

Anxiety , Stress , Depression among Nurses in a COVID hospital in Sri Lanka

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Objective

Psychological wellbeing and good mental health in health care workers is equally important as physical health to respond to in lifetime event of COVID-19 pandemic situation.

Design

This is an observational study, which carried out among nurses working in Colombo East Base Hospital, Sri Lanka.

Method

Data were collected using a structured self administered questionnaire which consisted of socio demographic items, We used Depression, Anxiety, and Stress Scale (DASS-21) scale for assessment over the period of three months during covid pandemic.

Results

There were 131 respondents out of 156 worked in general (56.5%), critical (42.2%) and administrative (2.3%) departments. The majority were females (85.6%). There were 21.4% found to be depressed, 29.8 % with anxiety and 19.8% are depressed in various levels.

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Statistically significantly higher (p<0.05) proportion of nurses working in critical care units had anxiety and stress associated issues than the ones who worked in general units and administrative departments.

Discussion

The system of reporting mental health issues was unfortunately not in place and staff felt that if they report about stress/burnout or anxiety at workplace may seem as negative attribute and others may fear repercussions if claim sick leave absence.

The extended working hours, issues of availability and depletion of personnel protection equipment, increased risk of virus contagion, fear of transmission to their families, staying away from the families are common issues among health care staff members in underdeveloped countries .

Conclusions

Healthcare providers should devise the tools to assess their staff's mental health well-being and measures with anxiety-relieving sessions and psychological support programs for staff benefit.

Change needs to start at the level of policy-makers to offer an enhanced variety of supports to nurses and other health care workers who play a critical role during large-scale disease outbreaks