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### Zoom Fatigue: Case Presentation and Brief Review

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# Zoom Fatigue: Case Presentation and Brief Review

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## Abstract:

In this review, we discuss the phenomenon of what has been called Zoom Fatigue—a sense of fatigue as well as physical and emotional stress that can be associated with teleconferencing (especially long teleconferences with minimal breaks). The Zoom Fatigue Scale is discussed as well as various theories to explain the phenomenon. Some preventive strategies are discussed.

## Case Presentation:

An emergency medicine program director reports that he has been doing about 8 hours of zoom meetings every Monday with a plan for 10 minute breaks every hour and a half hour break for lunch. However, the meetings often run over and there is little break time.

He notes that after the 8 hour session, he notes a sense of what he describes as brain fog—with overwhelming sense of fatigue physically and mentally. He experiences as sense of apathy and a lack of concentration.

The feeling is described as lingering for about 24 hours. Furthermore, he reports that when he has two back-to-back days of zoom meetings-- whether day one is 8 hours and the following day is 1-2 hours long-- the sensation above that he feel lingers even longer.

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## Discussion:

### What is Zoom Fatigue?

Various definitions exist but all invoke the notion of fatigue associated with videoconferencing. This has been called “videoconference fatigue” (During) and “online learning fatigue” in a study of medical students. (Oducado, Riedl, Barros). Some authors use the term “zoom exhaustion” (Fauville) rather than zoom fatigue. (Deniz, Rathan, Shosan) Shockly uses the term “virtual meeting fatigue.” (Shockley)

### History of Zoom Fatigue:

Fauville notes that public health measures associated with COVID-19 led to an over 30 fold increase in videoconference in just a few years. This increase seems to have led to an awareness of the phenomenon. (Fauville) Zoom fatigue has been studied by researchers world-wide and in different videoconference settings. (Fauville, Samara, Barros, Oducado, Shockley, Shoshan)

### How can Zoom Fatigue be measured?

A scale exists in the literature, called the Zoom Exhaustion and Fatigue (ZEF) Scale. (Fauville) This scale has been validated and measures general, visual, social, motivational and emotional fatigue.

## Discussion:(continued)

### Possible Causes of Zoom Fatigue:

Kushner did a study that supports the observation that in common teleconferencing setups, the images of the other people on the conference are looking at their own screens and are thus not making direct eye contact. This is known as “eccentric gaze” and the notion is that this is a contributing factor to zoom fatigue. (Kushner) Other researchers have noted that many participants studied in Zoom research appear to be dissatisfied with their physical appearance on the conference and that pictures of the person (avatars) may help alleviate this. (Ratan) Reidl suggests that there may be other contributing factors. Looking at a panel of faces simultaneously might be stressful. Even small delays in transmission creating voice delays may be stressful also. (Reidl)

### What can be done to reduce Zoom Fatigue?

- Regular breaks
- Not more than a limited number of hours of teleconferencing in a day
- Use of avatars rather than real-time images
- Improvements in technology may help with the eccentric gaze issue as well as any transmission delays

## Conclusions:

Zoom fatigue is a world-wide phenomenon that has been increasingly the object of scientific research. In this review, we discuss the phenomenon of what has been called Zoom Fatigue—a sense of fatigue as well as physical and emotional stress that can be associated with teleconferencing (especially long teleconferences with minimal breaks). The Zoom Fatigue Scale is discussed as well as various theories to explain the phenomenon. Some preventive strategies are discussed.

## References:

Available on request