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MENTAL HEALTH OF OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH EMPLOYEES IN THE PEAK OF THE PANDEMIC 2020

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Background:

The COVID-19 pandemic caused unprecedented stress around the world. Healthcare workers (HCW) were physically and psychologically at risk. Amid the pandemic Occupational Health Employees (OHEs) were working hard behind the scenes to support these frontline HCW.

Aim:

To evaluate the psychological well-being of OHEs during the peak of the pandemic.

Methods:

We conducted an online survey over a period of a week (8th May to 15th May 2020) after the peak of the pandemic. PHQ4 was used to screen for symptoms of anxiety and depression. Numeric Rating Scale (NRS) was used to assess the stress levels of the OHEs.

Results:

266 OHEs took part in the study, of which 238 were medical and 27 were non-medical staff. 45%-65% of the respondents (95% CI 0.50-0.70) were anxious & 40%-46% of the respondents (95% CI 0.45-0.51). Nurses in this study had 1.42 times increased odds of being anxious (worried) compared to doctors but had a lower odd of being depressed of 0.66 compared to doctors. There was a significant difference in the psychological symptoms within the study groups.

Conclusions:

OHEs were prone to psychological distress in the pandemic. A causal relationship was likely to exist between the COVID-19 pandemic and MH deterioration and stress suggestive of adjustment reaction. Further studies are needed to study the long-term psychological impact on the mental health of the OHEs post pandemic.