Job Stress and Burnout among Medical Laboratory Professionals Working in Urban and Rural Locations

**PURPOSE OF STUDY**
- To investigate the pervasiveness of job stress and burnout within the laboratory workforce and inform recommendations to promote well-being and prevent burnout.
- To examine the relationship between the job stress and burnout of medical laboratory professionals and their geographic work location.

**METHODS**
- **Cross-Sectional Survey Design:** Survey deployed online to a large national sample of medical laboratory professionals, examining indicators including:
  - Type of practice setting
  - Type of geographical area (urban, urban cluster, or rural)
  - Level of job stress
  - Whether respondents had and/or were experiencing burnout

**PARTICIPANT DEMOGRAPHICS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Geographic Area</th>
<th>Participants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Urban</td>
<td>2,945 (64%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban Cluster</td>
<td>1,317 (29%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural</td>
<td>340 (7%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Geographical Area</th>
<th>Participants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>South Central Atlantic</td>
<td>1,091 (24%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central North East</td>
<td>923 (20%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Far West</td>
<td>808 (18%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Practice Setting</th>
<th>Participants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Academic hospitals</td>
<td>1,702 (37%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-academic hospitals</td>
<td>1,602 (35%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reference laboratories/independent laboratories</td>
<td>381 (8%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**GEOGRAPHICAL REGIONS**
- South Central Atlantic (n = 1,091, 24%)
- Central North East (n = 923, 20%)
- Far West (n = 808, 18%)

**TOP PRACTICE SETTINGS**
- Academic hospitals (n = 1,702, 37%)
- Non-academic hospitals (n = 1,602, 35%)
- Reference laboratories/independent laboratories (n = 381, 8%)

**MEAN AGE**
- 45.3 years (SD = 12.7)

**JOB STRESS**
- 87% reported feeling at least some level of job stress (N = 3,996)

**BURNOUT**
- 78% of the laboratory professionals reported ever experiencing burnout (N = 3,601)

**JOB CHANGES**
- Top job changes being considered by laboratory professionals presently experiencing burnout:
  - Changing careers completely
    - Highest in rural areas (52%) and urban clusters (46%)
  - Employment in a related field
    - Highest in urban areas (46%)
  - Changing careers
    - Highest in rural settings (82%)

**KEY FINDINGS**
- 87% of the laboratory professionals reported feeling at least some level of job stress
- Close to half reported feeling a lot of job stress (47% in urban areas to 49% in rural areas)
- Less than 5% reported feeling no job stress (1% in rural areas to 4% in urban areas)

**CONCLUSIONS/IMPLICATIONS**
- The pervasiveness of job stress and burnout is significant across urban and rural locations.
- Recommendations for promoting well-being and preventing burnout are necessary.
- Further research is needed to explore the relationship between job stress and burnout and specific geographic locations.

**REFERENCES**