

# A REVIEW OF STRATEGIES IMPLEMENTED BY THE HEALTHCARE PROVIDERS AND THE HOSPITALS TO REDUCE STRESS AMONG HEALTHCARE PROVIDERS DURING THE COVID-19 OUTBURST

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## Abstract

Global healthcare systems undergo unprecedented strain as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, and healthcare professionals (HCPs) are facing high levels of stress, anxiety, and burnout. The methods of coping deployed by healthcare providers throughout the pandemic are examined in this article, emphasizing organizational, social, and personal remedies. We discuss how these methods helped mitigate the pandemic's psychological effects on healthcare providers, the significance of institutional support, and lessons for future crises based on a review of studies conducted between 2020 and 2023. The findings emphasize how important it is to promote resilience, offer mental health services, and carry out comprehensive modifications to strengthen ways of coping with probable health issues in the future.

**Keywords:** Healthcare providers, stress, anxiety, covid -19 outbreak, coping strategies,

## INTRODUCTION

The COVID-19 pandemic was a worldwide epidemic that altered the conditions of healthcare delivery, putting immense demand on healthcare providers (HCPs). Doctors, nurses, paramedical staff, and other primary care professionals worldwide were exposed to prolonged exposure to high-risk situations, extended hours at work, an absence of personal protective equipment (PPE), and the emotional peal of high mortality rates among patients. Those circumstances drastically raised the likelihood of psychological distress, including anxiety, sadness, and burnout. Understanding how healthcare workers reacted to these unusual circumstances is crucial to discovering strategies to safeguard their mental well-being during potential pandemics or equivalent situations.

HCPs were especially vulnerable during the COVID-19 disease since they faced the challenge of providing care for patients who were critically ill with personal is worried about contracting the virus or propagating it to their families. Several studies have demonstrated the psychological toll that HCPs endure, including significant increases in anxiety, post-traumatic stress disorder, and burnout. In a comprehensive review published in 2020, Pappa et al. observed that during the early stages of the pandemic, approximately 40% of HCPs expressed anxiety, and over 22% endured depression symptoms. The rapid development of the situation, coupled with the terror of an unidentified and largely unknown virus, aggravated mental health issues, emphasising the importance of appropriate coping mechanisms.

### Objectives of the study

To identify the coping strategies adopted by the healthcare providers during the Covid-19 outburst.

To identify the strategies adopted by the hospitals to reduce stress among healthcare providers during the Covid-19 outburst.

### Coping strategies adopted by health providers to reduce stress

**Personal Coping Strategies:** To manage the nervousness and mental stress during the outburst, medical personnel employed a range of individual coping strategies. Mindfulness and Meditation: HCPs began using mindfulness practices, such as deep breathing and meditation, to manage stress and maintain their sense of reality in the face of uncertainty. According to research, mindfulness helps healthcare providers to avoid burnout and reduce stress by promoting mental balance and resilience.

### Managing time

Most of us have terrible time management abilities. The final impact is a sense of heaviness, missed deadlines, and associated anxiety. The fact is that someone who can effectively manage his or her time can do twice as much as someone who is disorganised. Basic time managing tactics involve making a daily list of chores and ranking them based on their importance and urgency, organising activities by set priorities and tackling the most hard parts of a job while remaining focused and productive. It is said that effective time management results in i) reduced blood pressure, ii) a better sense of cognition, and iii) a significant reduction in the usage of tranquilizers. iv) a sense of tranquillity while activity.

**Physical Activity:** Healthcare providers observed that frequent exercise, whether it be in the form of walking, yoga, or workouts at home, helped them keep up their mental and physical health. Many healthcare providers said that exercise boosted their state of mind and assisted them in overcoming emotional obstacles.

**Journaling and Reflection:** Writing about everyday incidents has become a coping strategy for many HCPs, providing a quiet environment for the release of emotions and insight. Through writing, they were able to make sense of their obligations and confront with difficult circumstances.

**Adjust life objectives.** : Because of the intense competition to move ahead, the majority set exceptionally high standards and objectives for themselves. They are always trying to do too much in too little time. High expectations paired with inadequate resources lead to stress. As a consequence, people have to change their goals and make sure they have the resources and ability to achieve them.

**Optimism and humour:** Some HCPs used humour as a stress-reduction technique, usually in an attempt to maintain an optimistic attitude. Despite the grim nature of their duty, finding comedy in it boosted tenacity.

**Collegial Support:** With potential for debriefing, experience sharing, and emotional support, peer support has become an essential tool for HCPs. Formal and unstructured group debriefings let healthcare staff members go through their feelings together.

**Relaxation:** It can be done through meditation, hypnosis, or biofeedback. Regardless of the approach used, the goal is to accomplish profound relaxation in which one feels physiologically relaxed and detached from bodily sensations. 15 to 20 minutes of deep relaxation every day reduces tension and provides a person an intense feeling of peacefulness. Significant changes in heart rate, blood pressure, and other physiological parameters occur as a result of reaching Profound relaxation.

**Friends and Family:** During the outbreak, friends and family provided vital emotional support. Although many HCPs isolated themselves from their loved ones in order to avoid contracting infections, social media connections and encouraging communications made them feel included and cared for.

#### **Strategies implemented by the hospitals to reduce the level of stress**

**Institutional and Organizational Assistance** During the pandemic, institutional and organizational support played an integral part in reducing the stress experienced by healthcare personnel. Several tactics were implemented by hospitals, clinics, and other healthcare institutions to support their staff members:

**Creating a Supportive Work Environment:** Hospitals and other healthcare facilities have to foster an environment where asking for assistance with mental health issues is accepted and encouraged. It's important to normalise open dialogue about stress and mental health at work.

**Mental Health Services:** Several healthcare organisations expanded access to counselling services and mental health hotlines after realising the pandemic's negative effects on mental health. Programs providing psychological support were crucial for HCPs dealing with trauma, despair, or anxiety.

**Systemic Shifts in the Medical Field:** The pandemic made it clear that structural adjustments to the way healthcare is delivered were required, including better staffing ratios, flexible scheduling, and easier access to mental health treatments.

**Sufficient Safety Procedures and PPE:** Having enough personal protective equipment (PPE) and well-defined safety procedures helped to lower the level of anxiety that healthcare professionals felt at work. Some of the anxiety related to the possibility of infection was reduced by realising that their safety was the first priority.

**Adjustable Work Schedules and Shifts:** This was yet another essential support system. This reduced burnout among healthcare workers by enabling them to reconcile their heavy professional obligations with their personal lives.

**Developing Resilience:** As part of standard operating procedures, healthcare institutions should prioritize mental health assistance and resilience training. HCPs should incorporate regular training on coping mechanisms, stress reduction, and emotional health into their professional growth.

#### **Obstacles faced by the healthcare providers during Covid -19 outbreak**

During the outbreak, healthcare personnel encountered considerable obstacles while trying to obtain help, even if coping measures were available. Due to their long working hours and substantial patient loads, many HCPs did not have enough time for self-care, which caused them to engage in personal coping mechanisms insufficiently or too slowly. Healthcare professionals have occasionally been discouraged from seeking professional assistance due to the stigma associated with mental health, especially in settings where psychological illness is viewed as a sign of weakness. Moreover, organisational assistance was unbalanced, with many organisations lacking the infrastructure or resources necessary to offer their employees proper mental health care.

## **CONCLUSION**

The COVID-19 outbreak imposed an unprecedented demand on health care personnel, who had to navigate a complex web of personal, professional, and societal concerns. HCPs' coping strategies, which included mindfulness, social support, and organisational assistance, were crucial in mitigating the pandemic's mental health impact. However, significant obstacles remain in deploying these approaches, particularly in resource-constrained contexts. As the world grapples with the pandemic's long-term implications, it is vital to prioritise healthcare workers' mental health and provide them with the skills needed to deal with future healthcare challenges. We can

better prepare healthcare providers for future emergencies by encouraging resilience, providing institutional support, and addressing systemic healthcare challenges.

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