The impact of COVID-19 fear on anxiety among healthcare workers at the Terengganu tertiary referral hospital

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ABSTRACT

Introduction: The COVID-19 pandemic is hypothesised to increase stress levels and cause anxiety. This study aimed to investigate the effects of COVID-19 fear on anxiety among healthcare workers from Hospital Sultanah Nur Zahirah Terengganu. **Methods:** This study employed an explanatory design and a cross-sectional survey utilising two questionnaires to measure anxiety and fear levels: the General Anxiety Disorder-7 questionnaire and the Fear of COVID-19 Scale. The respondents were selected using a systematic random sampling method. The survey was conducted as an online survey between October and November 2022. The data were subsequently analysed using SPSS 26 with a p-value <0.05 was considered statistically significant. **Results:** There were a total of 337 responses from 354 selected respondents. The majority of respondents were clinical staff (81.3%; n=274), had a history of Covid-19 infection (64.7%; n=218), and had already received their initial COVID-19 booster dose (78.0%; n=263). The mean (SD) COVID-19 fear and anxiety score were 1.85(0.519) and 3.61(0.776), respectively. The majority of the respondents had moderate levels of COVID-19 fear (70.9%; n=239) and moderate anxiety (57%; n=192). A linear regression analysis revealed a weak relationship between COVID-19 fear and anxiety (R=0.154, p=0.088). The R^2 regression result demonstrated that COVID-19 fear contributed up to 2.4% to anxiety. **Conclusion:** The findings suggest that while COVID-19 fear is associated with anxiety, the association is weak, and other factors are more likely to contribute significantly to anxiety levels.