

Burnout among Healthcare Workers in Poland during the COVID-19 Pandemic

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Abstract : Work is an extremely important part of everyone's life and affects functioning in daily life. Healthcare workers (HCW) are suffering from negative actions in and out of the workplace, such as harassment, abuse, long working hours, mental suffering, exhaustion, and professional burnout. Staff burnout is detrimental not only in terms of individual employees but also to working with patients and to the healthcare institution as a whole. The purpose of this study was to explore the level of professional burnout among HCW working in medical institutions during the COVID-19 pandemic in Poland. The extent to which selected sociodemographic factors and perceived stress increase the risk of professional burnout was assessed. In addition, the frequency of use of professional psychological help and less formal support groups by HCW in relation to the level of professional burnout was presented. The survey was conducted as part of a larger project on the humanization of medicine and clinical communication from February-April 2022. This study used a self-administered online survey (CAWI) technique and PAPI (pen and paper interview) technique. The BAT-12 scale was used to measure burnout, the PSS-4 scale was used to measure stress, and questions formulated by the research team were also used. For the purpose of analysis, the sample was limited to 2196 HCWs who worked on a daily basis with patients during the COVID-19 pandemic. Frequency distributions were analyzed, and multivariate logistic regression was performed. The mean scores (scores) of job burnout as measured by the BAT-12 scale ranged among the professional groups from 2.15(0.69) to 2.30 (0.69) and remained highest for the nurses' group. The groups differed significantly in levels of burnout ($\chi^2=17.719$; $d.f.=8$; $p<0.023$). In the final model, raised stress most likely increased the risk of burnout ($OR=3.88$; $95\%CI <3.13-3.81>$; $p<0.001$). Other significant predictors of burnout included: traumatic work-related experience ($OR=1.91$, $p<0.001$), mobbing ($OR=1.83$, $p<0.001$), and a higher workload than before the pandemic ($OR=1.41$, $p=0.002$). Only 7% of respondents decided to use various forms of psychological support during the pandemic. HCW experiences challenges in dealing with an unpredictable pandemic. Limited preparedness can lead to physical and psychological problems such as high-stress levels, anxiety, fear, helplessness, hopelessness, anger and stigma. The workload can lead to professional burnout, as well as threaten patient safety.

Keywords : burnout, work, healthcare, healthcare worker, stress

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