

POSTER COMPETITIONS

Effect of the COVID-19 Pandemic on Mental Health of Indian Medical Professionals & the Relevant Role of Health Communication

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Introduction

The COVID-19 pandemic has affected the mental health of many more than it has infected; Medical healthcare professionals are especially vulnerable. This study targeted medical professionals divided into 3 categories: Senior/ experienced doctors, Junior Residents/ Interns, and Paramedical staff, and subjects in each category were asked the same questions relevant to the pandemic and its effect on their lives.

Objectives:

- 1.To identify the population among medical professionals most stressed due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the reasons for stress.
- 2.To analyze the different effects of stress (both personally and professionally), recommend solutions to reduce the stress levels.
- 3.To identify the role of health communication in decreasing stress levels.

Method

A sample size of 200 medical professionals across India was chosen in which about one-third of the sample size represented each category. A survey was conducted over 3 months using a standardized questionnaire. The results were systematically analyzed.

Results

About one-third (34.2 %) of the medical professionals perceived increased stress due to various reasons during the COVID-19 pandemic, the majority of which were medical Interns. The health of family (60%) and

viral exposure (39%) were perceived as the most common causes of increased stress. Anxiety (55%) and sleep disturbances (43%) were the most common effects on personal health. The professional lives of 33.5% were negatively affected whereas 13.5% of people were dutifully motivated towards their profession. Adequate PPE supplies were considered the most significant intervention to reduce stress levels by most (81%).

Conclusion

The following measures can help reduce stress levels significantly among medical professionals. An adequate supply of PPEs, work division at hospital duties, decreasing non-emergency patient load, increasing salaries, and a good health communication system.

Keywords

COVID-19, Mental Health, Healthcare professionals, Health Communication, India