

# Navigating the Challenges Faced by Employees in the Medical Transcription Industry A Review of Current Issues

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## Abstract

Medical transcription (MT) is a crucial component of healthcare documentation, translating physician dictations into written records. Despite its importance, employees in the medical transcription industry face numerous challenges that can impact their job performance, job satisfaction, and overall well-being. This review explores the primary challenges encountered by employees in the medical transcription industry, including technological changes, workload pressures, quality assurance, and the evolving nature of healthcare documentation. The discussion is supported by relevant literature and provides insights into potential strategies for improvement.

**Keywords:** Healthcare Documentation, Employee Challenges, Technological Changes.

## Introduction

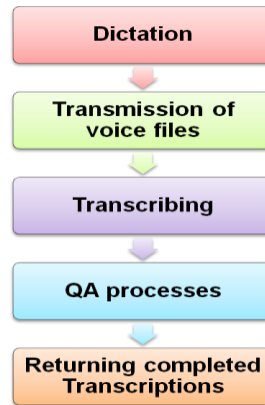
Overview of Medical Transcription Industry Medical transcription (MT) is one of the most sophisticated medical language specialty allied healthcare professions, which has become an indispensable element in the modern healthcare industry. It deals with the process of transcribing voice-recorded medical reports that are dictated by physicians and other healthcare practitioners. Medical language specialists/healthcare documentation specialists use electronic devices to convert voice recordings from healthcare workers into formal text reports, which are then edited and reviewed for accuracy.

According to the Medical Transcription Market research report 2023, the global medical transcription market is anticipated to rise at a considerable rate during the forecast period, between 2023 and 2030. Medical transcription service providers aim to deliver high-quality documents within a specified turnaround time (TAT), which puts immense pressure on employees at each level of the hierarchy, adversely affecting their work-life balance.

Medical transcription involves the conversion of voice-recorded reports dictated by healthcare professionals into text format. This process is essential for maintaining accurate medical records, which are critical for patient care, billing, and legal purposes (Patel et al., 2018). The demand for medical transcriptionists has fluctuated with advancements in technology, particularly with the rise of speech recognition software and artificial intelligence (AI). As a result, employees in this industry face various challenges that affect their work environment and job satisfaction.

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that are dictated by physicians and other healthcare practitioners. Medical language specialists/healthcare documentation specialists use electronic devices to convert voice recordings from healthcare workers into formal text reports, which are then edited and reviewed for accuracy explained by the following flow chart, (Shilpi, 2011)



**Flow chart: Process of Medical Transcription**

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**Organization/ Hierarchy Chart**

1	<b>Sector</b>	<b>Allied Health and Paramedics</b>
2	<b>Sub-sector</b>	<b>Non-direct care</b>
3	<b>Occupation</b>	<b>Medical Transcriptionist</b>
4	<b>Leadership level</b>	<b>Manager of Medical Transcription Unit</b>
5	<b>Middle Management level</b>	<b>Supervisor</b>
		<b>Editor/ Trainer</b>
6	<b>Entry Level</b>	<b>Medical Transcriptionist</b>

This review aims to systematically review the challenges encountered by employees in the medical transcription industry, offering insights into the implications of these challenges and suggesting possible solutions.

The medical transcription industry faces several issues that impact the overall well-being of its employees, including:

1. Long working hours
2. Adverse effect on work-life balance
3. Low pay scale in proportion to the long working hours
4. Health and personal issues
5. Job security concerns

Objectivity of this study is comparative analysis of policies in the medical transcription industry versus other organized private sectors, focusing on benefits, welfare schemes, salary deduction, work hours, overtime benefits, and annual increments and development of a framework of policies to improve the overall benefits of employees, thereby uplifting the organizational performance.

Methods can be adopted in this study conducted through the use of questionnaires and interviews. Medical language specialists (MLS) from various firms, both current and former, will be used as participants. The interview questions will investigate the MLS views on the problems faced in this industry, while the survey questions will explore ways to improve the work environment and policies.

The participants in this study will include individuals from all hierarchical positions within the medical transcription industry, ranging in age from 22 to 50 years old, and representing both genders. The data collection will take place at the companies' locations, through phone interviews, and at the participants' desired locations.

## Challenges Faced by Employees in the Medical Transcription Industry

### 1. Technological Changes

**1.1 Adaptation to New Technologies** The rapid advancement of technology, particularly in speech recognition and AI, has transformed the medical transcription landscape. While these technologies can enhance efficiency, they also require transcriptionists to continuously adapt to new tools and workflows (Sharma & Kumar, 2021). This constant need for adaptation can be overwhelming and may lead to job insecurity among transcriptionists who fear that their roles might become obsolete.

**1.2 Training and Skill Development** With the integration of new technologies, adequate training becomes essential. Many transcriptionists report a lack of proper training in using advanced software and tools, which can lead to frustration and decreased productivity (Patel et al., 2018). The gap between technological advancements and employee training poses significant challenges, as insufficient skills can lead to errors in transcription, further impacting patient care.

### 2. Workload Pressures

**2.1 Increased Volume of Work** Transcriptionists often experience high workloads, particularly during peak periods when the volume of dictations increases (Lai et al., 2020). The pressure to meet tight deadlines can result in stress and burnout, affecting both the quality of work and employee well-being. Studies have shown that excessive workloads can lead to job dissatisfaction and high turnover rates within the industry (Smith & Jones, 2019).

**2.2 Time Management Challenges** Effective time management is crucial in the medical transcription industry. However, the unpredictability of dictation volumes and varying lengths of recordings can complicate scheduling and lead to inefficient work patterns (Kumar & Singh, 2022). Transcriptionists often find it challenging to balance speed and accuracy, as rushing to meet deadlines can result in mistakes, which can have serious implications in the medical field.

### 3. Quality Assurance

**3.1 Maintaining accuracy in medical transcription** is paramount, as errors can lead to severe consequences for patient care (Walsh, 2020). Employees must navigate the complexities of medical terminology, ensuring that transcriptions are not only fast but also accurate. The pressure to produce

error-free work can contribute to anxiety and stress among transcriptionists, impacting their performance (Patel et al., 2018).

**3.2 Feedback and evaluation and processes for medical transcriptionists** can vary significantly among employers. Inconsistent feedback mechanisms can leave employees uncertain about their performance, hindering their ability to improve (Sharma & Kumar, 2021). Moreover, the lack of constructive feedback can result in a stagnant learning environment, where employees feel unsupported in their professional development.

#### 4. Job Security and Employment Trends

**4.1 Impact of Automation** The rise of automation in medical transcription has led to concerns about job security. Many transcriptionists fear that advancements in speech recognition technology will lead to job losses (Kumar & Singh, 2022). While automation can enhance efficiency, it can also create a culture of uncertainty, leading to anxiety among employees about their future roles in the industry.

**4.2 Outsourcing and Global Competition** Outsourcing medical transcription services to countries with lower labor costs has become increasingly common. This trend can result in job displacement for local transcriptionists and increased competition for available positions (Lai et al., 2020). Employees may feel pressured to accept lower wages or subpar working conditions, further exacerbating job dissatisfaction and instability.

#### 5. Work Environment and Ergonomics

**5.1 Remote Work Challenges** Many medical transcriptionists work remotely, which can offer flexibility but also presents unique challenges. The lack of a structured office environment can lead to feelings of isolation and disconnection from colleagues (Smith & Jones, 2019). Additionally, remote work can blur the boundaries between personal and professional life, making it difficult for employees to disconnect and recharge.

**5.2 Ergonomic Issues** Prolonged periods of typing and sitting can lead to various ergonomic issues, including musculoskeletal disorders (Walsh, 2020). Employers must prioritize ergonomic practices to ensure a healthy work environment, which is often overlooked in the focus on productivity and efficiency. Providing resources for proper workspace setup and encouraging regular breaks can mitigate these risks.

**Implications for Employee Well-being** The challenges faced by employees in the medical transcription industry have significant implications for their overall well-being. Job stress, insecurity, and dissatisfaction can lead to mental health issues, increased absenteeism, and reduced productivity (Patel et al., 2018). Employers must recognize the importance of supporting their employees through training, mental health resources, and fostering a positive work environment.

#### Strategies for Improvement

- 1. Comprehensive Training Programs** Implementing comprehensive training programs that focus on both technical skills and soft skills can empower employees to adapt to changing technologies and improve their job performance (Sharma & Kumar, 2021). Continuous professional development opportunities can enhance job satisfaction and contribute to employee retention.
- 2. Flexible Work Arrangements** Employers should consider offering flexible work arrangements that accommodate the unique needs of transcriptionists, especially those working remotely. Encouraging

regular breaks, promoting work-life balance, and providing mental health resources can help mitigate burnout and improve overall employee well-being (Smith & Jones, 2019).

3. Enhanced Quality Assurance Processes Developing standardized quality assurance processes can help maintain high transcription accuracy while providing employees with clear expectations and feedback (Lai et al., 2020). Regular performance evaluations, combined with constructive feedback, can support professional growth and reduce anxiety related to job performance.
4. Employee Engagement and Support Creating a culture of employee engagement is essential for addressing the challenges faced by transcriptionists. Encouraging open communication, fostering collaboration, and recognizing employee contributions can enhance job satisfaction and create a supportive work environment (Kumar & Singh, 2022).

## Conclusion

The medical transcription industry is at a crossroads, facing numerous challenges that impact employees' job satisfaction and performance. Understanding these challenges and implementing effective strategies to address them is crucial for fostering a healthier work environment and ensuring the sustainability of the industry. By prioritizing employee well-being, training, and support, employers can navigate the evolving landscape of medical transcription while enhancing the quality of healthcare documentation and its concludes that system or concerned department frame the policies that benefit the employees, thereby having a positive impact on the overall development of the organization in the medical transcription industry.

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