



## **Occupational burnout in nuclear medicine technologists working in Australia and New Zealand – Results of a national survey.**

Melissa Shields<sup>1</sup>, Lynne McCormack<sup>1</sup>, Daphne James<sup>1</sup>

1. The University of Newcastle

### **AIM:**

Occupational burnout has been defined as increased levels of emotional exhaustion and depersonalisation and decreased levels of personal achievement. It can be associated with negative feelings about the workplace and feeling that a person's efforts is of little consequence. Within a healthcare setting, occupational burnout can be attributed to a high workload or a non-supportive work environment.

### **METHODS:**

An online survey was administered to nuclear medicine technologists working in Australia and New Zealand via QuestionPro. The survey included the Professional Quality of Life Scale (ProQOL) Version 5 (2009) measuring Compassion Satisfaction, Burnout and Secondary Traumatic Stress in the workplace. For this study, only the burnout component is reported. Responses are based on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (never) to 5 (very often). The responses are summed to produce a numerical score, which is then categorised into a scale of low, moderate or high burnout.

### **RESULTS:**

Of approximately 1,300 registered nuclear medicine technologists practicing in Australia and New Zealand, 162 completed the survey. Of the 18 New Zealand participants, ten (56%) reported moderate levels of burnout. Of the 144 Australian participants, 114 (79%) reported moderate levels of burnout. No technologists reported high levels of burnout. All states of Australia were represented in the survey, with Queensland (91%), Western Australia (88%) and Victoria (86%) having the highest number of participants reporting moderate levels of burnout. Within Australia, technologists who had been working for 26-30 years and 30 plus years had the highest number of participants reporting moderate burnout (100% for both categories).

### **CONCLUSION:**

The ProQOL survey revealed that more than half of New Zealand participants and three quarters of Australian participants reported moderate levels of burnout. With higher levels of burnout associated with increased absenteeism and turnover, increased medical errors and decreased patient care, it is imperative to address the wellbeing needs of nuclear medicine technologists working in Australia and New Zealand at an individual and organisational level.