

HEALTHCARE PROFESSIONALS BURNOUT DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC AND MENTAL HEALTH DISORDERS AMONG HEALTHCARE PROFESSIONALS AROUND THE WORLD

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Abstract: Introduction: Burnout is a syndrome conceptualized as the result of chronic workplace stress that is not successfully controlled. It is characterized by three dimensions: feelings of exhaustion or depletion of energy, increased mental distance from work or feelings of negativism or cynicism about work as well as anxiety disorders, sleep disorders and other illnesses. With the emergence of the COVID-19 pandemic, due to severe burnout during work, considerable mental disorders occurred among nurses/medical technicians. Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) was first reported in Wuhan, China, in December 2019. The disease is caused by the severe acute respiratory syndrome Coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2) and is transmitted from person to person via aerosol droplets. In order to contain the pandemic, measures of social distancing, wearing face masks and confinement in cities were taken, and strict measures were adopted prevention and control in terms of travel restrictions, prohibition of gatherings and control of public places. Methodology: The burnout among healthcare professionals during the COVID-19 pandemic and their mental health was investigated. This study was conducted from May to the end of November 2023, by reviewing scientific journals in online databases (Scopus, Ebsco, PubMed, Medline, Google Scholar). The objective of the study was to examine how much COVID-19 affected the mental health of healthcare professionals, and whether burnout at workplace affected the increase in mental health disorders among nurses/medical technicians. Results: As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, mental health disorders have largely occurred due to burnout. Conclusion: Due to insufficient number of nurses/medical technicians and equipment, COVID-19 has led to nurse/technician burnout and mental health disorders.

Keywords: Mental health research with COVID-19 nurses

1. INTRODUCTION

Burnout is not recognized as a disease and its definition remains uncertain. Burnout is a psychological syndrome that occurs as a prolonged response to chronic interpersonal stressors at work. There is a difference between the exhaustion of a hard-working day and the permanent fatigue that is a consequence of this syndrome. It is far more than stress, burnout causes enormous exhaustion, a sense of cynicism, detachment from work, a sense of inefficiency and lack of personal achievement.

In healthcare professionals, due to burnout, there is an increase in the distance from work, or a feeling of negativism or cynicism in relation to work (Bai et al., 2020). These feelings lead to anxiety and sleep disorders (Li et al., 2017, Huang et al., 2020).

Good mental health helps people make healthy choices, achieve personal goals, develop healthy relationships and cope with stress.

Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) was first reported in Wuhan, China, in December 2019. The disease is caused by severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2) and is transmitted from person to person by aerosol droplets (Judson & Munster, 2019). After the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, strict prevention and control measures were adopted in terms of social distance, travel restrictions, bans on gatherings and control of public places (WHO, 2020, Stoye, 2020). Statistical data indicating the danger of the spread of SARS-CoV-2 from health workers to patients to family members created tension among healthcare professionals around the world (Lancet, 2020). A study in China surveyed more than 1,200 healthcare professionals during the COVID-19 pandemic and their work during the COVID-19 pandemic (Kisely et al., 2020). Exposure to constant stress, which leads to mental health disorders such as depression or anxiety is increasingly present among healthcare professionals

(WHO, 2021, WHO, 2020). Given the global prevalence of mental health disorders among healthcare professionals of about 24% to 30%, either due to sociocultural differences, low income, death of close family members as well as hesitancy towards vaccination where there is a clear disparity during the pandemic between developed and developing countries (Lai et al., 2019, Chatterjee et al., 2020).

The World Health Organization declared it a global pandemic on March 11, 2020, and healthcare systems in many countries were heavily burdened in terms of capacity and resources, the main goal was to provide continuous quality of care. While, we are now facing another equally serious pandemic as a result of the COVID-19, mental health disorders among healthcare professionals, as well as threats to mental health from the suffering of regional quarantines that have left consequences for communities and millions of individuals where they have been left vulnerable and started using various substances because they remained lonely (Kwong et al., 2021, Xiong et al., 2020).

Extreme and persistent psychological pressure on nurses with exposure to infected patients with SARS-CoV-2, where fear for the safety of their own health as well as for close family members takes over (Spoorthy et al., 2020).

With the arrival of the COVID-19 pandemic, the mental health of nurses/medical technicians has been greatly impaired, and it is related to exposure to infection and fear of death (Greenberg et al., 2020).

A study examining the mental health of nurses during the COVID-19 pandemic from April 7, 2020, to January 15, 2021, when it first hit the United States. She came across the consequences of mental health problems among healthcare professionals as a result of COVID-19 (Shoib et al., 2022).

2. MATERIAL AND METHODS

A systematic literature review was conducted to summarize the results of observational studies that assessed healthcare professionals burnout during the COVID-19 pandemic, and presence of mental health disorders among healthcare professionals worldwide. Retrieval of articles were conducted in PubMed, Scopus, EMBASE and Web of Science from May 2023 to December 2023.

The aim of the study is to examine how much COVID-19 affected burnout at the workplace of nurses/medical technicians, and to examine the extent to which healthcare professionals managed to preserve their mental health while working with COVID-19 positive patients. On this topic, 13 articles were published, and as similar titles related to the Covid-19 pandemic, 1600 papers were published, many of which were rejected as irrelevant. Studies that was carried out in 48 countries, and in the USA, data was not taken in Utah and Alaska, then in some African countries, China, India and Mexico.

3. RESULTS

Analytical cross-sectional study that was conducted in southeastern Mexico, where mental health disorders, to a large extent was present. Depression had a prevalence of 43%, of which 48.18% had mild depression, 30.9 % moderate, 19 17.27% severe depression, and only 4.54% had extremely severe depression.

In some studies, nurse's burnout risk factors during the pandemic associated with COVID-19 was examined. The results of a systematic review of meta-analyses showed that the total prevalence of nurse's burnout lack of personal achievement according to the MBI (MBI: Maslach Burnout Inventory) was 15.2%. (95% CI: 1.4–39.8%).

A study that was conducted from April 7, 2020 to January 15, 2021 that followed the mental health of nurses during the COVID-19 pandemic when it first hit United States. Data from nurses in 48 states was taken (no data was obtained from nurses in Utah and Alaska) and reached the result that they had mental health disorders due to lack of staff, increased stress, fear of contracting COVID-19 and low amount of support from superiors.

Study of nurse/technician burnout and associated risk factors during the COVID-19 pandemic: a systematic review and meta-analysis. The results are as follows: emotional exhaustion of healthcare professionals is 34.1%, depersonalization in 12.6%, and lack of personal achievement in 15.2%, and in the female gender with a prevalence of anxiety of 23.2%, depression 22.8% and insomnia 38.9 %.

From the study Mental Health Disorders and Coping Strategies of Healthcare professionals During the COVID-19 Pandemic: Analytical Cross-sectional Study in Southeastern Mexico Stress was prevalent in 29.7%. Out of which 77.63% had mild stress, 18.42% had moderate stress, only 3.94% had severe stress and no respondent had extremely severe stress.

From the study "Occurrence", prevention and management of psychological effects of virus outbreaks on healthcare professionals: a rapid review and meta-analysis, it was found that anxiety, depression and agitation were highly prevalent in the study population in China with 45%, 50% and 72% respectively.

The study on COVID-19 in healthcare professionals: a systematic review and meta-analysis of prevalence, risk factors, clinical characteristics and outcomes among healthcare professionals positive for COVID-19, 40% (95% CI: 17, 65) were asymptomatic at the time of diagnosis. Severe clinical complications developed in 5% (95% CI: 3, 8)

of positive healthcare professionals, and 0.5% (95% CI: 0.02, 1.3) died. These situations leading to mental health disorders among nurses.

Study on the global prevalence of mental health problems among healthcare professionals during the COVID-19 pandemic: a systematic review and meta-analysis. The study involved 344 (49%) nurses and 74 (10%) other clinical roles. The results indicate that 43.7% were nurses, while 7.0% were associated healthcare professionals. The age of the participants ranged from 18 to 50 years and older. The range of mental health problems among nurses across studies was as follows: depression 8%–95%; anxiety 3%–97%; agitation 3%–76%; and post-traumatic stress disorder 3%–84%.

A study monitoring the mental health of intensive care staff during COVID-19 indicate that the majority of participants reported doing well on the WEMWBS (n=418, 59%), although almost half of participants (n=322, 45%) met the threshold for at least one of the following measures: major depression, PTSD, major anxiety or problematic alcohol use.

Decline in mental health among nurses worldwide during COVID-19: a systematic review and meta-analysis. The results indicate that of the total sample of 17100 ranging from 45 to 4692. Furthermore, for each of the mental illnesses; anxiety, stress, depression, PTSD, insomnia, the percentage of nurses in the total study sample (17,100) was 79.8%, 24.6%, 72.0%, 3.7%, and 1.5% respectively.

4. DISCUSSION

Woo et al. (2020) estimated that the prevalence of burnout symptoms from a study involving nurses from 49 countries revealed that 11.23%. nurses during the COVID-19 pandemic have a higher level of emotional exhaustion. This study also points out a lower level of depersonalization and a higher level of personal achievement than nurses working in mental health wards (Woo et al., 2020).

Kisely, S., Warren and Siskind (2021) points out that burnout during the COVID-19 pandemic nurses have additional concerns and responsibilities related to the COVID-19 pandemic in addition to caring for patients. Concerns such as lack of personal protective equipment and fear of exposure to infection at work, spreading SARS-CoV-2 and taking the virus home to close family members.

Shigemura J., Ursano R.J (2021) in their study suggest that medical staff treating patients with COVID-19 report high levels of anxiety and low levels of self-efficacy.

Bellantini et al. (2021) and Moukaddam and Shah (2020) investigated that since December 2019, COVID-19 emerged and spread globally, causing a pandemic. Healthcare professionals reported anxiety, depression, and distress in Egypt and identified factors associated with mental health problems.

Aydin Sayilan et al. (2020) observed that younger nurses/medical technicians had a higher level of burnout in area of personal achievement. While Chen et al. (2020) found in their study that women have higher levels of emotional exhaustion, but men have higher levels of depersonalization .

Ghaleb, Yasser, et al. (2021) concluded: depression had a prevalence of 43%, anxiety of 48%, and stress of 29.7%, leading to mental health disorders in countries including Iraq, Egypt, Somalia, Jordan, Pakistan, Sudan, Yemen and Morocco.

Hu Li Za Zhi. (2020) in two studies where a larger number of nurses participated reported burnout. In 2020, nurses/medical technicians with higher education had a higher degree of burnout during the COVID-19 pandemic.

5. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the availability of mental health resources at the workplace could improve interprofessional teamwork and reduce the risk perception of emerging public health events. Studies indicates that healthcare professionals during the COVID-19 pandemic had a high prevalence of mental health disorders such as depression, anxiety and stress. The development of these disorders is associated with a poor strategy for dealing with the COVID-19 pandemic and a lack of adaptation to the new pandemic.

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