

Hospital Workers' Psychological Resilience after 2015 Middle East Respiratory Syndrome Outbreak

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Abstract : During a pandemic, hospital workers should protect not only their vulnerable patients but also themselves from the consequences of rapidly spreading infection. However, the evidence on the psychological impact of an outbreak on hospital workers is limited. In this study, we aim to assess hospital workers' psychological well-being and function at the workplace after an outbreak, by focusing on 'psychological resilience'. Specifically, the effects of risk appraisal, emotional experience, and coping ability on resilience indicated by the likelihood of post-traumatic syndrome disorder and willingness to work were investigated. Such role and position of each factor were analyzed using a path model, and the result was compared between the healthcare worker and non-healthcare worker groups. In the investigation, 280 hospital workers who experienced the 2015 Middle East Respiratory Syndrome outbreak in South Korea have participated. The result presented, in both groups, the role of the appraisal of risk and coping ability appeared consistent with a previous research, that was, the former interrupted resilience while the latter facilitated it. In addition, the role of emotional experience was highlighted as, in both groups, emotional disruption not only directly associated with low resilience but mediated the effect of perceived risk on resilience. The differences between the groups were also identified, which were, the role of emotional experience and coping ability was more prominent in the non-HCW group in explaining resilience. From the results, implications on how to support hospital personnel during an outbreak in a way to facilitate their resilience after the outbreak were drawn.

Keywords : hospital workers, emotions, infectious disease outbreak, psychological resilience

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