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Work Stress and Well-being of
Hospital Doctors

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to examine the work stress and well-being of hospital doctors and to determine whether underlying personality dispositions and stressful life events impacted on this relationship. The sample population consisted of 680 (full-time and part-time) medical practitioners from Auckland Hospital, Green Lane Hospital and Starship Hospital. The final sample was comprised of 173 medical practitioners (junior and senior) with a 25.4% response rate. The questionnaire method was utilized with the Physician Stress Inventory measuring work stress and the General Health Questionnaire 12 measuring well-being. The Social Readjustment Rating Scale was used to assess the number of stressful life events experienced by the doctors in a year and the Attributional Style Questionnaire was used to assess the role personality dispositions can play in the work stress-well-being relationship. The doctors indicated that perceived work productivity and idealistic traits were the most prevalent sources of work stress. Junior doctors experienced more stressful life events than senior doctors. Overall, 35% of the doctors were at risk to experiencing some degree of psychological morbidity, but the criteria for determining morbidity is questionable. An underlying personality disposition, attributional style of stability for good events was associated with positive well-being and acted as a mediator in the relationships of physicians' stress and life events to negative well-being. These findings however cannot be generalized due to the small sample size and future research in this domain will help unfold a more clear and definite association between work stress and well-being of hospital doctors.