

Assessing the Psychological Impact of Covid-19 on Intensive Care Workers: a Single-centre Cross-sectional UK-based Study

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BACKGROUND

The COVID-19 pandemic presents a unique set of stressors for healthcare professionals across the globe¹. The challenges facing intensive care workers in the United Kingdom (UK) have not previously been seen on this scale. There is a dearth of research establishing the psychological impact of the virus among intensive care workers (ICU) specifically, who may be at the greatest risk of adverse outcomes. Protecting the psychological wellbeing of healthcare workers caring for patients with COVID-19 is essential for the long-term capacity of the health workforce.

OBJECTIVES

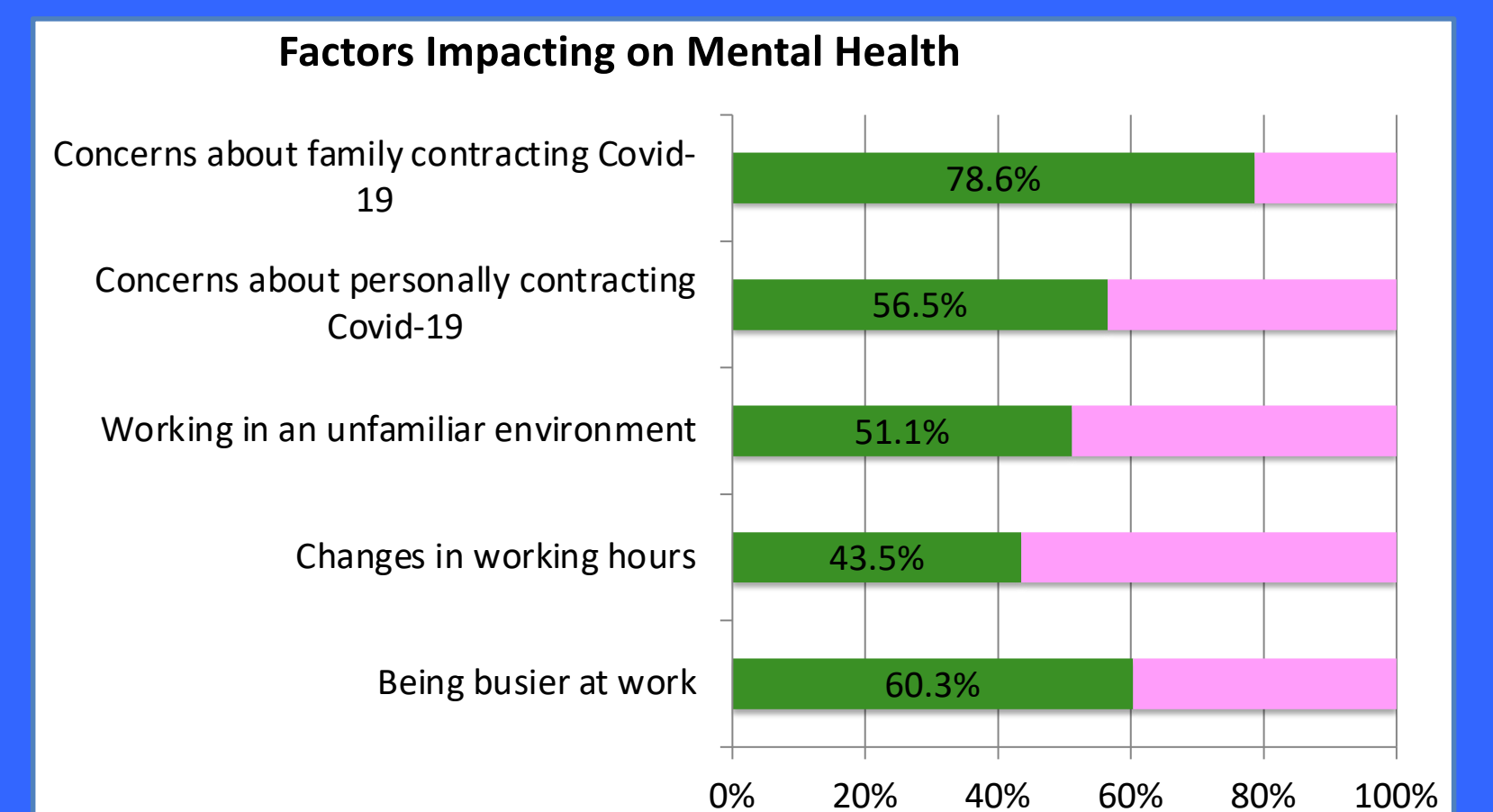
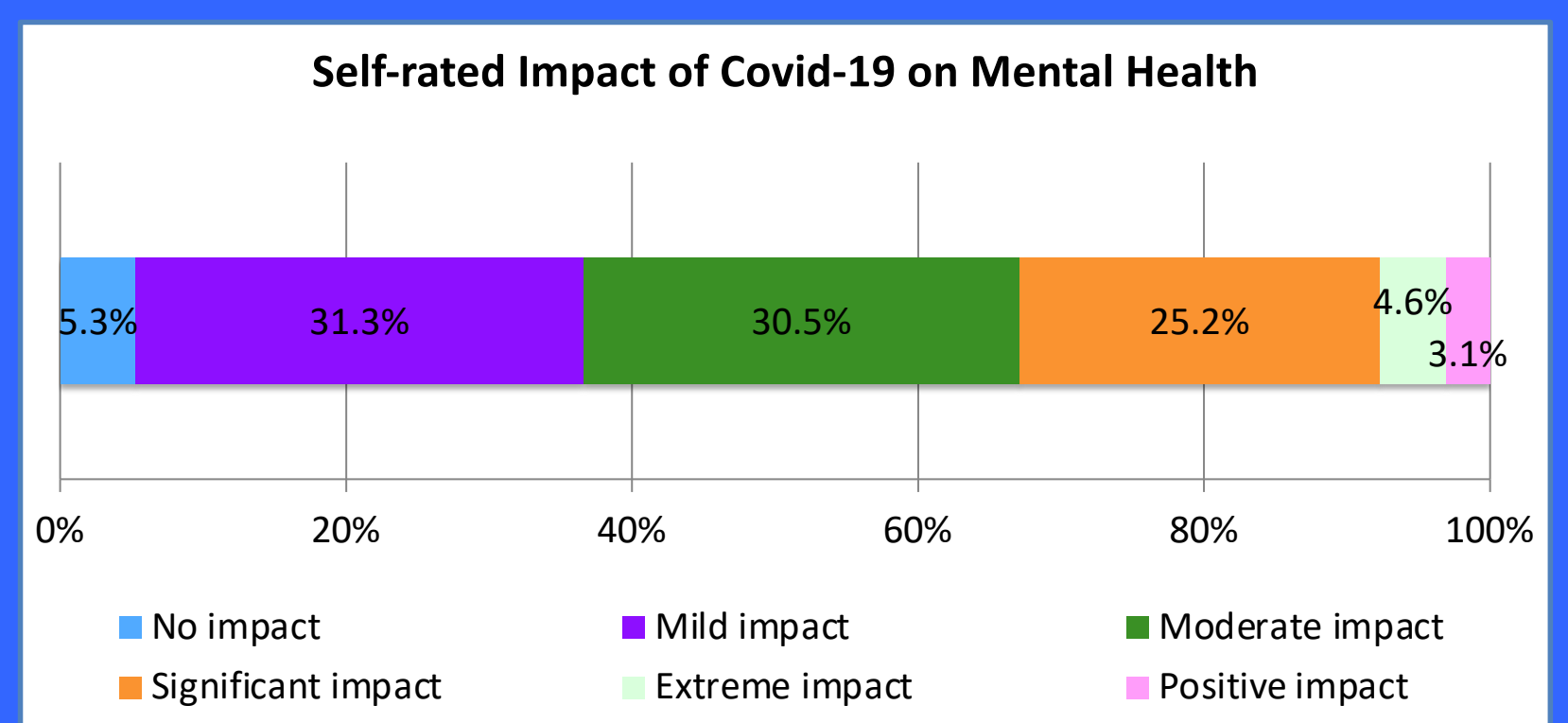
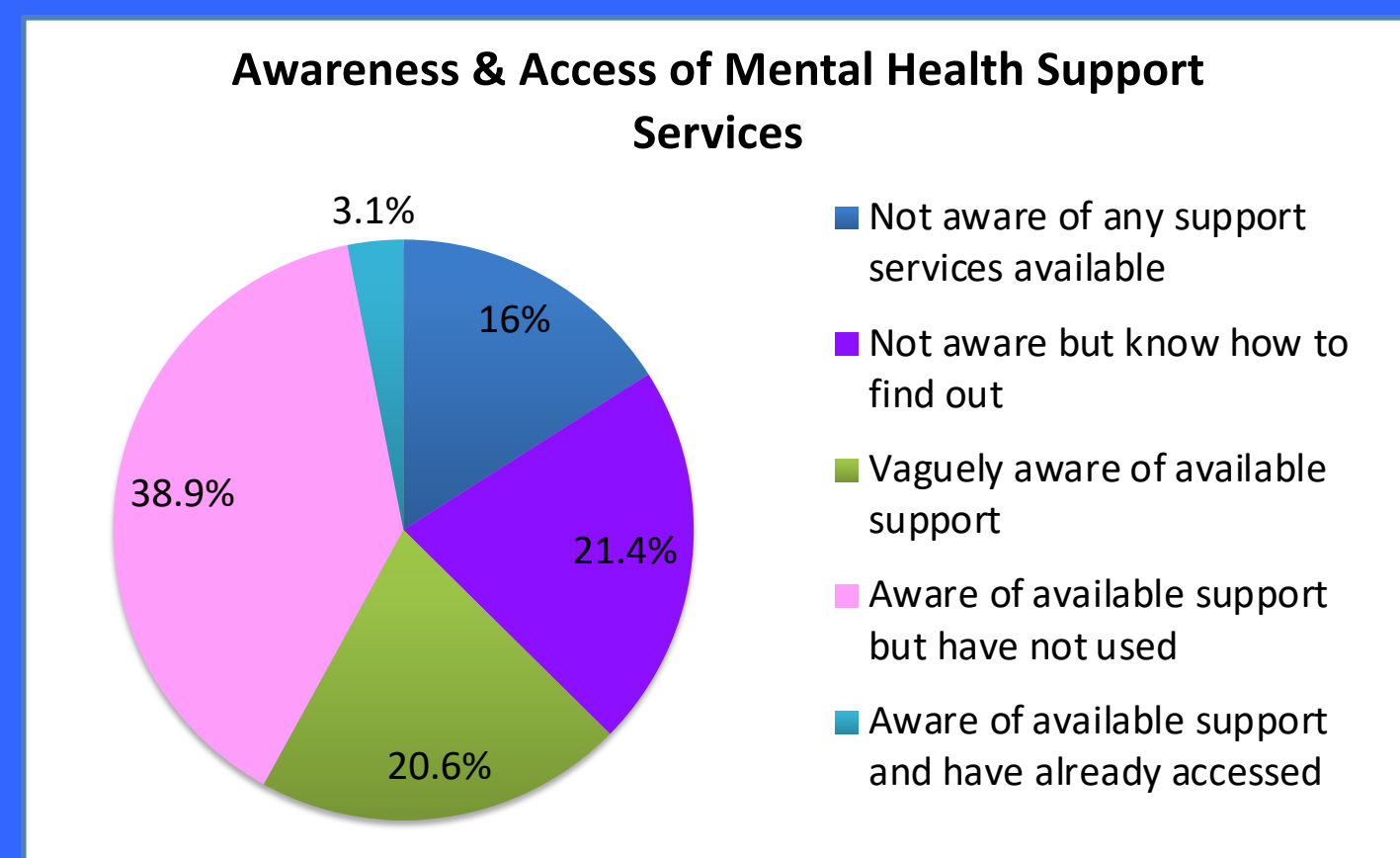
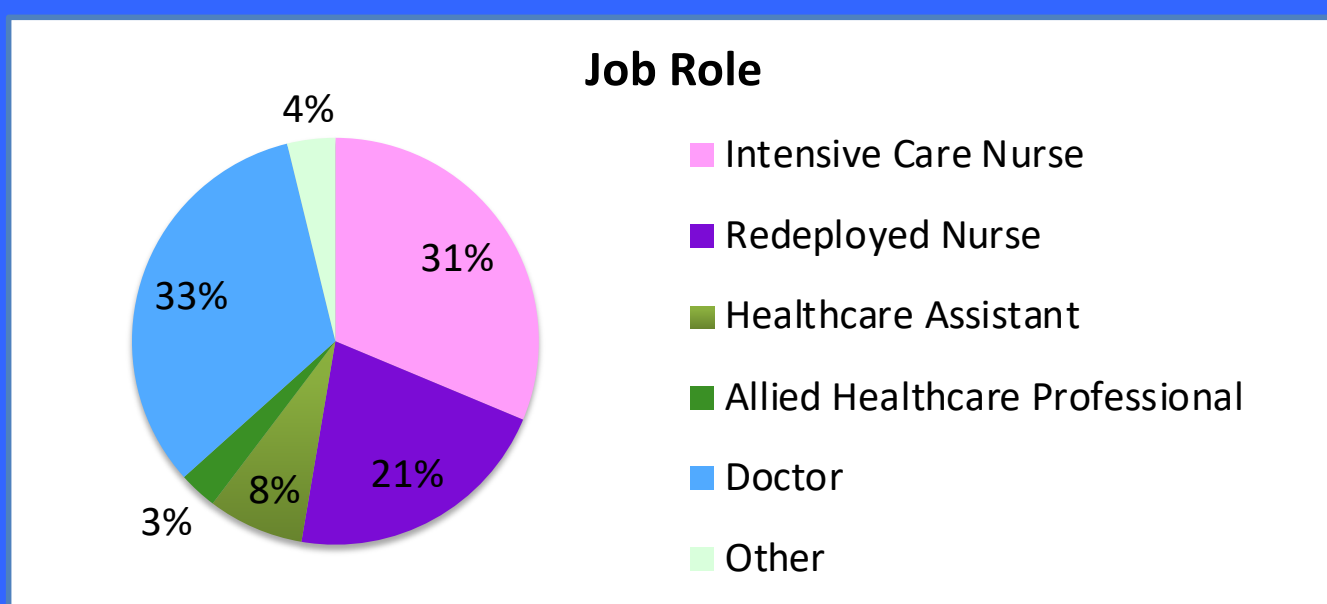
- Establish the psychological impact of COVID-19 on ICU workers
- Allow policy-makers to ensure mental health is not overlooked
- Encourage future development of a robust psychological support system for staff

METHODS

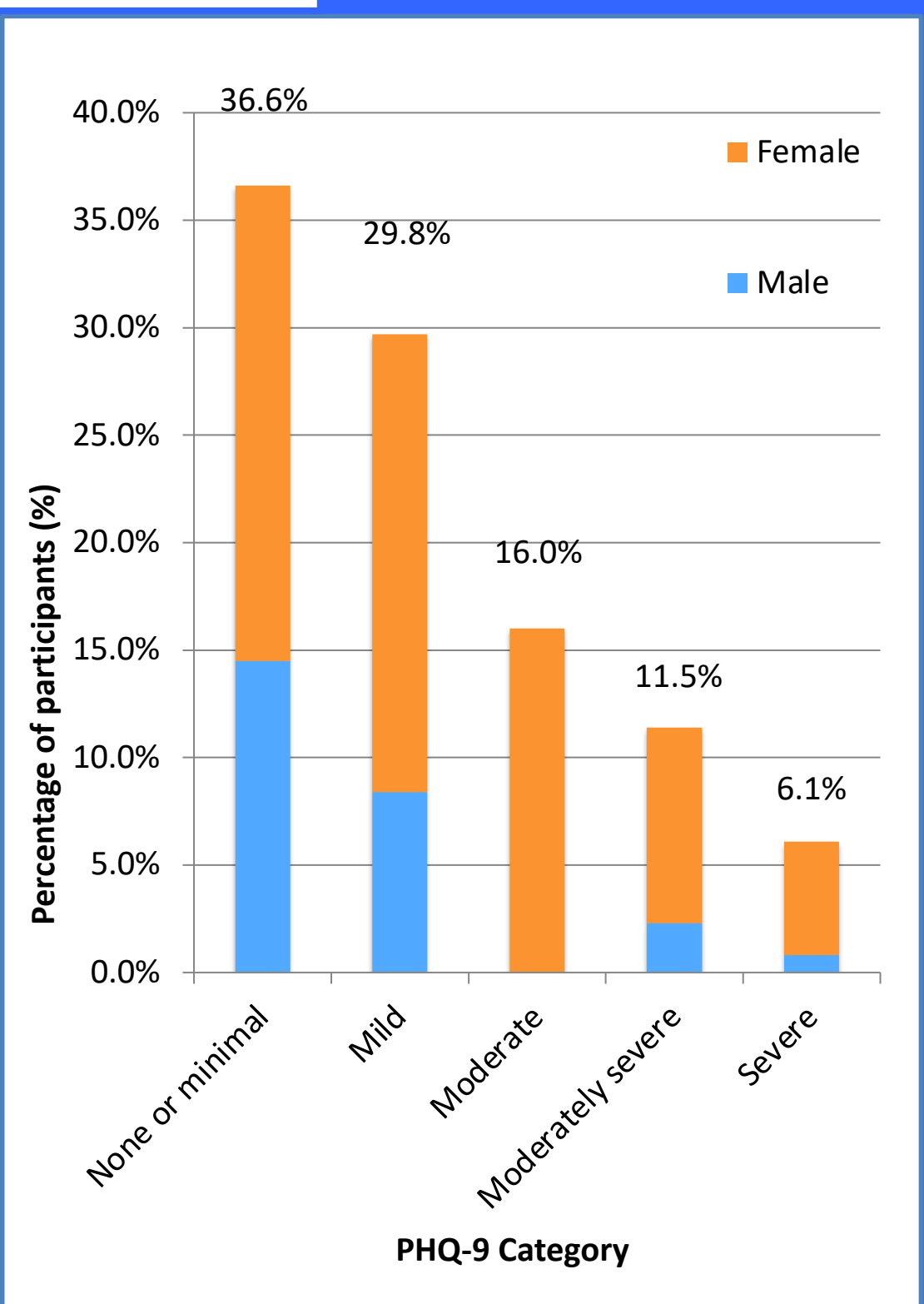
- Questionnaire to 131 intensive care workers identified using a convenience sampling approach in June 2020.
- Validated screening tools incorporated to assess for symptoms of anxiety (Generalised Anxiety Disorder Scale, GAD-7)², depression (Patient Health Questionnaire, PHQ-9)³ and post-traumatic stress disorder (Impact of Event Scale-Revised, IES-R)⁴
- HRA approval obtained

RESULTS

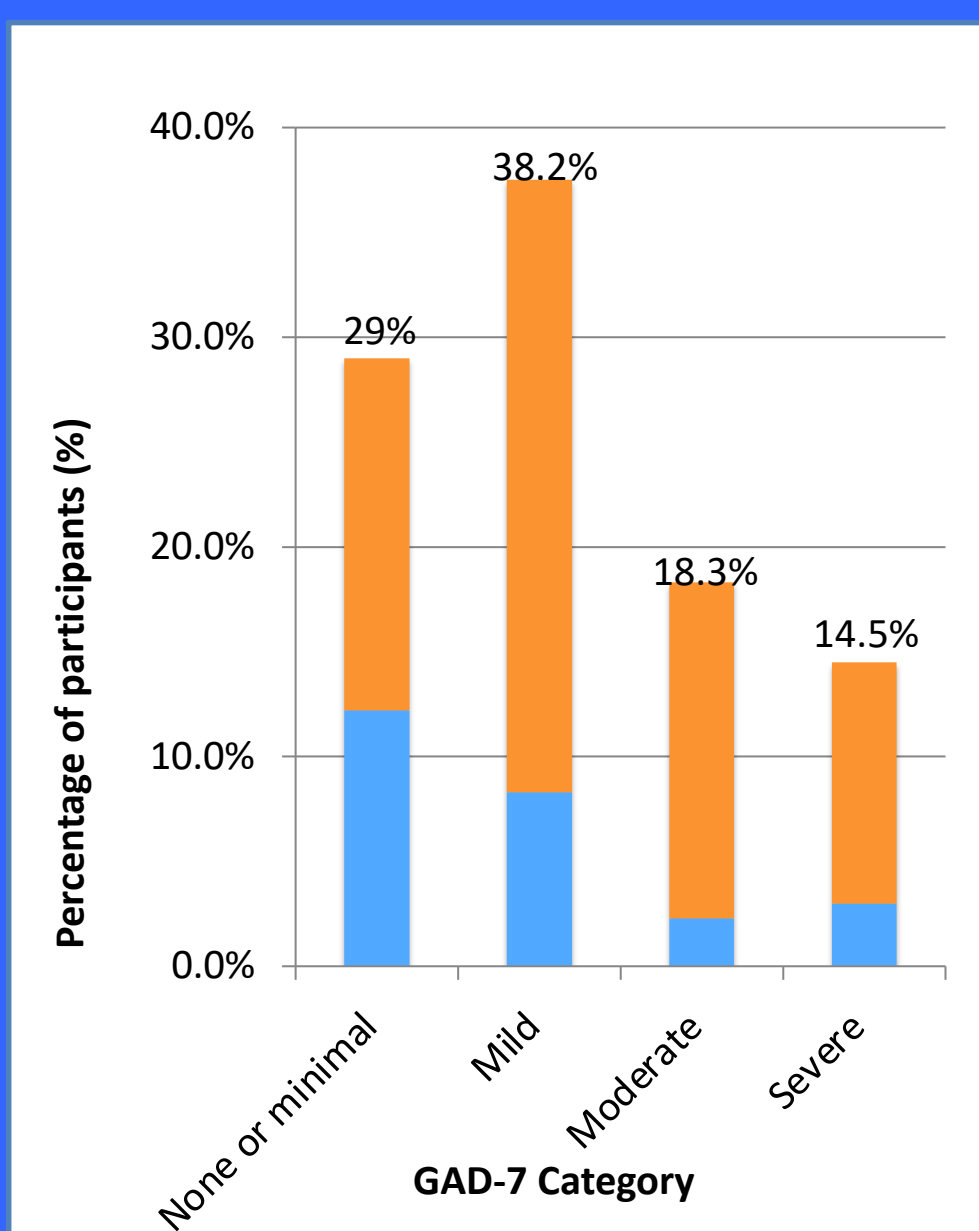
- 74% of participants were female, 26% were male
- 65% participants were aged 25-44 years



DEPRESSION

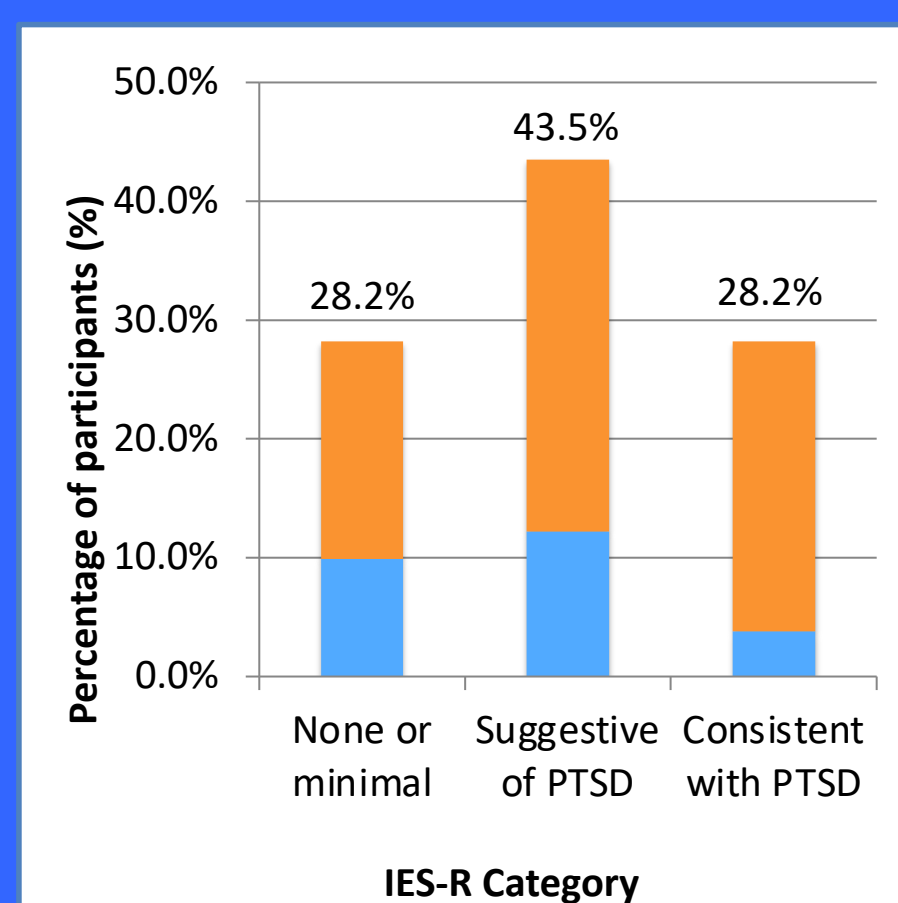


ANXIETY



PERCENTAGE OF STAFF REPORTING SYMPTOMS OF

POST-TRAUMATIC STRESS DISORDER



CONCLUSION

The psychological impact of COVID-19 on intensive care workers is significant and healthcare systems are currently ill-prepared to cope with the increased demand for support⁵. Specific focus and attention must be directed accordingly in order to safeguard the mental health of this key sector of the workforce, who play a crucial role in the fight against Covid-19. Determining and acknowledging the scale of the problem is the first step towards achieving this.

SUGGESTIONS

- Improve awareness of and access to psychological support services
- Consider group support sessions or de-brief at the end of shifts
- Early screening using validated scoring systems
- Enhance rest and recuperation facilities
- Ensure robust processes for PPE