THE MENTAL HEALTH OF THE PROFESSION

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This talk will examine the literature on mental illness in the medical profession and explore the complex issues that may contribute to the emergence of psychopathology in medical practitioners. These include work-related factors, personal vulnerability factors and socio-cultural factors. The issue of “compassion fatigue” will be discussed. There will be a further exploration of suicidal behaviour in the profession, with a discussion of risk factors for suicide and the identification of such in vulnerable colleagues. This overview of mental health issues is designed to set the stage for an active discussion amongst participants about mental illness and suicidal behaviour in doctors.