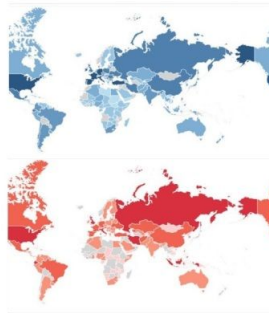

COVID-19: Outcomes in Healthcare Staff



A new study explores the data on COVID-19 infections and deaths among healthcare workers around the world and outlines some implications for policy and practice.

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A systematic review analysed the data on COVID-19 from 586 citations until 8 May 2020, to assess the rates of COVID-19 infections and deaths in healthcare workers in the beginning of the pandemic in different regions/countries and demographics.

Overall 152,888 HCWs were infected with and 1,413 died of COVID-19, which represents 3.9% and 0.5% of the global case count respectively. The majority of infections were recorded in women (71.6%) and nurses (38.6%) whereas fatal outcomes were mostly in men (70.8%) and doctors (51.4%). Within the period the highest absolute numbers of infections and deaths were registered in Europe, and the highest mortality rate in the Eastern Mediterranean.

Other major findings of the study include:

- The majority of infections and deaths in HCWs were reported in the 50-59 age range, and the highest mortality rate in the group aged over 70 years. The median age was 47.3 years for those infected and 56.2 years for those who died.
- Infections were seen more in nurses, deaths more in doctors.
- Among doctors, general practitioners were at the highest risk of death, among nurses those working in mental health.
- At that time, Europe reported the highest number of deaths and Africa the lowest.

The authors outline some implications and recommendations based on their findings. They stress that HCWs protection “must be a core element of any pandemic response” and call for the relevant measures to be put in place including infection control, PPE availability, timely diagnostics and treatment of the disease in HCWs, protection of vulnerable HCW populations and well-being support. It is also advised to develop universal guidelines for COVID-19-related classification, testing and reporting; to establish an international HCW infection registry; and to ensure equity through international agreements.

Image credit: Bandyopadhyay et al. (2020)

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