Review of “Mental health care for medical staff in China during the COVID-19 outbreak”


One-Minute Summary

- The authors assessed the mental health of health care workers (HCWs) caring for coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) patients at the Second Xiangya Hospital of Central South University (Changsha, Hunan, China), which is the largest tertiary hospital in Hunan province.
- A psychological intervention plan was developed, including:
  - Development of online courses to guide HCWs to deal with psychological problems
  - A psychological assistance hotline
  - Various group activities to release stress
- However, HCWs were reluctant to participate in individual or group sessions and refused psychological help, despite showing signs of irritability and psychological distress.
- The immediate worries of HCWs, identified in 30-minute interviews (N = 13), were dealing with patients who refused quarantine or were not accepting of medical advice; worries about personal protective equipment (PPE) shortages; and feeling helpless when treating severely ill patients. HCWs were also concerned about bringing the virus home and infecting their family members.
- Based on feedback from interviews, the hospital provided HCWs with:
  - A place for HCWs to rest and temporarily self-isolate from their family
  - Daily living essentials and food
  - Help preparing and sending videos to their family members while away from home
  - Training to identify and respond to psychological problems in patients
  - Security to help with uncooperative patients
  - Hospital-based guidelines on PPE use
  - Leisure activities and methods to cope with stress
  - Psychological counsellors who visited HCWs in the rest area to discuss challenges

Additional Information

- The authors highlight that the mental health of HCWs is vital to COVID-19 response efforts; however, they acknowledge that the best method to support HCW mental health is not clear.
PHO Reviewer’s Comments

- The authors base their results on a study within a single health care facility, where they interviewed a small number of HCWs. Readers must use caution when interpreting these results, as they may not be generalizable to all HCWs treating COVID-19 patients.

Citation


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