

Mitigation of mental health effects of COVID-19 pandemic among healthcare workers in Western Kenya

Abstract

Introduction: COVID-19 caused severe detrimental effects on the mental health status of people. The pandemic has seriously affected Healthcare Workers (HCWs) who have been on the frontline responding to the COVID-19 pandemic. Measures adopted by the Ministry of Health to take care of the mental well-being of HCWs are inadequate, leaving them to take care of their mental health. The purpose of this study was to investigate the measures adopted by Healthcare Workers in Western Kenya to mitigate the mental health effects of COVID-19.

Methods: The study adopted a cross-sectional descriptive study design. A sample size of 356 HCWs was calculated using the Yamane formula and participants were recruited through a stratified sampling technique. Data was collected using a semi-structured questionnaire.

Results: Forty-four per cent of the HCWs encountered a mental health problem during the pandemic, with depression having a higher prevalence (14.6%). In line with the Ministry of Health guidelines, 80.1% of the HCWs consumed a healthy, nutritious and sufficient diet while 43.3% engaged in physical activities to mitigate the mental health effects of COVID-19 pandemic.

Conclusions and Recommendations: The Ministry of Health should institute a policy for promoting mental health at work place. Healthcare Workers should be trained on healthy adaptive behaviours to cope with situations at workplace. Long-term sustainable measures should be implemented to ensure HCWs are not highly affected by mental health disorders during pandemics.

Authors

Z. Maingi, K. Kathukumi, S. Jaika, P. Odera, S. Konyole, C. Tibbs