

THE BRIGHT AND DARK SIDES OF TECHNOSTRESS: AN EMPIRICAL STUDY OF U.S. HEALTHCARE WORKERS

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ABSTRACT

Healthcare workers are experiencing psychological stress induced by healthcare IT (HIT), otherwise known as “technostress.” Technostress is categorized by IS researchers as a “dark side” of technology, and is primarily viewed as negative psychological perceptions associated with deleterious effects of technology on individuals and organizations. However, extant literature suggests otherwise – that stress can be positive (as eustress) and negative (as distress), and thus can have a “bright side” in addition to a “dark side.” The objective of this study is to integrate literature on psychological stress and technostress and qualitative data collected from hospitals to introduce a new framework of technostress that considers both positive stress induced by technology (techno-eustress) and negative stress induced by technology (techno-distress). The framework is then empirically validated in the context of healthcare and HIT by analyzing survey data provided by 402 registered nurses employed in the United States. In the framework, we specifically investigate the antecedents of techno-eustress and techno-distress, the impact of techno-eustress and techno-distress on job satisfaction and turnover intention, and the direct effects of three organizational mechanisms—involvement facilitation, literacy facilitation, and technical support—on techno-eustress and techno-distress. Results reveal that several antecedents are related to techno-eustress or to techno-distress, techno-eustress is positively related to job satisfaction, and techno-distress is negatively related to job satisfaction and turnover intention. The organizational mechanisms have both positive and negative effects on techno-eustress and techno-distress. These results are discussed in terms of contributions to theory and practice.