Mental Health Assessment of Health Care Workers in Covid-19 pandemic in SRN Hospital Prayagraj

Sarita Bajaj1, Anurag Varma2, Anubha Srivastava3, Richa Singh4, Rajendra Kumar Singh5

1Professor and Head of Department, Dept. of Medicine, 2Consultant Psychiatrist, Dept. of Psychiatry, 3Associate Professor, Dept. of Medicine, 4Assistant Professor, Dept. of Social and Preventive Medicine, 5Junior Resident, Dept. of Medicine, MLN Medical College, Prayagraj, Uttar Pradesh

Sir,

In the wake of Covid-19 pandemic there has been a spate of publications on the subject. In this correspondence I would like to emphasize on the Psychiatric morbidity faced by health care workers.

Health care workers managing Covid designated hospitals and exposed to coronavirus disease (COVID-19) are at higher risk of being psychologically stressed and developing psychiatric morbidity. Hence this study was designed for Mental health assessment of health care workers working in Level 3 COVID Hospital SRN associated with MLN Medical College, Prayagraj.

A cross-sectional survey was carried using Survey Monkey to minimise risk of personal exposure and to fulfil social distancing norms. Study collected demographic data and mental health parameter from 224 health care workers in our COVID designated L3 tertiary care hospital from May1, 2020 to August 31, 2020. The symptoms of depression, anxiety, insomnia were assessed by the 9-item Patient Health Questionnaire, 7-item Generalized Anxiety Disorder scale, the 7-item Insomnia Severity Index respectively. Multivariable logistic regression analysis was performed to identify factors associated with mental health outcomes.

Figure 1 shows the Data observed in this study of Depression, Anxiety and Sleep disorders. It can be seen that minor depressive complaints, problems of anxiety and Insomnia have been commonly reported but the symptoms have not been significant to cause Psychiatric illness according to DSM-V and there was no statistical difference among the various studied groups on assessment of anxiety on GAD 7 scale, insomnia on ISI scale and depression on PHQ 9 scale.

Most of the health workers engaged in duties also report a sense of fulfilment and pride and a good peer support system of COVID-19 Warriors has emanated which has led to increased bonding in the workplace and with families in spite of occasional problems of duty rostering, shortage of safety kits, increased workload and novel challenges which were not expected in their specialities of work, this is especially true for doctors who make up the majority of our survey. Health care workers have always stood up to difficult challenges, they have been used to working with limited resources and their resilience has again shown through in spite of themselves turning COVID-19 Positive and hearing of sad losses of their colleagues due to this pandemic. The self-actualisation and religious affiliation, familial, friend and co-workers support too may have been significant factors and the very fact that working itself prevents Acute and Post Traumatic stress can be argued to have had a protective influence.

With no signs of the COVID 19 pandemic ending, uncertainty about Vaccine efficacy, new mutant variants emerging and evidence of reinfection we feel that Psychiatric morbidity is going to increase not just in health care workers but also in COVID-19 patients and the general population also a longer study period and follow up of our own sample may show more positive correlation as Psychiatric illnesses have an incubation period and more such studies need to be done on health care workers specifically working with COVID-19 patients.

References