

The Impact of Covid-19 Related Fear on Substance Use Among Health Care Workers

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INTRODUCTION

- The COVID-19 pandemic has impacted the mental health of the global population, including observed increases in substance use.
- Research suggests that healthcare workers have been at increased risk.
- Moreover, data from Australia suggests that COVID-19 fear and other factors impact the emotional state of healthcare workers.
- Taken together, it is important to assess the impacts that COVID-19 fear has on mental health and substance use patterns of healthcare workers.



AIM

Using a scoping literature review, we aimed to assess the relationships between COVID-19 related fear and anxiety and the subsequent substance use of healthcare workers.

METHOD

- Articles were chosen based on relevance to the research question and on being able to connect both reported COVID-19 related fear, anxiety, or stress amongst healthcare workers and its impact on substance use.
- We used PubMed and Google Scholar and selected sources published in English.
- The search key terms we used were “healthcare workers,” “substance use,” “substance abuse,” “alcohol,” “fear of COVID-19”, “COVID-19 related fear,” and “healthcare professionals.”
- We found 13 primary sources, 5 of which met the inclusion criteria and were included in this review.

RESULTS

Results of Data Collection Across Five Studies

Author and Date	Research questions/hypothesis	Methodology	Analysis & Results
Beiter et al., 2022	Alcohol consumption and its relation to COVID-19 related stress	The Middle East Respiratory Syndrome [MERS-CoV], Brief COPE Scale	Greater alcohol consumption among those that experiences greater stress related to COVID-19
Ghozy et al., 2022	Impact of COVID-19 on mental health of healthcare workers	Cross-sectional, Kessler Psychological Distress Scale	36.77% prevalence of psychological distress healthcare workers, highest among women
Lu et al., 2020	Determine levels of anxiety, fear, during the COVID-19 pandemic among healthcare workers and differences among occupational level	Cross-sectional, Alcohol Use Disorders Identification Test–Consumption (AUDIT–C)	Medical staff had higher rates of fear, anxiety, depression than administrative staff
Rahman et al., 2020	Factors that impacts psychological distress and coping mechanisms amongst healthcare workers during COVID-19 pandemic	Cross-sectional, Kessler Psychological Distress Scale, Fear of COVID-19 Scale (FCV-19S); Brief Resilient Coping Scale (BRCS).	female (1.56, 1.00–2.45), 30–59 years old (2.29, 1.21–4.35) high psychological diaries (2.90, 1.82–5.62) 31.9% high levels of fear
Wozniak et al., 2021	Comparison of ICU and non ICU healthcare workers mental health outcomes during COVID-19 pandemic	Cross-sectional, PHQ-9, the Peritraumatic Distress Inventory (PDI), WHO-5	(22.5%) fear of infection (46.1%) afraid of transmission (22.2% 15% alcohol and tobacco consumption



CONCLUSIONS

- This review suggests that there is a need for examining the potential differences of substance use among occupation level, demographic groups, and location. This would reveal vulnerable populations, the necessary resources and interventions needed.
- In conclusion, further studies need to be done in the U.S. to examine this relationship of fear, anxiety, and stress to determine the association of increased substance use among healthcare workers.

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