Motivations for Exiting the EMS Profession Differ between EMTs and Paramedics

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Background
- EMS has a high rate of turnover
- Limited data on comparison of factors for exiting EMS between provider levels
- Research on why individuals leave the EMS workforce can lead to changes that improve recruitment and retention

Disclosures
- None

Methodology

Results

Discussion

Conclusion

Disclosures
- None

Background
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BACKGROUND

**Objective**

Describe and compare the most important factors in the decision to leave EMS among EMTs and paramedics

METHODS

**Study Design and Population**

Electronic Questionnaire

- National Certified EMS Professionals who did not renew during 2016-2017
- Recent cycle
- EMS Professionals no longer practicing
- EMS professionals still working
- EMTs
- Paramedics
- AEMTs

RESULTS

- Data Analysis
  - Descriptive statistics
  - To compare factors between EMTs and paramedics, Z-tests of proportion with Bonferroni adjustment for multiple comparisons were used

DISCUSSION

CONCLUSION
Variable Generation

- Respondents provided list of factors in decision to leave EMS
  - Select all that applied
  - Select most important factor in their decision
- Likelihood to return to EMS

Exiting EMS

- Lack of flexible schedule
- I/my family moved to a new location
- Lack of opportunities for advancement
- An illness, injury or disability
- Desire for better pay and benefits
- Desire for career change
- Dissatisfaction with organization's management
- Pursuing further education
- Worked too many hours
- Negative working relationship with co-workers
- Self/Burnout
- Retirement
- Other

Questionnaire Results

- Questionnaire Responses: n = 5,093
- EMS Professionals no longer practicing: n=2,703
- EMTs: 89% (n=2,291)
- Paramedics: 15% (n=412)

10% response rate

Retirement as Reason for Leaving EMS

- EMTs: 7%
- Paramedics: 26% *(p<0.001)
- n=228

* Denotes significant difference
Most Important Factors for Leaving EMS:

- Exiting EMS: 23%
- Further Education: 18%
- Better Pay/Benefits: 5%
- Illness/Injury/Disability: 3%
- Stress/Burnout: 11%

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factor</th>
<th>EMTs</th>
<th>Paramedics</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Exiting EMS</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Further Education</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Better Pay/Benefits</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Illness/Injury/Disability</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stress/Burnout</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>8%</td>
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n = 2,420 *(p<0.01)

Intention to Return to EMS:

- Intention to Return to EMS: 32%
- Exiting EMS: 17%

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n = 2,669 *(p<0.001)

Limitations

- Only nationally-certified EMS professionals
- Potential response bias
Conclusion

- Reasons for leaving EMS profession differed by provider level
- Paramedics are more likely to leave EMS in pursuit of better pay/benefits and due to wellness-related factors
- Fewer paramedics reported an intention to return to EMS
- Future research to improve EMS workforce retention and recruitment

THANK YOU!