

Physicians are more suicidal than the general public: A look at why medicine is a horrible career choice

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(NaturalNews) For over a century, medicine has been seen an illustrious career choice for many aspiring young men and women. More students every year attempt to be part of the profession, in what has become a cash cow industry. In the 2011-2012 entering class, U.S. medical schools received applications from 43,919 students; 32,654 were first-time applicants - up 2.6 percent from the previous school term. One fact that is rarely publicized to new recruits, though, is that the image Big Pharma and the medical industry has created of medical doctors is but a shadow of the reality. The profession is riddled with high suicide rates, low quality of life and job satisfaction rates. In a study of 7,905 participating American surgeons, 6.3 percent reported suicide ideation (SI) during the previous 12 months. Shockingly, among individuals 45 years of age and older, SI was 1.5 to three times more common among surgeons than the general population.

Pitfalls of the medical profession

Although, focused only on surgeons, the results from this study could easily apply to any specialty in the medical field. Several factors contributing to these astronomically high SI rates include low quality of life (QOL), high burnout, low job satisfaction, and feeling underpaid

In a study of over 16,000 internal medicine residents, for example, the *Journal of American Medical Association* reported: quality of life (QOL) was rated "as bad as it can be" or "somewhat bad" by 14.8 percent of U.S. medical school graduates. Overall, burnout and high levels of exhaustion was reported by 51.5 percent and 45.8 percent respectively. Overall, MDs or DOs were more likely to experience burnout than individuals with a high school diploma, bachelor's degree, master's degree, and other professional/doctoral degrees. One key factor to low physician QOL are the elements of healthcare reform restricting medical autonomy, invariably taking the "art" out of medicine as treatment and quality guidelines are set by insurers and Medicare. Many physicians are not only skeptical that these changes will improve patients' quality of care, they are growing more frustrated by not being able to treat patients according to their personal congruency. Historically, doctors would own a private practice and enjoy a significant amount of autonomy. With how the Big Pharma/Insurance model has evolved; however, most MDs/DOs today are veritable pharmaceutical pez dispensers and have very little freedom to decide aspects of patient care.

A 2012 survey with 24,216 U.S. physician respondents across 25 specialty areas indicate how miserable it is to work in healthcare. Just over half of all physicians would choose medicine again as a career, far fewer than in the prior year (69 percent). Only one quarter of internists and one third of family physicians would choose the same specialty. About 23 percent of all doctors would choose the same practice setting, compared with 50 percent a year ago.

It's interesting to note that only 11 percent of physicians said that they consider themselves rich, while 45 percent said that their income is no better than that of many non-physicians. Another 45 percent said that although their income probably qualifies them as rich, they have so many debts and expenses that they don't feel rich. Although it is reported that physician incomes have dropped, it all seems relative seeing that in 2012 radiologists and orthopedic surgeons topped the list at \$315,000, followed by cardiologists (\$314,000), anesthesiologists (\$309,000), and urologists (\$309,000). The bottom-earning specialties in 2012's survey were pediatrics, family medicine, and internal medicine.