

Plight of new subset of overwrought vets

Dear editor,

In response to discussions about the stress, isolation, overwork and mental illness prevalent in our profession, I would like to draw readers' attention to the plight of a new subset of overwrought vets – the corporate joint-venture partner.

I own a franchised corporate practice of a well-known brand. On the positive side, this opportunity allowed me to break away from an interminable wait for maybe a partnership in a local practice. Instead, I run my own team, have my independence clinically, and theoretically could make some money. The more brutal reality is that, as a company director, I am the boss as well as the employee and, therefore, appear to be exempt from benefits that some employees may enjoy, such as working time regulations, maternity leave and, of course, time off sick.

Financially, I also have the worst of both worlds: I have lower pay than an average employee (about £10,000 per annum less, based on SPVS' 2008 survey values for my experience/area/practice type), I have long hours and I considerable financial worries from the business. Let me explain – the business debts are all in my name. The debts are such that it is very difficult to generate enough cash to reduce them, as the franchise company takes a huge slice of our daily takings – even when the business is not in profit. I am working the practice single handed long beyond the point when a traditional practice would have been able to afford an assistant. It seems like an impossible task to make any impact on the debts.

The prevalent attitude in the company discourages discussion of weakness and looks down on anyone not relishing his or her punishing working year, or who wishes to adjust his or her work/life balance to something humane. So, for all the arguing bosses and assistants out there, just think – you could own a corporate practice.

Yours faithfully,

NAME AND ADDRESS WITHHELD ON REQUEST.

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