

Doctors well-being during COVID-19 in a tertiary hospital.

Introduction

COVID-19 has become the largest medical challenge worldwide of the last 50 years, affecting the physical and mental well-being of physicians.

The aim of this study was to explore the well-being of physicians during the second wave of the COVID-19 outbreak in a Belgian tertiary hospital, with special attention to anesthesiologists. Who were confronted with overcrowded intensive care units, were mentally challenged during several months by an overwhelming workload.

Mental well-being was evaluated by the validated Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Well-being Scale (WEMWBS).

Conclusion

This small study showed a significant difference between the well-being of specialists and resident doctors.

Physicians with a higher workload due to COVID reported a significantly lower well-being than those with a low workload. Also, one out of five doctors experienced negative feelings.

Attention should be paid on the prevention and treatment of well-being among healthcare workers, especially female anesthesiologists.

Materials

Demographic data such as age, gender, function, COVID exposure, workload and the WEMWBS score, summing 14 equally weighted questions (scoring range 1 to 5) about mental well-being, was collected.

The Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Well-being Scale (WEMWBS)

Below are some statements about feelings and thoughts.
Please tick the box that best describes your experience of each over the last 2 weeks

STATEMENTS	None of the time	Rarely	Some of the time	Often	All of the time
I've been feeling optimistic about the future	1	2	3	4	5
I've been feeling useful	1	2	3	4	5
I've been feeling relaxed	1	2	3	4	5
I've been feeling interested in other people	1	2	3	4	5
I've had energy to spare	1	2	3	4	5
I've been dealing with problems well	1	2	3	4	5
I've been thinking clearly	1	2	3	4	5
I've been feeling good about myself	1	2	3	4	5
I've been feeling close to other people	1	2	3	4	5
I've been feeling confident	1	2	3	4	5
I've been able to make up my own mind about things	1	2	3	4	5
I've been feeling loved	1	2	3	4	5
I've been interested in new things	1	2	3	4	5
I've been feeling cheerful	1	2	3	4	5

Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Well-being Scale (WEMWBS)
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Results

Ninety physicians completed the questionnaire, 42 residents and 48 staff members, with an average WEMWBS of 50.6 ± 8.0 .

Participating residents worked more on a COVID-19 department than participating specialists ($p=0.02$). The residents noticed that their workload was higher ($p=0.001$) and scored significantly lower on the WEMWBS (48.1 ± 8.2) compared to staff members (52.8 ± 7.3), ($p=0.01$).

Female anaesthesiologists scored significant lower in the WEMWBS compared to their male colleagues ($p=0.03$)

Methodology

All physicians of the Antwerp University Hospital (UZA) were invited to participate through an online anonymous questionnaire to objectively evaluate their well-being during the second wave of the COVID-19 outbreak in Belgium.

SPSS, version 26.0, was used for statistics. The quantitative data was analysed using descriptive statistics. The categorical data was presented as frequencies and percentages. The normal distribution between groups was evaluated by Pearson chi-square test or Fisher's exact test. The T-test or ANOVA was used to evaluate the WEMWBS score between groups.