ABSTRACT

Aim: The primary aim of this study was to screen for stress in non-clinical general practice staff, and to determine whether this correlates with job satisfaction. The study also determined if staff knew where and how to obtain occupational health advice for work-related stress.

Method: This was an anonymous cross-sectional postal survey undertaken between November 2005 and January 2006 of non-clinical general practice staff who worked within a particular London PCT locality. A postal questionnaire together with a letter explaining the purpose of the survey was sent to 370 non-clinical staff working within the PCT locality in November 2005. The questionnaire contained the 12 item GHQ and the 15 job satisfaction measure questions developed by Warr, Cook and Wall (1979). Respondents were also asked to state the most satisfying and stressful aspects of their jobs. They were also asked if they knew where and how to obtain occupational health advice for work-related stress. Details on the respondents’ age, sex, job, hours of work, time in current employment and the type of practice (single handed/partnership) they worked in were also obtained. Statistical analysis was done using the Statistical Product and Service Solutions (SPSS) for Windows, version 13 package and Microsoft Access.

Results: The questionnaire was returned by 245 respondents giving a response rate of 66%. The prevalence rate of cases of psychological morbidity was 25% with practice managers having the highest prevalence rate (39%). There was a low/very low negative correlation between GHQ scores and job satisfaction scores (intrinsic, extrinsic and total). There was a significant difference in the job satisfaction scores of cases and non-cases with cases having statistically significant lower job satisfaction scores. The most satisfying aspects of the job, indicated by respondents, were helping people, patient contact, good working relationships with colleagues and positive feedback from
The most stressful aspects of the job identified were dealing with angry and aggressive patients, high workload/demands, finding appointments and interruptions including phone interruptions. Although only 36% of all respondents indicated that they were aware of the availability of an occupational health service, the majority (81%) of practice managers were aware of the service.

**Conclusion:** The prevalence rate for cases of stress identified in this study is higher than that reported in the general population with practice managers having the highest prevalence rate. If help and support is made available through an occupational health service it is important that this is appropriately advertised to ensure all staff are made aware of its availability and know how to access the service.