

## Non-Physician Medical Worker Experience during the COVID-19 Pandemic

**Authors :** William Mahony, L. Jacqueline Hirth, Richard Rupp, Sandra Gonzalez, Roger Zoorob

**Abstract :** Background: The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on physicians has been considered by many researchers, but less is known about non-physician healthcare workers. The aim of this study is to examine the association of COVID-19 safety training and communication with stress. Methods: A 91-item online survey was distributed, starting January 2, 2021, to non-physician healthcare workers, including physician assistants, nurse practitioners, and medical assistants (MAs) in the United States through email and social media. A \$1 donation was made to the Red Cross for each completed survey. The survey consisted of demographics, occupational questions, and perceived stress (perceived stress scale, PSS). Items on the PSS were combined for an overall score and categorized according to the severity of perceived stress. Chi-square tests were performed for bivariate analyses of categorical variables. Results: Of the 284 participants consenting to complete the survey, 197 participants completed the full survey. MAs made up most of the sample at 79%. Among all respondents, 47% had moderate PSS scores (scored between 14 and 26), and 51% had severe PSS scores (scored between 27 and 40). Unvaccinated participants reported statistically significantly lower levels of perceived stress ( $p = 0.002$ ). Performing tasks outside of typical job responsibilities was not associated with PSS scores ( $p = .667$ ). Discussion: Non-physician healthcare workers demonstrated a high level of perceived stress overall. The association between vaccination status and perceived stress should be examined in order to evaluate whether vaccination levels could be improved with further education about the virus and associated risks.

**Keywords :** COVID-19, SARS-Cov-2, nursing, public health

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