

Mental health of health personnel, an important factor in health care services

DOI: 10.5377/alerta.v6i2.15946

Violeta Collantes Salas¹, Edi William Aguilar Urbina²

1-2. Trujillo Regional Teaching Hospital, Peru.

* Correspondence

✉ viole_1484@hotmail.com

1. 📞 0009-0005-4825-2260

2. 📞 0000-0001-6510-5346

Dear Editor,

Issue number 1 of volume 6 of the journal published the article by Magaña Salazar *et al.* on work stress and mental health of front-line personnel in COVID-19 care in a regional hospital in San Miguel, El Salvador¹. This article identified a positive correlation, using Spearman's coefficient, between work stress and mental health status, with the use of work stress scales from the International Labor Organization and the abbreviated Goldberg scale. Although the high levels did not reach alarming percentages, health personnel assigned to the first line of care during the COVID-19 pandemic, presented occupational stress and alterations in mental health. A total of 121 workers from the emergency and hospitalization areas of COVID-19 were studied, most of them were women and 44.6 % were nursing personnel; the average age was 33.5 years old. Occupational stress and mental health disorders were found mainly, between the ages of 21 and 40 years old. Nursing, radiology and general services workers presented high levels of mental health disorders¹.

These results coincide with the study conducted at the Jipijapa Basic Hospital on the impact of COVID-19 related to the mental health of nursing personnel, in which several psychological alterations were described, including stress, fear, anxiety, depression, and lack of concentration to fulfill the tasks required by their work, which have increased with the progression of the COVID-19 pandemic. The results showed that the nursing personnel presented psychological alterations such as anxiety, depression,

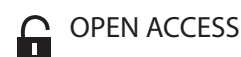
anguish, and panic. In addition, somatic problems developed due to the excess of working hours caused by the increased number of patients attended in the Teófilo Dávila Hospital. Similarly, the fear of infecting family members due to the constant risk in the care areas also represented an aspect that affected mental health².

During the COVID-19 pandemic, the high demand from critically ill patients, the need for patient isolation, and the consequent use of safety measures such as personal protective equipment increased the anxiety and stress of nursing staff³.

Muñoz *et al.* emphasize the nursing staff as the health personnel who are responsible for looking after the health condition of patients in hospitalization areas for prolonged periods; this places them in constant exposure to various stressful situations, such as suffering, pain, despair, irritability of patients, the performance of procedures involving painful experiences and death, which generates an emotional burden that often leads them to ignore their self-care and develop feelings such as frustration, fear, anger, or despair, defined as causes of a poorly adaptive stress⁴.

Other studies describe that nursing students mainly presented sleep alterations, followed by somatic symptoms and behavioral and interpersonal relationship disturbances. It is striking that 42 % of the participants exhibited exhaustion at a medium level, which constitutes a risk of developing burnout syndrome⁵.

On the other hand, it is essential to conduct a diagnosis of the health situation of workers to avoid inadequate work



OPEN ACCESS

La salud mental del personal de salud, un factor importante en la atención sanitaria

Suggested citation:

Collantes Salas V, Aguilar Urbina EW. Mental health of health personnel, an important factor in health care services. *Alerta*. 2023;6(2):185-186. DOI: 10.5377/alerta.v6i2.15946

Received:

April 4, 2023.

Accepted:

April 12, 2023.

Published:

July 20, 2023.

Authors contribution:

VCS¹, EWAU²: study conception, manuscript design, literature search, writing, revising and editing.

Conflict of interests:

Authors declare no conflicts of interest.

performances through the implementation of timely interventions, including management processes aimed at improving rest areas and schedules, meal times, recreational meetings for emotional care, continuous staff rotation, as well as the supply of the necessary resources to perform the work, including biosafety equipment¹.

In addition, it is relevant to establish wellness, mental health promotion, and stress reduction programs to foster a healthy work environment for health personnel and a continuous training process for personnel to improve patient care since their working environment plays an essential role in the reintegration of patients to their activities and to society¹.

This necessity leads to the importance of reviewing the experiences and implementing emotional and psychological support interventions in the workplace to strengthen the response of health personnel and health processes, adopting good practices as an excellent opportunity for research and action.

Funding

There was no source of funding.

References

1. Magaña Salazar MY, Méndez de Robles SJ, Martínez Díaz S. Estrés laboral y salud mental del personal de primera línea en la atención de la COVID-19. *Alerta*. 2023;6(1):25-33. DOI: [10.5377/alerta.v6i1.15445](https://doi.org/10.5377/alerta.v6i1.15445)
2. Procel Vera GDC, Vera Solórzano FJ, Suconota Pintado AL. Impacto en la salud mental del personal de enfermería en un hospital general por Covid-19. *Polo del Conocimiento*. 2022;7(8):1328-1344. Available at: <https://polodelconocimiento.com/ojs/index.php/es/article/download/4455/10616>
3. Cuzco C, Carmona Delgado I, Canalias Reverter M, Martínez Estalella G, Castro Rebollo P. Hacia una pandemia de Salud Mental. *Enfermería Intensiva*. 2021;32(3):176-177. DOI: [10.1016/j.enfi.2021.03.005](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.enfi.2021.03.005)
4. Muñoz Zambrano CL, Rumie Díaz H, Torres Gómez G, Villarroel Julio K. Impacto en la salud mental de la (del) enfermera(o) que otorga cuidados en situaciones estresantes. *Cienc. enferm*. 2015;21(1):45-53. DOI: [10.4067/S0717-95532015000100005](https://doi.org/10.4067/S0717-95532015000100005)
5. Santes M del C, Meléndez S, Martínez N, Ramos I, Preciado M de L, Pando M. La salud mental y predisposición a síndrome de burnout en estudiantes de enfermería. *Revista Chilena De Salud Pública*. 2009;13(1):23-29. Available at: <https://revistasaludpublica.uchile.cl/index.php/RCSP/article/view/656>