

In times of stress, the best thing we can do for each other is to listen with our ears and our hearts and to be assured that our questions are just as important as our answers.

— Fred Rogers

THE MEDICAL REGULATORY PROCESS CAN BE VERY STRESSFUL for all parties striving to protect the public. In addition, healthcare providers face increasing stress dealing with the challenges of healthcare delivery. This issue of JMR highlights sensitive approaches to the regulatory process and evaluating depression and suicide prevention among health care providers.

It is important for healthcare regulators to safeguard the public, but the regulatory process can be stressful, anxiety provoking, and complicated for all involved. In the article **“Kind, Firm, and Fair Medical Regulations: A Systems Approach and Six Ethical Principles,”** (page 33) Saroj Jayasinghe proposes a systems approach to identify the agents and issues in a situation. Dr. Jayasinghe advocates for a more sensitive approach to the regulatory process and its complexities.

One of the most important concerns for healthcare regulators is identifying risk and protective factors associated with physician performance in practice. In their article **“Risk Based Regulation in Quality Assurance: Selection of (and Benefits Experienced by) Registrants Undertaking Regulator-mandated Peer Review,”** (page 9) Sherylyn Arabsky and co-authors discuss a regulatory-mandated peer review process. The goal is to empirically identify physicians who are at risk of substandard performance using factors that are safe from claims of violating Human Rights Codes.

Healthcare providers’ depression and suicide is a major concern at a global level. In the article titled **“Supporting Healthcare Workers Well-Being and Suicide Prevention: The HEAR Program May 2009 – April 2023,”** (page 18) Sidney Zisook and co-authors review 14 years of data from one academic institution. The importance of utilizing the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention’s Interactive Screening Program (ISP) approach is highlighted. Implementation of the ISP probes suicide risk factors in healthcare workers utilizing mental health services and seeks to reduce barriers to help seeking. The level of engagement and referrals generated by the ISP attested to its effectiveness.

In September 2024, the World Health Organization released a guidance document on health practitioner regulation titled *“Health Practitioner Regulation: Design, Reform and Implementation Guidance.”* In a Commentary titled **“World Health Organization Guidance on Health Practitioner Regulation: An Overview,”** (page 5) the authors of the document, The World Health Organization Technical Expert Group on Health Practitioner Regulation, address the critical gap in global health policy, and encourage policymakers and regulators to use the guidance document to assess their regulatory systems and researchers to generate more robust evidence on the impact of health provider regulations on health outcomes.

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