American Urological Association MediaRoom

Studies Highlight Impact of Ergonomic Challenges and Burnout on Urologists

BOSTON, May 15, 2017 /PRNewswire-USNewswire/ -- Two new studies being presented today at the 112th Annual Scientific Meeting of the American Urological Association (AUA) highlight two areas of interest for today's urologist: burnout and ergonomic concerns. These studies will be presented during a special AUA press conference at the Boston Convention & Exhibition Center and moderated by Deborah Lightner, MD, AUA spokesperson and professor of urology at Mayo Clinic in Rochester, MN.

Study Details
Burnout in Urology: Results from the 2016 AUA Census (# MP76-10): Burnout is a growing concern for physicians, and has been linked to depression, interpersonal conflict and medical errors. A recent study suggested that urologists have a very high rate of burnout, which was increasing and out of proportion to peers. Using the Maslach Burnout Inventory, the AUA assessed urologist burnout as part of the 2016 AUA Census. Burnout was defined as scoring high in either the emotional exhaustion or depersonalization question categories. Overall, Census data indicates a 38.8 percent overall burnout rate for urologists, with 37.1 percent scoring high for depersonalization and 17.2 scoring high for emotional exhaustion, which is comparable with other medical and surgical specialties. While welcomed news, the overall burnout of 39 percent among urologists warrants intervention at both the personal and professional levels.

Study Details
Is Your Career Hurting You? The Ergonomic Consequences of Surgery Over Time in 701 Global Urologists (# MP76-11): In recent years, studies have demonstrated that surgeons may be predisposed to occupational injury as a result of poor ergonomics in the operating room, particularly due to increased surgical hours and increased use of laparoscopic techniques. Researchers from Australia and the United States conducted a multi-national survey to assess the prevalence of musculoskeletal complaint and injury among urologists across their careers. Nearly half of the respondents (313) had experienced neck pain (165), back pain (244) or both (96), with 30 percent ultimately seeking either non-invasive or invasive treatments. This research was unable to identify a dose dependent relationship to surgical hours. Exercise and a healthy weight were protective against spinal pain.

"The issue of burnout is a very real concern for the entire medical community and needs to be addressed. Additionally, 47 percent of urologists report back and neck issues," Dr. Lightner said. "These two studies bring to light how important it is for urologists to recognize signs of distress in themselves and others and to practice all important self-care techniques, two of which are exercising and maintaining a healthy weight. We need to take care of ourselves in order to best care for our patients."

NOTE TO REPORTERS: Expert spokespeople are available to discuss this story. Please contact the Communications Office at 410-689-3932 or email cfrey@AUAnet.org.

About the American Urological Association: The 112th Annual Meeting of the American Urological Association (AUA) takes place May 12-16 at the Boston Convention & Exhibition Center in Boston, MA.

Founded in 1902 and headquartered near Baltimore, Maryland, the AUA is a leading advocate for the specialty of urology, and has more than 21,000 members throughout the world.

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