

Burnout and Salivary Cortisol Among Laboratory Personnel in Klang Valley, Malaysia During COVID-19 Pandemic

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Abstract : COVID-19 outbreak is particularly detrimental to the mental health of everyone as well as leaving a long devastating crisis in the healthcare sector. Daily increment of COVID-19 cases and close contact, necessitating the testing of a large number of samples, thus increasing the workload and burden to laboratory personnel. This study aims to determine the prevalence of personal-, work- and client-related burnout as well as to measure the concentration of salivary cortisol among laboratory personnel in the main laboratories in Klang Valley, Malaysia. This cross-sectional study was conducted in late 2021 and recruited a total of 404 respondents from three laboratories in Klang Valley, Malaysia. The level of burnout was assessed using Copenhagen Burnout Inventory (CBI) comprising three sub-dimensions of personal-, work- and client-related burnout. The cut-off score of 50% and above indicated possible burnout. Meanwhile, salivary cortisol was measured using a competitive enzyme immunoassay kit (Salimetrics, State College, PA, USA). Normal levels of salivary cortisol concentration in adults are within 0.094 to 1.551 µg/dl (morning) and can be none detected to 0.359 µg/dl (evening). The prevalence of personal-, work- and client-related burnout among laboratory personnel were 36.1%, 17.8% and 7.2% respectively. Meanwhile, the abnormal morning and evening cortisol concentration recorded were 29.5% and 21.8% excluding 6.9%-7.4% missing data. While the IgA level is normal for most of the respondents, which recorded at 95.53%. Laboratory personnel were at risk of suffering burnout during the COVID-19 pandemic. Thus, mental health programs need to be addressed at the department and hospital level by regularly screening healthcare workers and designing an intervention program. It is also vital to improve the coping skills of laboratory personnel by increasing the awareness of good coping skill techniques. The training must be in an innovative way to ensure that the lab personnel can internalise the technique and practise it in real life.

Keywords : burnout, COVID-19, laboratory personnel, salivary cortisol

Conference Title : ICODH 2024 : International Conference on Occupational Diseases and Healthcare

Conference Location : Honolulu, United States

Conference Dates : May 02-03, 2024