
Action Needed to Alleviate Moral Distress in Radiology



According to a recent study published in the American Journal of Roentgenology, urgent action is needed to address the prevalence of moral distress in radiology - a reported contributor to radiologists leaving their jobs.

The study assessed the frequency and severity with which radiologists experience moral distress, its root causes and the countermeasures.

The research team incorporated the validated Moral Distress Scale for Health Care Professionals, alongside additional questions and modifications for medical imaging. Emailed to members of the Radiological Society of North America in 2022, the Measure of Moral Distress for Health Care Professionals (MMD-HP) was calculated for each respondent as a summary of distress across scenarios.

The national survey found that moral distress was highly prevalent, with 98% of radiologists experiencing some level of it. Moreover, moral distress caused 28% of respondents to consider leaving, and 18% of radiologists had left and reported greater moral distress compared to those who had not left.

One scenario with the highest levels of distress was related to high case volumes (namely, higher case volume than could be safely performed). Due to external or environmental constraints to provide high-quality care, it created conflict between doing the right thing for the patient and the radiologist's daily lived experiences in care delivery. Subsequently, they spend more hours at work to ensure the delivery of high-quality performance. High case volumes also prevented the education of residents.

An additional scenario rated to have the highest levels of distress was an overall lack of administrative action and support.

Respondents selected as least one potential countermeasure to alleviate moral distress: 71% of respondents supported educating leaders on sources of moral distress, 44% supported opportunities for engaging in inter-speciality dialogue, and 22% selected using more ethics consultations.

Finally, the study highlighted the necessity for leaders to be educated on the sources of moral distress and the ways to address the issue.

Source: [American Journal of Roentgenology](#)

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