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Fear of COVID-19 and workplace phobia among Pakistani doctors: A survey study



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Abstract

Background: The novel coronavirus disease-2019 (COVID-19) has seriously affected the lives of millions of people across the world. It has also heavily burdened healthcare professionals and the virus poses serious risks for their personal and professional lives. Therefore, the present study examined the associations between fear of COVID-19 and workplace phobia among doctors in Pakistan during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Methods: An online survey was conducted among 421 doctors in Pakistan between April 10 and May 25, 2020. The Workplace Phobia Scale (WPS) and the Fear of COVID-19 Scale (FCV-19S) were the main psychometric instruments used in this study.

Results: There was a significant positive relationship between fear of COVID-19 and workplace panic anxiety and workplace avoidance behavior. Significantly higher fear of COVID-19 was found among (i) females compared to males, (ii) doctors with 5 years or less of work experience compared to those with more than 5 years, and (iii) postgraduate trainees compared with other ranks. Two groups (doctors who were above 30 years old and postgraduate trainees) were found to have higher levels of workplace phobia compared to their counterparts. Doctors with severe levels of fear of COVID-19 had significantly higher levels of workplace panic anxiety and workplace avoidance behavior.

Conclusions: Fear of COVID-19 was significantly associated with workplace phobia which may negatively affect doctors' performance. Therefore, important steps are needed to protect doctors' health by providing sufficient resources to allay their fears and anxieties which consequently help them in carrying out their frontline duties in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Keywords: Fear of COVID-19, Workplace phobia, Doctors, Workplace panic anxiety, Avoidance behavior

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understand the severity of the problem and how to cope up with it.

Conclusion

The present study examined the associations between fear of COVID-19 and workplace phobia among doctors in Pakistan during the COVID-19 pandemic. It was found that there were significant positive associations between fear of COVID-19 and workplace phobia (i.e., workplace panic anxiety and workplace avoidance behavior). Also, females, postgraduate trainees, and those with five or less years of working experience had significantly higher levels of fear of COVID-19 compared to their counterparts. Furthermore, two groups (doctors who were more than 30 years old and postgraduate trainees) had significantly higher levels of workplace phobia compared to their counterparts. Additionally, doctors with severe levels of fear of COVID-19 had higher levels of workplace panic anxiety and workplace

phobia among the participants. All methods were performed in accordance with the relevant guidelines and regulations.

Consent for publication

Not applicable.

Competing interests

The authors declare that they have no competing interests.

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