

Evaluation of mental health status among healthcare workers in a fully COVID-19 hospital towards post-COVID era

Wang Hooi Xian¹, Hor Chee Peng^{1,2,3}, Cheng Joo Thye^{1,4}, Abdul Mutalib Norhasimawati², Looi Irene^{3,4}

¹Department of Medicine, Hospital Kepala Batas, Penang, ²Unit of Health Management, Hospital Kepala Batas, Penang, ³Clinical Research Centre, Hospital Seberang Jaya, Penang, ⁴Department of Medicine, Hospital Seberang Jaya, Penang

ABSTRACT

Introduction: Albeit transiting towards COVID-19 endemicity, mental health issues remain a concern, as some healthcare workers continue to experience ongoing stress, anxiety, and depression. We aimed to evaluate the mental health status among COVID-19 front liners in a fully COVID-19 hospital towards the post-COVID-19 era. **Methods:** We retrieved the Depression Anxiety Stress Scale with 21 items (DASS-21) data from periodical mental health surveillance among healthcare workers under the Mental Health and Psychosocial Support Program in Kepala Batas Hospital towards the end of Omicron wave in Malaysia between August to September 2022. The surveillance questionnaire comprised four sections, which covered sociodemographic profiles, occupational details, work-related stressors, and DASS-21. We extracted the related data from the database and performed analysis using IBM SPSS Statistics version 26. **Results:** Among 157 respondents, 87.3% were females with a mean age of 37.5±8.57 years. About 28% were doctors, 46.5% were nurses and the remaining as allied health workers from eight departments. Up to 13.4% experienced stress followed by 11.5% anxiety and 7% depression of varying degrees. All subjects with positive DASS-21 were offered psychological aid. There were no significant relationships between mental burden with their job position, age, gender, and duration of service (all $p>0.05$). Long working hours (66.9%), heavy workload (66.9%), working environment (51%), lack of manpower (1.9%) and patient factors such as complaints (1.3%) were the perceived contributors to mental health challenges. **Conclusion:** The mental health burden remains significant among frontliners in the transition period. Mitigation measures are made available to halt the progression among our valuable healthcare workers.