

# Workforce

## Contents

Factors influencing the development and prevention of compassion fatigue in healthcare workers .....	2
--	---

# Factors influencing the development and prevention of compassion fatigue in healthcare workers

**Background** – Compassion fatigue (C.F.) is increasingly common in healthcare systems around the world; with organisations dealing with increasing demand and limited resources. Whilst compassion fatigue impacts the wellbeing of healthcare workers, the care they deliver, and the rate in which they leave their roles; it remains a misunderstood term with limited strategies for its prevention or management. It is therefore paramount that healthcare workers, leaders, and policy makers alike, understand its definition; and how to prevent, recognise, and deal with this pervasive phenomenon. (Henshall et al 2017).

**Aim** – This paper reports a mixed methods systematic review, assessing systematically the factors influencing and preventing the development of compassion fatigue in health care workers; whilst offering some practical definitions and outcomes to aid those working in healthcare systems.

**Data**- A systematic search was made of C.I.N.A.H.L., M.E.D.L.I.N.E. and Cochrane databases.

**Methodology** – Empirical evidence was critically appraised using the ‘Hopkins tool’ (Dang and Dearholt 2018-page 282). Thematic analysis with narrative synthesis allowed conclusions to be drawn.

**Results** – The findings from this research identify compassion fatigue as remaining poorly understood, with limited robust evidence available. The development of C.F. is likely multifactorial; and includes the need for effective training around compassion, compassionate leadership, and identification of personal characteristics that may identify those more disposed to its development.

**Recommendations** – Further robust research is needed; in particular, qualitative, and experimental studies are lacking. The outcomes of this study can be utilised to direct future work around C.F..A joined-up, health worker, organisational, and governmental approach; to maintain the wellbeing of those in health care roles and the quality of care they deliver should be implemented.

**Author:** Sarah Jowitt

**Contact:** [sarah.jowitt@sky.com](mailto:sarah.jowitt@sky.com)