Perceived need and help-seeking for psychosocial support among health and social care professionals: A Systematic Review

Oona Kuosmanen¹, Erika Jääskeläinen², Kalle Seppälä³, Paulus Torkki⁴, Eeva Tuunainen⁴
1 University of Eastern Finland, 2 University of Oulu, 3 University of Tampere, 4 University of Helsinki
Background

- Health and social care workers are facing multiple challenges that may increase their burden and stress (1).
- It is fundamental to prevent work-related mental health issues to sustain workforce and improve the quality of care (2).
- To prevent and treat these issues efficiently, it is crucial to recognize the need for help.

Aims

We investigate:

- How many health and social care workers have experienced need for psychosocial support?
- How many of workers have actually sought help?
- How large costs do work-related mental health issues and barriers for help-seeking cause to the health and social care organisations?
Methods

- Sources: PubMed, PsycInfo, CINAHL

- 853 references from CINAHL, 441 from PsycInfo and 945 from PubMed -> 868 total duplicates were removed -> 1371 references for title and abstract screening

- Final search was conducted on 02/2024:
  "mental health*" OR psychological* OR stress OR burnout OR burn-out OR "burn out" OR fatigue OR distress OR anxiety OR insomnia OR depression OR sleep* OR “compassion fatigue” OR “empathic distress”
  AND
  "social care work*" OR "social care profession*" OR "health care work*" OR "health care profession*" OR "hospital work*" OR "hospital profession*" OR "medical work*" OR "medical profession*" OR nurse* OR doctor* OR physician*
  AND
  need* OR support OR help* OR perceived
Results

- Title and abstract screening is ongoing by two researchers.
- Our preliminary findings show that perceived need for psychosocial support is major.
- There are several barriers for help-seeking, such as stigma.
- Many of the researches considering need for support are conducted at the time of covid-19.
- Measuring direct costs proved to be complex.

Zhang, W.; Ma, X.; Yu, S.; Zhang, X.; Mu, Y.; Li, Y.; Xiao, Q.; Ji, M. Public Health (Elsevier) 12/ 2023;225():72-78
New York, New York Elsevier B.V. 2023 12//
DOI: 10.1016/j.puhe.2023.09.003 • Ref ID: 174058426

- "We collected and analysed 51,406 valid online questionnaires."
- "As a result, 64.7% nurses believed they had a moderate or high need for psychological counselling. However, 80.7% indicated that receiving adequate respect could decrease the need for stress-related psychological counselling."
Results – examples of studies

Help-seeking for depression among Australian doctors.

Muhammad Ramzi, N. S. Aishah; Deady, Mark; Petrie, Katherine; Crawford, Joanna; Harvey, Samuel B.
Internal Medicine Journal 12// 2021;51(12):2069-2077
Malden, Massachusetts Wiley-Blackwell 2021 12//
DOI: 10.1111/imj.15035  Ref ID: 154274244

- "A secondary analysis was conducted on a nation-wide survey of 12 252 Australian doctors. The study sample consisted of doctors who reported having ever felt seriously depressed (n = 4154; 33.9% of total sample)"
- "Sixty percent (95% confidence interval (CI): 58.5–61.5) of doctors who have ever felt seriously depressed reported some form of professional help-seeking for depression."
  -> 40% of seriously depressed doctors did not seek help!
- "The most common barrier to help-seeking was 'privacy/confidentiality'."
Discussion

Recognizing this need for psychosocial support is important

1. To sustain the mental health of professionals
2. For continued delivery of services
3. For patient safety

Based on perceived need, employers can develop relevant interventions to provide psychosocial support to workers

Findings of this study could provide one possible solution to recruitment problem in health and social care field
Thank you!

Oona Kuosmanen, University of Eastern Finland
Contact: oonakuo@student.uef.fi

Acknowledgements: Funding by Finland's Ministry of Social Affairs And Health