COVID-19 related traumatic stress symptoms and associated factors among Healthcare Workers in Nigeria: a cross-sectional study

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Background

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a negative impact on the mental health of healthcare workers (HCWs) globally. However, there is little data from low- and middle-income countries including Nigeria. Therefore, the aim of this study was to measure traumatic stress symptoms related to the COVID-19 pandemic (TSSR_COVID-19) and its associated factors in a sample of Nigerian HCWs.

Methods

A cross-sectional descriptive study was conducted among 434 Nigerian HCWs (doctors and nurses) during the COVID-19 pandemic. Participants were assessed using a demographic and self-reported COVID-19 related experiences questionnaire, the Impact of Event Scale with modification for COVID-19 (IES-COVID 19), the Kessler Psychological Distress Scale, the Generalized Anxiety Disorder Questionnaire, and the Patient Health Questionnaire. Multivariable linear regression was used to determine the predictors of TSSR_COVID-19 and statistical significance was determined at p<0.05.

Results

The mean age of participants was 37.4 (±3.1) years with 67.1% (n=291) and 51.8% (n=225) being females and nurses respectively. The mean duration of work experience among HCWs was 10.7 (±8.06) years. The total mean IES-COVID-19 score was 2.35 (±1.74, range= 0-7.25) while the mean scores of avoidance and intrusion subscales were 1.36 (±1.04, range= 0- 4 and 0.99 (±0.91, range= 0 - 4 respectively. The prevalence of psychological distress (PD) was 93.6% (mean = 5.68 ±4.01) of which 54.9% was rated moderate to severe. The prevalence of “moderate to severe” anxiety and depression symptoms were 3.2% (mean = 2.30 ±3.20) and 6.7% (mean =2.95 ±3.71) respectively. The independent predictors of TSSR_COVID-19 were being a nurse (p=0.02), worry about being infected with COVID-19 (p=0.002) and higher levels of anxiety (p<0.001).

Conclusions

There is the need for the development of an innovative, culturally sensitive, cost-effective, and evidence-based psychosocial intervention for HCWs in Nigeria.