



A Doctor's New Year Compass: Unlocking Health, Happiness, and Longevity in 2025

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Editorial

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Abstract

As the clock strikes midnight on December 31, we doctors and medical professionals worldwide often find ourselves reflecting not just on our contributions to healthcare but also on the personal sacrifices our demanding careers entail. The new year of 2025 offers a unique chance for us in the medical field to prioritize our own health, well-being, and happiness. By setting purposeful resolutions, we can navigate a path that leads not only to professional fulfillment but also to personal longevity and satisfaction.

Keywords: Happiness; Longevity; Health

Abbreviations

CDC: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Introduction

Globally, the challenges we face as medical professionals are well-documented. For instance, a study in the Journal of Occupational and Environmental Medicine reported that less than 30% of doctors engage in regular physical activity, often citing time constraints and exhaustion [1]. In India, this figure is even lower, with only 20% of healthcare professionals meeting recommended activity levels. Practices like yoga, tai chi, or brisk walking, which are deeply rooted in cultural and physiological benefits, offer a way to restore physical vitality and mental clarity. The UK's NHS has also reported that doctors incorporating even 30 minutes of moderate exercise daily experienced 30% lower rates of burnout.

Preventive health measures are equally pivotal for prolonging life and enhancing quality. Vaccination remains a cornerstone of disease prevention. The CDC estimates that

consistent flu vaccination in the U.S. prevents over 5 million illnesses annually [2]. Meanwhile, a survey by the Indian Medical Association in 2023 revealed that 35% of doctors had delayed our COVID-19 boosters. Staying current on vaccinations protects not only us but also our families and patients, especially in high-risk environments.

Screening for chronic conditions such as cancer, hypertension, and diabetes underscores the importance of proactive healthcare. Globally, nearly 70% of cancers are diagnosed late due to missed screenings—a statistic mirrored across countries like the U.S., India, and the UK. A report by the National Cancer Institute in the U.S. emphasized that early detection of colorectal cancer increases the five-year survival rate to 90%. In India, the ICMR has highlighted similar benefits, yet screenings among us remain inconsistent. Regular checkups not only enhance our personal health but also demonstrate the critical importance of preventive care to patients. The global prevalence of hypertension among healthcare professionals is striking. Termed the “silent killer,” this condition affects over 40% of us worldwide, with stress and long working hours as contributing factors.

A 2022 Lancet study revealed that stress management techniques like meditation reduced systolic blood pressure by an average of 5 mmHg [3]. Practices like mindfulness or short nature walks during shifts can be integrated into our daily routines to combat the pressures of life in medicine.

Diet, another cornerstone of health, is often neglected due to erratic schedules. Surveys reveal startling data: in India, 30% of healthcare workers skip breakfast regularly, while in the U.S., nearly 25% rely on fast food more than three times weekly. Nutrient-dense foods like whole grains, fruits, and legumes, alongside superfoods like turmeric and millets, can reduce fatigue and lower the risk of chronic illnesses. The resurgence of millets, for example, in both India and global markets highlights their potential to decrease diabetes risk by 25%.

The relationship between alcohol consumption and professional performance cannot be ignored. The World Health Organization notes that alcohol contributes to 5.3% of global deaths. In the UK, studies by The BMJ link excessive alcohol consumption among medical professionals to a 15% increase in clinical errors. By adhering to moderate consumption guidelines, we can improve cognitive function and ensure better patient outcomes. Nicotine use among doctors, though declining, still poses a health risk. While 9% of U.S. healthcare workers and 7% of our Indian counterparts continue to smoke, vaping and smokeless tobacco use remain concerns. Declaring smoke-free zones in personal and professional spaces not only protects us but also reinforces public health advocacy. Programs like India's National Tobacco Control Program and the NHS's cessation initiatives offer support for those looking to quit.

Proper medication use and disposal are increasingly important in addressing global health challenges. The opioid crisis in the U.S. saw over 70,000 deaths in 2021 alone, and while less pronounced in countries like India, the misuse of prescription drugs is growing. We must lead by example, ensuring safe storage, adherence to prescriptions, and patient education to mitigate misuse.

Mental health is a critical component of our well-being. Globally, nearly 50% of medical professionals report symptoms of burnout, with the highest rates among women. The Medscape Burnout Report for 2023 emphasized that therapeutic interventions, peer support, and wellness programs can dramatically improve mental health [4]. Additionally, sleep hygiene is paramount. Studies by the Indian Sleep Foundation reveal that 60% of doctors experience sleep deprivation, leading to impaired judgment and increased errors. Aiming for 7–9 hours of restorative sleep is essential for cognitive and emotional resilience. Personal relationships are often strained by the demands of the profession. Yet, these bonds are vital for emotional

support and longevity. The Harvard Adult Development Study underscores that strong relationships are the most significant predictors of happiness and lifespan [5]. For us, whether it's a weekly family dinner, participating in hobbies, or taking time off for vacations, these connections provide a much-needed foundation of stability. As we reflect on our unique position as caregivers, we must recognize the profound link between our well-being and the quality of care we provide. Our lives are a testament to the balance we strive to achieve. Focusing on personal goals, physical health, and nurturing relationships is not a luxury—it is a necessity. A commitment to mindfulness, balanced nutrition, and regular health screenings can add years to our lives and vitality to our daily practices.

Our mental health is deeply interconnected with our physical health. Beyond therapy and wellness programs, we should explore creative outlets like writing, painting, or playing an instrument. Studies show that engaging in artistic activities reduces stress and enhances mental clarity. For example, doctors who participated in structured art sessions reported 35% less burnout and improved mood, as per findings in a 2022 Journal of Arts and Health study [6].

The road ahead may still present challenges, but by setting intentional resolutions, we can unlock a future of health, happiness, and longevity. As the new year of 2025 approaches, let us resolve to care for ourselves with the same dedication and compassion we extend to our patients. The first step is to recognize that self-care is not selfish—it is the foundation for a fulfilling life and a thriving medical career.

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