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480

"The Usual Challenges of Work Are All Magnified": Australian Paediatric Health Professionals' Experiences During the COVID-19 Pandemic

F. Akram^{1,2,*}, M. Pidcock^{1,2}, D. Oake^{1,2}, G. Sholler^{1,3}, M. Farrar^{2,4}, N. Kasparian^{5,6}

¹ Heart Centre for Children, The Sydney Children's Hospitals Network, Sydney, NSW, Australia

² Discipline of Paediatrics and Child Health, School of Clinical Medicine, UNSW Medicine and Health, The University Of New South Wales, Sydney, NSW, Australia

³ Paediatrics and Child Health, University of Sydney, Sydney, NSW, Australia

⁴ Department of Neurology, Randwick, Sydney Children's Hospital, Sydney, NSW, Australia

⁵ Cincinnati Children's Center for Heart Disease and Mental Health, Heart Institute and the Division of Behavioral Medicine and Clinical Psychology, Cincinnati Children's Hospital Medical Center, Cincinnati, OH, USA

⁶ Department of Pediatrics, University of Cincinnati College of Medicine, Cincinnati, OH, USA

Background: The COVID-19 pandemic has significantly increased stress and strain on health professionals. Focussing on paediatric cardiac care, this study explored health professionals' concerns about COVID-19, perceptions of positive and adverse effects of the pandemic on healthcare, and experiences of psychological distress.

Methods: Paediatric health professionals from a large quaternary hospital service in Australia were invited to complete an online survey between June 2020 and February 2021. Demographics, clinical role characteristics, and anxiety and depressive symptoms were assessed. Qualitative data on experiences and perceived effects of the pandemic on paediatric cardiac care were also collected.

Results: 228 health professionals from diverse disciplines (152 nurses, 37 medical doctors, 22 allied and mental health professionals, 17 research and administrative staff) participated (54% response rate, 85% women). Half the sample (52%) endorsed 'moderate' to 'extreme' worry about COVID-19 and 38% of participants perceived health care services as adversely impacted by the pandemic to a 'great' or 'very great' extent. Almost one in five health professionals reported anxiety (18%) and 11% reported depressive symptoms indicative of a need for clinical intervention. Six themes were identified in the qualitative data: (1) Concern about the consequences of visitor restrictions and disrupted patient services, (2) Intensified strain on healthcare workers, (3) Feelings of fear and loss, (4) Social isolation and disconnection, (5) Adapting to change, and (6) Gratitude.

Discussion: Timely, tailored policies, supports, and interventions are needed to address health professionals' mental health needs during and beyond the pandemic, to minimise the far-reaching impact of situational stressors.

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481

What is Known About Critical Congenital Heart Disease Diagnosis and Management Experiences From the Perspectives of Family and Healthcare Providers? A Systematic Integrative Literature Review

S. Watkins*, F. Bloomfield, T. Gentles, O. Isichei, K. Ward

Liggins Institute, The University Of Auckland, Auckland, New Zealand, for the ECHO steering group

Background: The experience of diagnosis, decision-making and management of Critical Congenital Heart Disease (CCHD) is complex and taxing for families and clinicians. We systematically reviewed evidence relating to the family and healthcare provider experience of CCHD diagnosis and its management.

Method: A systematic integrative review identified relevant articles by keyword search in Medline (Ovid), PsycINFO, Cochrane, Cumulative Index to Nursing and Allied Health Literature (CINAHL Plus), Journal of Indigenous Research and Midwifery Journal from 1990–2021. Articles were included that met criteria related to the study question. A quality assessment applied Critical Appraisal Skills Programme and Mixed Methods Appraisal tools. Thematic analysis occurred in four phases: Data codes extracted, and tabulated, common themes refined then finalised by group consensus.

Results: Of 1,817 papers identified and screened, 22 met the inclusion criteria. We identified three themes:

1. The diagnosis and treatment of a CCHD child significantly impacts parental health and wellbeing.
2. The way that healthcare and information are provided influences parental response and adaptation, and
3. Parental responses and adaptation can be influenced by how and when support occurs.

We found that minority groups, immigrants, and more deprived social circumstances are underrepresented. One study explored health care provider experience with evidence that providers' perspectives on caring for and managing CCHD are lacking.

Conclusion: The experience of diagnosis and management of a CCHD child is stressful and life-changing for families. The way information and support are provided may be key in alleviating this, but there are few data to guide health care providers, particularly when interacting with minority groups. Research focussing on the experience of minority groups and their interaction with healthcare providers is needed.

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