Perceived need and help-seeking for psychosocial support among health and social care professionals: Survey and analysis

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Health and social care professionals operate in high-stress work environments and face ever-changing challenges.

Professionals’ mental well-being severely affects:

1. the quality of care
2. the functionality of the health care system
3. the employer and the taxpayer
Aims of our study

- How much **health and social care professionals** experienced need for **psychosocial support** due to **work-related** situations and distress?

- How many of workers sought out and received help for these experiences?

- How many **sick-days** were taken due to **work-related distress**?
Methods

- **A mixed-questions survey** was distributed in mid-2023 to workers through professional associations gathering data on work-related distress.

- **Demographics:**
  6863 answerers:
  - 169 physicians
  - 5283 nurses
  - 903 other professionals
  - 504 students on the field

- Further categorized by their specialization, education and levels of experience
Results

- **73%** experienced work-related distressing situations after which they **would have liked to discuss with a helper**

- **23% received help from the employer** so that they may continue their work as usual and another **22% searched the help elsewhere**.

- All-and-all **22%** reported having **had to take days off** due to these situations
  - Physicians: 20%
  - Nurses: 23%
Results

- The average length sick-leave due to work-related distress was **30 days** for all, **20 days for physicians** with a variety of reasons.

- Physicians were more likely to buy the help they needed with their own money instead of the help being provided by the employer.
Discussion

- The availability for easy-access mental health support for healthcare professionals does not meet the demand.

- Based on our research, in Finland, the annual cost of lost work due to work-related mental health load can be roughly approximated:
  - For physicians around 20–60 million euros in sick-days
  - For all social and health care workers, the cost rises to several hundred million euros

- Mental health problems caused by distressing situations at work severely impact the workers, the patient care and productivity even when they do not result in sick days.
Thank you!

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