

ABSTRACT

Introduction

Work stress is harmful response of the body which occurs due to imbalance between job requirements and capabilities or needs of the worker. It affects physical, mental and social well-being of workers. Among all occupations, nursing profession is regarded as a stressful occupation.

Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic has affected healthcare workers globally including nurses. It has increased work stress on an already stressed nurses and make them physically and mentally ill due to the effect of many factors.

Objectives

This study was carried out to determine the work stress and associated factors among nursing officers at Sri Lanka National Hospital, Colombo during COVID-19 pandemic.

Methods

A descriptive cross-sectional study was conducted among 595 nursing officers working in Sri Lanka National Hospital Colombo during COVID 19 pandemic period using stratified cluster sampling method. Data collection was done by using a pre-tested self-administered questionnaire which included Nursing Stress Scale to assess the work stress among nurses. Percentages were used to summarize categorical data. Means and standard deviations were used to summarize numerical data. Chi-square test was used to assess the statistical significance of Socio demographic, service-related and COVID-related factors with the level of work stress among nursing officers at probability 0.05 level.

Results

Response rate was 93.7%. The majority of nursing officers were females (90.3%) at young age (25-35 years of age – 62.4%). Sweating (75.6%) was the common difficulty found among nursing officers while wearing PPEs. Other common difficulties were dry hands (64%), headache (61.5%), dryness of the mouth (54.3%) and vision problems with face shield or goggles (50.8%).

Low stress was found among 90.1% of the studied nurses and high stress among 9.9% of studied nurses. Marital status ($p=0.041$), monthly family income ($p<0.001$), dependent adults at home ($p=0.04$), shift duties worked during a month ($p<0.001$), number of combined two shifts worked during a month ($p=0.002$), availability of PPEs in sufficient amount ($p=0.006$), fear of exposure while traveling ($p=0.02$) and support from supervisors during the pandemic period ($p<0.001$) were significantly associated with work stress during the COVID 19 pandemic period.

Conclusions and recommendations

Considerable proportion of nursing officers was found to be having high stress. Therefore, establishment of continuous supporting mechanisms to protect nurses from work-related stress is important during a pandemic situation.

Keywords : work stress, COVID-19 pandemic, Sri Lanka National Hospital, nursing officers