

## **Tiger Team Strategy as a Health District Response to the COVID-19 Pandemic in Sydney, Australia during the Period between March 2020 to January 2022**

**Authors :** Rehana Khan

**Abstract :** Background: The study investigates the experiences of Tiger Teams within the Sydney Local Health District during the COVID-19 pandemic. Aim: The aims were to understand the experiences of the Tiger Team members, to evaluate the effectiveness of Tiger Teams, and to elicit any learnings for future implementation of Tiger Teams in a similar context. Methods: Tiger Team members who worked from March 2020 to January 2022 were approached, with 23 members agreeing to participate in the study. Individual interviews were undertaken by a researcher on a virtual platform. Thematic analysis was used to analyse the data. Saturation was deemed to have been reached when no new themes or subthemes arose within the final three interviews. Results: Four themes emerged: diversity worked well in Tiger Teams; fear of the unknown and challenging conversations were the main challenges of Tiger Teams; improved use of resources and more structure around the strategy of the Tiger Team model would help in future implementations; and Sydney Local Health District's response to the pandemic was uniformly considered effective in keeping the community safe. In relation to Sydney Local Health District's response in future pandemics, participants suggested having a pool of staff in readiness to undertake Tiger Team duties when required; prioritise staff welfare at all levels of involvement during a pandemic; maintaining transparent communication and relationship building between Executive level, Tiger Team members and clinical floor level in relation to decision making; and improve documentation, including evaluations of the COVID-19 pandemic response. Implications: The study provides constructive insights into the experiences of Tiger Team members, and these findings will help inform future planning for surge and secondment of staff in public health emergencies.

**Keywords :** Tiger Team, pandemic response, future planning, COVID-19

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