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Background:

The massive spread of the corona virus being relatively deadly, leads to psychological pressures dominated by an atmosphere of panic and worries mainly among Health Care workers (HCWs). Only few studies have evaluated this impact on HCWs mental health in Tunisia.

Aim:

we aimed at determining the prevalence of corona virus fear and its associated factors among HCWs in the University Hospital Tahar Sfar Mahdia (Tunisia).

Methods:

We conducted a cross sectional study among HCWs staff in the University Hospital Tahar Sfar Mahdia which is located in the Central-East part of Tunisia in December 2020. The fear of corona virus disease was assessed using the valid French version of the Fear of Covid-19 Scale (FCV-7).

Results:

A total of 173 professionals were recruited with a mean age of 35.35 ± 9.31 years. Among them, 66% were women. One third of participants (33.3%) were medical professionals. Almost, 68% have experienced a high level of fear. Our survey showed a significantly higher level of fear among females 70.1% and elderly people 60.8%. It was positively associated ($p < 0.05$) with anxiety and depression, high risk perception and the responsibility degree of being a virus vector for their loved ones. Anxiety and depression disorders (standardized $\beta = 3.118$, $CI = 0.545-5.832$, $p = 0.018$), high risk perception ($\beta = 3.321$, $CI = 0.097-6.545$, $p = 0.044$), knowledge about Covid-19 transmission ($\beta = 2.586$, $CI = 0.439-4.734$, $p = 0.019$), degree of responsibility ($\beta = 3.130$, $CI = 0.373-5.887$, $p = 0.026$), being a doctor ($\beta = -6.475$, $CI = -8.785-4.165$, $p = 0.001$) and Perceived Vulnerability to Disease ($\beta = 0.26$, $CI = 0.157-0.363$, $p < 0.001$) were found to be predictive factors of corona virus fear in the linear regression model (Adjusted $R^2 = 0.374$).

Conclusions:

Authorities should introduce a preventive strategy based on psychological intervention for HCWs to overcome their fear and worries.

Key messages:

- The high prevalence of the fear of Covid-19 among health care workers is alarming. Its impact on mental health cannot be ignored.
- The health authorities worldwide should not have as objective only the reduction of the transmission, but also the work on individual fears to ensure a society totally free of covid-19.

The fear of Covid-19 and its predictive factors among health care workers in Mahdia Tunisia

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