel rushed less than once a month, the survey revealed.



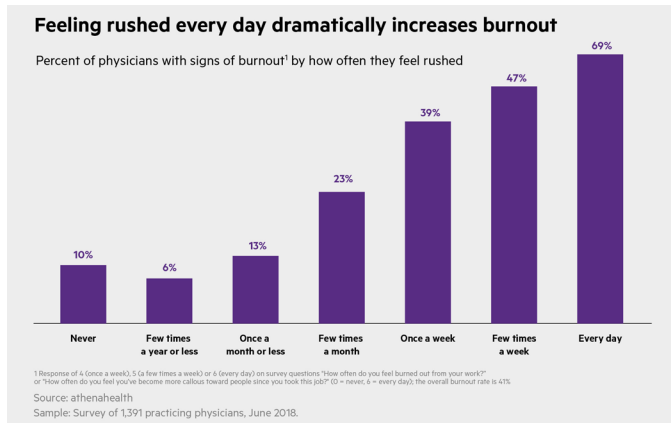
Female physicians (33%) are more likely to feel rushed every day than their male counterparts (24%), and female primary care physicians tend to feel the most rushed of all (43% feel rushed daily).



To see how feeling rushed affects physician burnout, survey participants were also asked to answer the following two questions: "How often do you feel burned out from your work?" and "How often do you feel you've become more callous toward people since you

took this job?" Those who said they felt either burned out or callous once a week or more were categorized as showing signs of burnout. The answers from all physicians, burned out or not, were then compared to their "feeling rushed" results.

"What we found," explains Josh Gray, athenahealth vice president of research, "was almost 70 percent of doctors who said they're rushed every day also reported signs of burnout, while just 10 percent of those who never felt rushed indicated that burnout was a problem."



Provenzano, for her part, says she'll be OK, but she still worries about burnout among her peers? "I do believe the entire system needs to change—that primary care needs more resources and more funding—or we're going to see more and more physicians either working part time or moving to other jobs."

Chris Hayhurst is a frequent contributor to athenaInsight

Set up to Fail

One physician who's given a lot of thought to professional sustainability is Audrey Provenzano, M.D., a general internist with a community health center in Chelsea, Massachusetts. Before she took her current position, Provenzano says, she worked at a clinic where visits were limited to 15 minutes. "It didn't matter if it was a physical or a new patient or an end-of-life discussion, that was all you had." It was impossible not to feel rushed in that environment, she adds, and the time constraints eventually contributed to her decision to leave the practice. "There is nothing more demoralizing than looking at your schedule at the beginning of the day and knowing that you're going to fail miserably at your job."

Today, Provenzano says, she still often feels rushed, "but it's definitely improved and my time is more flexible." Because her current practice is affiliated with a major hospital, it has more of the financial support that is needed "to not be completely dependent on patient volume," she explains. (See this related story on "capability," a measure of whether physicians have the tools and latitude they need to provide high-quality care.)

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