

Gulf Perspectives On Mental Health: A Systematic Examination Of Disorders In Primary Health Care Settings

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Abstract

Background: The importance of mental health concerns to individual, community, and international healthcare is growing. The majority of health problems are also associated with mild to severe mental health conditions. The Arab Region—especially the Gulf Region—faces the same problem as other nations.

Aim: Evaluation of mental illnesses in primary care is the goal. Assess the diagnosis and prevalence of mental health issues in Gulf nations' primary healthcare systems. **Method:** A systematic review based significant research published between 2019 and 2023; a thorough search of databases including PubMed, Scopus, Web of Science, and CINAHL was carried out. The English-language publications that explicitly addressed mental health issues, mental illnesses, and the prevalence of mental disorders among them were chosen as the study's inclusion criteria. The selected papers also have to offer insightful information on team dynamics and employ

measuring instruments that are well recognized. Ten studies were included in the synthesis following initial screening and quality evaluation.

Results: Four subthemes—mental health challenges brought on by long work hours, burnout, workplace violence, working multiple night shifts, and various mental illnesses like anxiety, depression, stress, aggression, and burnout—have been identified within this systematic literature. Additionally, it indicates the prevalence of mental illnesses among female primary healthcare workers.

Conclusion: It is determined that several psychological problems, including stress, anxiety, and depression, are experienced by primary healthcare providers and are associated with their workload, shift work, and extended work hours. Those working in basic healthcare are also often among those who report suffering workplace violence. The primary healthcare of migrants was shown to be more anxious and melancholy owing to exhaustion and distinct cultural shifts. The systematic research also looks at the fact that female primary healthcare providers face higher mental health issues and problems than male counterparts.

Keywords: Gulf Perspectives, Arab Region, healthcare, Mental Health, Diagnosis, Primary Health Care Settings

Introduction

Individuals with mental problems differ from one another as do experiences with different mental illnesses. The nursing staff's attitude toward a patient with mental health concerns is determined by their education and training, which also affects their understanding of mental illness or mental disorders. (Patovirta, Tyerman, and Celestini, 2021). In addition to social and cultural factors, the lack or ineffectiveness of mental health laws and regulations in the context of healthcare may also be used to explain why discrimination against individuals with mental disorders is so common in the Arab world. While the gradual integration of mental health specialists into the mainstream healthcare system is a positive step toward the de-stigmatization of psychological diseases, more has to be done to address the stigmatizing behavior of medical staff toward mental illness. (Merhej, 2019).

Frontline healthcare workers suffered from psychological anguish during COVID-19; this was especially widespread in Saudi Arabia. In the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, the prevalence of severe psychological distress exceeded 27%. Multiple regression studies revealed that characteristics such as male gender, long hours worked, age, years of expertise, region, and usage of psychological services were associated with serious mental health concerns. The results pave the way

for the provision of specialized psychological healthcare services to prevent the advancement of mental illness at the individual and organizational levels (Alqutub et al., 2021; Refai et al., 2023).

Healthcare personnel who have worked in any of the aforementioned facilities have direct experience with both probable and proven instances. Employees face a lot of stress, anxiety, and depression. Hospital staff members are more likely to suffer from psychological issues, anxiety, and depression disorders if they work in the emergency department, critical care unit, or infections ward (Ali et al., 2020).

Kang et al. stated during the COVID-19 pandemic in China that preserving the emotional well-being of medical professionals is essential to controlling the global epidemic and safeguarding their own health. According to the most recent local study on the emotional toll that the COVID-19 epidemic is having on nurses in Riyadh, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, males were far more likely than women to experience the psychological strain of their work (Balay-Odao et al., 2021).

According to Sindhu et al. (2022), death anxiety is negatively yet substantially connected with optimism and life satisfaction in health professionals during COVID-19. Higher levels of life satisfaction were demonstrated by more upbeat healthcare practitioners. Optimism is a powerful mediator between life satisfaction and death anxiety among health professionals. While female health workers were shown to have a greater incidence of death fear, men health workers showed higher levels of optimism and life satisfaction (Sindhu et al., 2022).

Additionally, there was a strong correlation between family support, family income, prior experiences with psychiatric disease, and fear of infection and the anxiety and sadness experienced by female undergraduate nursing students regarding the possibility of catching COVID-19. Parental support was a predictor of students' stress levels. In conclusion, moderate levels of stress, anxiety, and depression were reported by female undergraduate nursing students (Albikawi, 2022).

Stress and hopelessness are common experiences for psychiatric nurses. Psychiatric nurses deal with a variety of difficult conditions, including treating violent and aggressive patients, treating patients who relapse often, and dealing with the grim prognosis of mental illnesses. According to Hasan, Elsayed, and Tumah's (2018) results, psychiatric nurses exhibited a range of work-related stress, depression, and coping strategies.

According to Qanash et al. (2021), extended shift work is associated with subpar health care and a lower quality of life. There were 1563 nurses from various departments who participated in the cross-sectional research. The findings indicated a connection between fatigue, low life satisfaction, and a bad social life and lengthy work hours and night shifts. Night shifts and extended work hours exceeding 12 hours are associated with chronic tiredness and the most common mishaps that nurses report. Sleepiness was the cause of these incidents.

Stigma around mental health is also present in the healthcare environment. According to a study, other nurses on staff stigmatize and have negative attitudes toward nurses who encounter psychiatric disturbances. Many nurses feel depressed or nervous, but they choose not to disclose it out of fear of stigma from other nurses who they believe to be stigmatized for having mental health problems. (İnan et al., 2019)

Alsharari (2019) did a cross-sectional study to examine the effects of night shift work on the psychological well-being and socialization of KSA nursing personnel. The research has 1521 nursing staff members who have taken part. The findings indicated that nurses assigned to night shifts had worse psychological well-being scores than nurses assigned to day shifts or shorter shifts.

Alsharari et al. (2021) investigated the effects of working night shifts on psychological problems and life satisfaction among KSA's nursing personnel using a correlational research. A total of 1256 nurses took part in the poll. The findings indicated a negative relationship between the nurses' staff's quality of life and working long hours or nights in Saudi Arabia.

Furthermore, the clinical setting has been associated with several physical, emotional, and mental stressors. The workplace itself, with its long shifts, task overload, and contacts with patients and their families, was identified as a significant cause of stress for nurses. These findings were consistent with previous study conducted in Riyadh (Almazana et al., 2019).

It has been demonstrated that nurses suffer from a variety of mental illnesses, including stress, anxiety, and depression, but they choose not to seek treatment for these conditions because of stigma or a lack of awareness (Murney et al., 2020).

Method

Research Objective:

Evaluating mental diseases in primary healthcare is the aim of the research. Assess the diagnosis and frequency in the Gulf nations as well.

Research Question:

This systematic review's research questions are as follows:

- Which mental illnesses affect primary care practitioners in the Gulf region?
- What are the diagnoses and frequency among Gulf nations' healthcare providers?

Literature Search Strategy:

Search of academic databases (PubMed, Scopus, Web of Science) identified relevant studies on mental healthcare in Gulf countries. Terms used: Mental Healthcare, Mental Disorder, Healthcare Providers, Nurses, Mental Health challenges.

Table 1. Syntax Search

| | |
|----------|--|
| Syntax 1 | "Mental health," "Primary healthcare provider," "Gulf countries:" |
| Syntax 2 | "Mental health issues," "Mental disorders", "Primary healthcare provider," "Gulf countries:" |
| Syntax 3 | "Mental health," "Mental disorders", "Frequency of disorder", "Primary healthcare provider," "Gulf countries:" |
| Syntax 4 | "Mental health Challenges," "Mental disorders", "Primary healthcare provider," "Gulf countries:" |

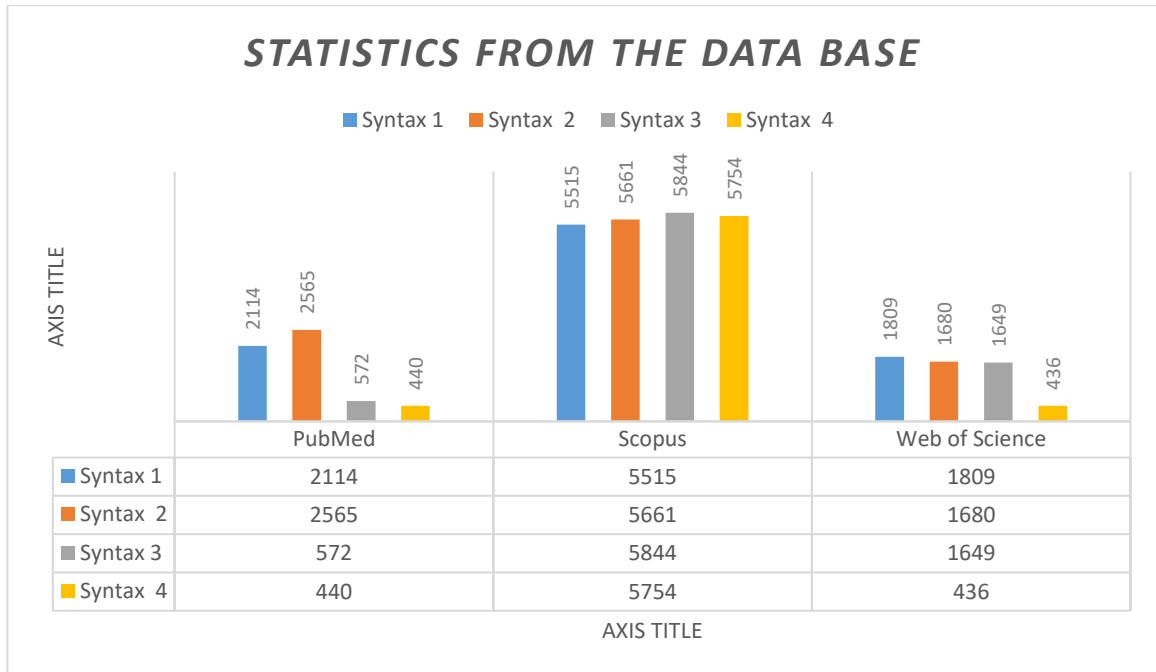
Table 2. Statistics from the Data Base

| No | Database | Syntax | Year | No of Researches |
|----|----------------|----------|-------------|------------------|
| 1 | PubMed | Syntax 1 | 2019 - 2023 | 2114 |
| | | Syntax 2 | | 2565 |
| | | Syntax 3 | | 572 |
| | | Syntax 4 | | 440 |
| 2 | Scopus | Syntax 1 | | 5,515 |
| | | Syntax 2 | | 5,661 |
| | | Syntax 3 | | 5,844 |
| | | Syntax 4 | | 2,754 |
| 3 | Web of Science | Syntax 1 | | 1,809 |
| | | Syntax 2 | | 1,680 |
| | | Syntax 3 | | 1649 |
| | | Syntax 4 | | 436 |

To ensure the latest and most relevant research, we meticulously searched three well-respected databases:

Scopus, PubMed, and Web of Science. Our focus was on publications from 2019 to 2023. The results were impressive. Scopus provided us with a staggering 19,764 research articles, showing its superiority. PubMed contributed an additional 5,691 items to the pool, while Web of Science added 5,574. These numbers underscore the thoroughness of our literature search and lay the groundwork for the subsequent stages of our systematic review.

Pictorial Representation of Research Data Base



.Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

The inclusion and exclusion criteria serve as the crucial benchmarks for this literature review, determining which studies are deemed suitable and which are not. The inclusion criteria encompass requirements such as utilizing English-language publications, focusing on full-text papers published from 2019 to 2023, and exploring the topic of nursing violence.

Furthermore, any research that fails to address the role of nurses in preoperative assessment is not documented in English literature, falls outside the specified timeframe of 2019 onwards, or relies on limited edition grey articles that lack comprehensive material, is unequivocally excluded from consideration.

Study Selection

Data search is done by selecting studies and identifying the search engine. Inclusion and exclusion criteria are used to identify the studies. Various databases and literary libraries are used for the research. Syntax is entered in the search field for literature searches.

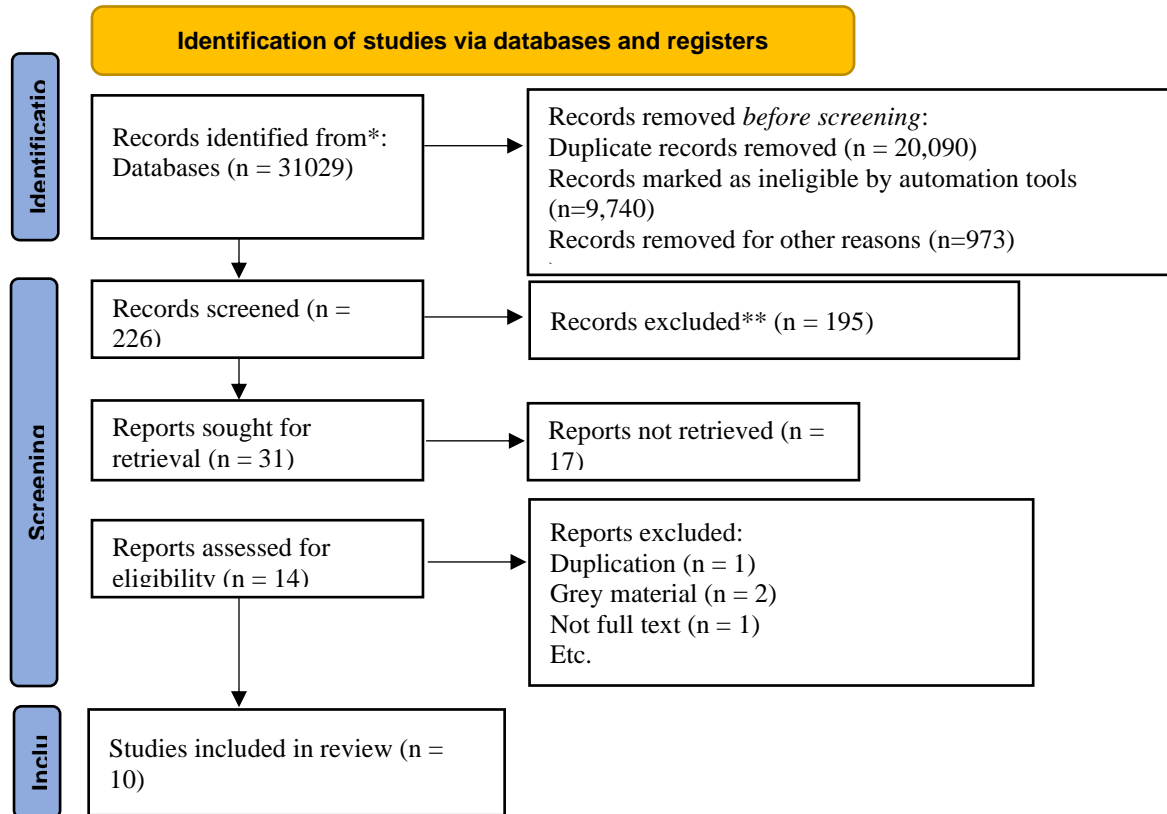
Table 3. Selected Studies for SR (Systematic Review)

| No | Author | Research | Year |
|----|-------------------------|--|------|
| 1 | Titi,Wahabi & Elmorshed | Mental health impact of the first wave of COVID-19 pandemic on healthcare workers in 12 Arab countries | 2022 |
| 2 | Hasan, Elsayed & Tumah | Occupational stress, coping strategies, and psychological-related outcomes of nurses working in psychiatric hospitals. | 2019 |
| 3 | Aldhamin & Al Saif | The mental health of healthcare workers in GCC countries during the COVID-19 pandemic: A systematic review and meta-analysis. | 2022 |
| 4 | El-Tallawy et al | Prevalence and risk factors associated with mental health symptoms among anesthetists in Saudi Arabia during the COVID-19 pandemic. | 2022 |
| 5 | Alsolais et al | Risk perceptions, fear, depression, anxiety, stress and coping among Saudi nursing students during the COVID-19 pandemic. | 2021 |
| 6 | Zaghloul et al | Mental health status of expatriate nurses in northcentral Saudi Arabia. | 2019 |
| 7 | Sultan et al | Impact of COVID-19 pandemic on psychological health of a sample of the health care workers in the western region of Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. | 2022 |
| 8 | Al Ammari et al | Mental health outcomes amongst health care workers during COVID 19 pandemic in Saudi Arabia | 2021 |
| 9 | Alyousef & Alhamidi | Exploring experiences of workplace violence and attempts to address violence among mental health nurses in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. | 2022 |
| 10 | Aruta et al | Measuring mental well-being among frontline nurses during the COVID-19 crisis: Evidence from Saudi Arabia | 2023 |

Study identification using databases and registrations

The basis for evaluating excellence is the answer to all of the literary puzzles. A great deal of information about research technique and the study to apply pressure is contained in this comprehensive review of the literature. The idea is supported by methodical evidence and the caliber of the chosen study, which includes information from peer-reviewed publications, the literature, comprehensive assessment, and quality control.

Identification of Studies via Database



Data Extraction

Utilizing a tool with precise inclusion and exclusion criteria is necessary for data extraction. These objectives include comprehensive information on the empirical data as well as particulars about the selected academics. Study features (e.g., authors, year of publication, study design), participant characteristics (e.g., sample size, healthcare profession), metrics for measuring job satisfaction and burnout, and important conclusions about job satisfaction, burnout levels, and their effects on team dynamics were among the information that was extracted.

Table 5. Research Matrix

| Author, Year | Aim of study | Methodology | Sample | Setting | Result |
|--------------|--------------|-------------|--------|---------|--------|
|--------------|--------------|-------------|--------|---------|--------|

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|----------------------------|--------------------------------|--|
| Aruta, J. J. B. R., Almazan, J. U., Alamri, M. S., Adolfo, C. S., & Gonzales, F. (2023) | Examine the structural validity, convergent validity, and reliability of the Warwick–Edinburgh Mental Well-Being Scale (WEMWBS) in professional nurses during the COVID-19 crisis | Survey design | 413 nurses in Saudi Arabia | Saudi Arabia | The WEMWBS demonstrated structural and convergent validity, as well as reliability in measuring mental well-being among nurses during the COVID-19 crisis. It can be used to screen mental well-being in times of public health crises. |
| Alyousef, S. M., & Alhamidi, S. A. (2022) | Explore mental health nurses' experiences with work-related violence and efforts to combat this violence in inpatient mental health facilities in Saudi Arabia | Qualitative exploratory study consisting of semi-structured interviews | 16 participants | Kingdom of Saudi Arabia | Nurses experienced violence, impacting work settings. Efforts required to combat violence were identified as two main themes with subthemes. |
| Alsolais, A., Alquwez, N., Alotaibi, K. A., Alqarni, A. S., Almalki, M., Alsolami, F., ... & Cruz, J. P. (2021) | Assess perceptions of risk, fear, mental health status, and coping strategies among Saudi student nurses amid the COVID-19 pandemic | Online survey, using the Depression, Anxiety and Stress Scale and Brief-Coping Orientation of Problem Experienced scale | 492 nursing students | KSA | Students had modest risk perception and fear of contracting COVID-19. "Religion" was the most frequently used coping strategy. Some students manifested degrees of depression, anxiety, and stress. Predictors of fear included poor COVID-19 knowledge, perceived seriousness, perceived risk, and certain coping strategies. |
| Titi, M., Wahabi, H., & Elmorshe dy, H. (2022) | Systematic review to evaluate the overall prevalence of depression in migrant workers | Systematic review of Saudi, Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) studies | 10 studies | Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) | The pooled depression prevalence among migrant workers in the GCC was 21%. Various risk factors contributing to high depression prevalence were identified, including workload, stressful environment, outstanding loans, substance |

| | | | | | |
|--|--|--|--|---|---|
| | | | | | use, and language barriers. |
| El-Tallawy, S. N., Titi, M. A., Ejaz, A. A., Abdulmoimen, A., Elmorsheedy, H., Aldammas, F., ... & Alqatari, A. (2022) | Evaluate mental health problems among anesthetists in Saudi Arabia by quantifying the severity of distress, anxiety, and depression symptoms | Cross-sectional, hospital-based online survey using Impact of Event Scale-Revised Questionnaires (IES-R) and Patient Health Questionnaire-4 (PHQ-4) | 296 respondents completed the survey | Saudi Arabia | Anesthetists in Saudi Arabia exhibited mental health vulnerabilities during the pandemic. Lack of confidence in infection control measures and stigmatization were identified as risk factors for distress, anxiety, and depression symptoms. |
| Sultan, S., Bashar, A., Noman, I., Tabassum, A., Iqbal, M. S., Fallata, E. O., ... & Rheem, S. (2022) | Evaluate the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the psychological health of health care workers | Survey containing measures of depression, anxiety, and stress, along with questions about COVID-19 perception, mental health support, and work-related factors | 283 health care workers participated | Kingdom of Saudi Arabia | 17.3% screened positive for depression, 26.2% for anxiety, and 17.3% for stress. Nurses reported significantly higher levels than doctors. Those receiving mental health support reported lesser symptoms. Those feeling a major impact on quality of life reported higher depression, anxiety, and stress. |
| Zaghloul, M. S., Saquib, J., AlMazrou, A., & Saquib, N. (2019) | Examine the mental health status of expatriate nurses in Northcentral Saudi Arabia | Electronic survey | Nurses (n = 999) from India, the Philippines/Indonesia, Pakistan, and Arab countries | Governmental hospitals in Al-Qassim, Saudi Arabia | Arab nurses were five times more likely to suffer from severe depression and stress compared to Filipino/Indonesian nurses. Results were similar for stress. Depression and stress varied significantly by nationality among expatriate nurses. |
| Aldhamin, R. A., & Al Saif, A. Z. (2022) | Summarize the available evidence on the prevalence of stress, burnout, | Systematic review and meta-analysis of studies published | 19 studies | Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries | Found a pooled estimate of prevalence for moderate to severe anxiety, depression, and |

| | | | | | |
|---|---|-------------------------------------|---|---|--|
| | anxiety and depression among healthcare providers | between January 2020 and April 2021 | | (KSA, Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, and the United Arab Emirates) | stress. Meta-analysis was not performed for burnout due to the small number of identified studies and the different tools used. A positive trend was observed over time for moderate to severe anxiety and depression. Significant heterogeneity was present among the studies, and many studies were of poor quality. |
| Hasan, A. A., Elsayed, S., & Tumah, H. (2019) | Assess workplace stress, coping strategies, and levels of depression among psychiatric nurses | Descriptive correlation design | 70 psychiatric nurses working in mental health settings | Port-Said, Egypt | Found that psychiatric nurses exhibited moderate levels of work-related stress and depression, utilizing various coping strategies. Stress and depression were prevalent among psychiatric nurses.. |
| Aruta, J. J. B. R., Almazan, J. U., Alamri, M. S., Adolfo, C. S., & Gonzales, F. (2023) | Examine the structural validity, convergent validity, and reliability of the Warwick–Edinburgh Mental Well-Being Scale (WEMWBS) in professional nurses during the COVID-19 crisis | Survey design | 413 nurses in Saudi Arabia | Saudi Arabia | The WEMWBS demonstrated structural and convergent validity, as well as reliability in measuring mental well-being among nurses during the COVID-19 crisis. It can be used to screen mental well-being in times of public health crises. |

Quality Assessment

We assessed the methodological quality and risk of bias of the studies included in this research using appropriate tools tailored to different study designs. This rigorous evaluation guarantees that the findings are reliable and serve as a valuable source of knowledge. **Table 6. Assessment of the**

literature quality matrix

| Author | Are the selection of studies described appropriately | Is the literature covered all relevant studies | Does the method section describe? | Were findings clearly described? | Quality rating |
|---------------------------|--|--|-----------------------------------|----------------------------------|----------------|
| Alyousef & Alhamidi | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Acceptable |
| Zaghloul et al | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Acceptable |
| Aruta et al | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Acceptable |
| Al Ammari et al | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Acceptable |
| Sultan et al | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Acceptable |
| El-Tallawy et al | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Acceptable |
| Titi, Wahabi & Elmorshedy | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Acceptable |
| Aldhamin & Al Saif | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Acceptable |
| Alsolais et al | Yes | No | Yes | Yes | Acceptable |
| Hasan, Elsayed & Tumah | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Acceptable |

The studies included in the systematic review have appropriate descriptions about studies, and the method section is described clearly and properly. Overall, most of the studies included a clear description of the selection process, adequate coverage of the literature, and a detailed methodology section. Furthermore, the majority of the time, the study's findings was clearly stated. As a result, these studies were given a "Good" quality rating.

Results

Table 7. Themes and Sub-themes for the Results of the Systematic Review:

The following four sub-themes have been observed among the studies, including in the systematic review.

| Themes | Sub-themes |
|--|--|
| 1. Mental Disorders among the Primary Healthcare during Pandemic | 1.1 Anxiety among the Primary Healthcare |
| | 1.2 Depression among the Primary Healthcare |
| | 1.3 Stress among the Primary Healthcare |
| | 1.4 Psychotic Features of the Psychiatric Primary Healthcare |
| | 1.5 Aggression among the Primary Healthcare |
| 2. Mental Disorders among the Migrant Primary Healthcare | |
| 3. Frequency of Mental Disorders among the Female Primary Healthcare | |
| 4. Mental health-challenged | 4.1 Mental Health challenges due to long hours of work |
| | 4.2 Mental Health Challenges due to burnout |
| | 4.3 Mental health Challenges due to workplace violence |
| | 4.4 Mental health Challenges due to frequent night shifts |

Discussion:

The Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) comprises the nations of Qatar, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Oman, Kuwait, and Bahrain, all located in the Middle East and characterized by high income and shared social, religious, and ethnic traits. Additionally, these GCC countries face similar health challenges and opportunities. Nevertheless, the insufficient allocation of resources for mental health services may hinder the advancement of psychological well-being services and the fulfillment of community needs. A recent systematic analysis of mental health issues in the population of Saudi Arabia during the pandemic reported lower incidence rates compared to our study, with depression, stress, and anxiety showing rates exceeding 20%. The variance between previously published data and current findings could be attributed to different time ranges in the studies (Alsaywid et al., 2020).

A recent study has found that migrant healthcare workers are particularly prone to experiencing psychological distress. The study highlights the numerous social, cultural, economic, and psychological challenges that migrants face because of their migration. Migration, which involves the permanent or temporary relocation of individuals from one region to

another, is a prevalent phenomenon worldwide (Alzahrani, 2020).

Moreover, this study has also revealed the prevalence of various psychiatric disorders among migrant healthcare workers. In comparison to other Gulf countries such as Bahrain, where over 10% of migrant workers suffer from depression (Almubark et al., 2020), the rate of depression found in this investigation was relatively lower. However, the research conducted by Hasan et al. (2021) reported a total frequency of 39% for depressive disorders among migrant workers in Qatar in 2021.

Interestingly, the current study demonstrates a wide range of prevalence for four mental health outcomes: anxiety, stress, depressive disorders, and burnout. This variability can be attributed to several factors, including the timing of data collection. For instance, the lowest recorded frequency of anxiety was observed in a study conducted in February 2020 in KSA, prior to the country's first outbreak (Pappa et al., 2020).

Moreover, the presentation of challenges to psychological well-being, emotional distress, and even clinically defined mental disorders exhibits significant variations in difficulty, intensity, intricacy, associated disability, duration, and risks. Often, a diagnosis does not readily translate into an immediate need for intervention (Park et al., 2020). Given the considerable comorbidity typical in mental disorders, General Practitioners (GPs) may face additional challenges in establishing the correlation between specific conditions and supporting evidence for particular treatments (Wittchen, Mühlig & Beesdo, 2022).

Female healthcare professionals, when compared to the general population, are more likely to encounter various risks associated with psychological disorders, such as inconsistent doctor-patient relationships, apprehension about patient mortality, and increased governmental oversight of professional duties.

Moreover, the advent of COVID-19 imposes an additional psychological burden on healthcare personnel, encompassing fears of infection, social isolation, and a heightened sense of urgency at work. Previous studies have highlighted significant emotional and psychological strains among healthcare staff due to the COVID-19 pandemic (Mosheva et al., 2020). Addressing the mental health repercussions of COVID-19 is a critical challenge during the pandemic. However, existing research has predominantly focused on analyzing the mental responses of the entire medical staff, with limited attention given to primary healthcare professionals (Balay-Odao et al., 2021).

Suggestions

Future research should consider incorporating unpublished data and reports from governmental and non-governmental

organizations, as well as seeking input from subject-matter experts. Additionally, it is advisable to investigate the factors contributing to mental health challenges encountered by primary healthcare providers.

Limitation

This systematic review is limited by the inclusion of only published papers, which may introduce publication bias. Vital insights from unpublished or grey literature regarding emergency planning and response capability in Gulf countries could have been overlooked.

Recommendations

Future researchers should delve into the factors affecting the mental health of migrants. They should also investigate the prevalence of mental health disorders across different genders, age groups, and levels of education in primary healthcare settings. Furthermore, there is a need to address the current research gaps in order to establish a more robust connection with psychological assessment and mitigate the challenges faced by migrants.

Conclusion

Primary healthcare providers often experience a variety of psychological disorders, including anxiety, depression, and stress, which are closely linked to heavy workloads, long hours, and shift work. Moreover, violence in the work setting is a common occurrence among these professionals. Additionally, migrant primary healthcare workers often suffer from increased levels of depression and anxiety due to cultural adjustments and burnout. Furthermore, a systematic review has revealed that female primary healthcare providers face more mental health disorders and challenges compared to their male counterparts.

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