

ABSTRACT

Introduction

Even though global evidence suggests high prevalence estimates of job strain in the banking sector during the COVID-19 pandemic, there is a dearth of research on job strain among Sri Lankan bank employees, who play a vital role in providing essential public services during the pandemic.

Objective

To determine the prevalence and selected associated factors of job strain among the bank employees in the Kesbewa Divisional Secretariat (DS) area during the COVID-19 pandemic

Methods

A cross-sectional study was conducted in the Kesbewa DS area, Colombo district. The study population included all bank employees employed in all 31 branches of banks in the Kesbewa DS area. A self-administered questionnaire, including the validated 22-item Job Content Questionnaire (JCQ-22), was used for data collection. The prevalence of job strain among the bank employees was computed with 95% CI. Bivariate analysis was conducted to determine the significant associated factors of high job strain and odds ratios with 95% CI were computed.

Results

The sample consisted of 323 bank employees in the Kesbewa DS area (Response rate=83.9%). The mean (SD) age was 32.7 (7.6) years and the majority were females (n=183,56.7%). The prevalence of high job strain and iso-strain among the bank employees in the Kesbewa DS area during the COVID-19 pandemic were 25.1% (95%CI=20.3%-29.8%) and 9.9% (95%CI=6.9%-13.1%) respectively. Service experience less than 10 years (OR=1.6,95%CI=1.0-2.8;p=0.043), doing less overtime work (OR=0.5,95%CI=0.3-0.9;p=0.037) and high job satisfaction (OR=0.2,95%CI=0.1-0.3;p<0.001) had statistically significant associations with high job strain. Perceived adequacy of different workplace

facilities to prevent and control COVID-19 showed statistically significant negative associations ($p < 0.05$), while working with the constant worry of contracting COVID-19 had a statistically significant positive association with high job strain among the bank employees (OR=1.8, 95% CI=1.1-3.0; $p = 0.023$).

Conclusion and recommendations

The prevalence of high job strain among the bank employees in the Kesbewa DS area during the COVID-19 pandemic was high. Adequate measures to prevent and control COVID-19 within the workplace showed significant negative associations with high job strain among the bank employees. It is recommended to provide facilities to promote mental well-being among the bank employees during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Key words: Job strain, Bank employees, COVID-19 pandemic