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Mindfulness is not just a fashionable trend – it can be a path to mental balance and the prevention of burnout among healthcare professionals

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Editorial

„We take care of the future best by taking care of the present now.“ (Jon Kabat-Zinn)

In recent years, healthcare professionals have faced significant professional and emotional strain, manifested in high levels of stress, fatigue, anxiety and depressive symptoms, and feelings of burnout. As demonstrated by the results of the Czech branch of the international HEROES study (COVID-19 HEalth caRe wOrkErS study), these impacts emerged during the pandemic but persist to this day, highlighting the need for systematic mental health support within healthcare systems (Brennan Kearns et al., 2025). In this context, mindfulness represents a timely and effective approach that strengthens emotional regulation, a sense of well-being, and resilience to stress (Sulosaari et al., 2022). International research shows that cultivating mindfulness can help healthcare professionals cope with psychological burden, improve sleep, and enhance the quality of care provided. It also has a significant role in the prevention of burnout syndrome (Cohen et al., 2023).

Mindfulness is a way of consciously and nonjudgmentally attending to the present moment. It originates from Buddhist meditative traditions but has been developed within modern psychology since the 1970s, particularly by Jon Kabat-Zinn, as a secular method. The most widespread intervention is the eight-week Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction (MBSR) program designed for the general population. The core principles of mindfulness include attention to the present moment, acceptance of one's inner experience, and compassion—toward oneself and others. The goal is not to suppress thoughts or emotions, but to cultivate the ability to observe them consciously, thereby strengthening psychological resilience, self-awareness, and the capacity to respond with calmness and understanding. Fundamental techniques include meditation and breathing exercises, awareness of bodily sensations, and mindful movement.

Integrating mindfulness into healthcare practice brings a number of demonstrable benefits. Studies indicate that regular mindfulness practice reduces levels of stress, anxiety, and psychological exhaustion among healthcare professionals, thereby supporting their mental balance and resilience to workload-related demands. This practice also enhances the ability to concentrate and sustain attention, which translates into higher quality of care and a safer working environment. Long-term mindfulness practice acts as an effective prevention of burnout syndrome, as it teaches healthcare profes-

sionals to recognize signals of fatigue, stress, or overload before they develop into chronic problems. At the same time, it promotes more open communication, empathy, and the maintenance of personal boundaries, improving relationships between healthcare professionals and patients as well as the overall team atmosphere. A major advantage of mindfulness is that it does not require complex equipment or extensive time commitment—it can be incorporated into short breaks during shifts, a few minutes of conscious breathing, or simple awareness of the present moment. Even these small but regular moments can have a significant impact on mental well-being and overall job satisfaction among healthcare professionals. More intensive programs such as MBSR, however, require longer and more regular daily practice.

Despite the well-documented benefits of mindfulness practice, its implementation in healthcare settings faces several challenges. One of these is the lack of time—the work rhythm of healthcare professionals is often so intense that the idea of “pausing” may seem unrealistic. Another barrier is the skeptical attitude of some professionals who perceive mindfulness more as a fashionable or esoteric trend rather than a scientifically grounded method of mental health support. Insufficient awareness and the absence of systematic education in mental hygiene and self-care can also pose challenges. Without appropriate guidance and support from management, mindfulness may easily remain only an individual effort of a few enthusiasts. It is therefore important for organizations to create space for the development of these skills—for example, through short trainings, workshops, or supervision sessions that help professionals understand the principles of mindfulness and integrate them into everyday practice in a realistic way.

Mindfulness alone does not solve all the problems of contemporary healthcare. However, it can be one of the keys to rediscovering the balance between caring for others and caring for oneself. Healthcare professionals who are able to allow themselves a brief moment of conscious pause tend to be more resilient to stress, more attentive to their own needs and those of their patients, and more satisfied in their professional roles. It is therefore important that mindfulness becomes part of the culture of the healthcare profession—not only as an individual coping strategy, but also as a component of education, team support, and organizational leadership.

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