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Problem solving and decision making

Task two

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Impact of stress on healthcare workers before and during Covid 19

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1. Introduction

This report will discuss a definition of a complex problem including its scope and impacts within the healthcare industry. As well as proposing a range of solutions using decision making tools such as SWOT and Fishbone (Ishikawa) analysis and to identify the most appropriate options. Moreover, this report will communicate this plan to stakeholders.

This report will focus on the impact of stress on healthcare workers before and during Covid 19. The pandemic has touched so many people, particularly those on the front lines that it is critical to understand more how it is affecting their lives and mental states, as well as what can be done to assist them. Healthcare providers, who are working on the frontlines during the pandemic, are perceived to be overwhelmed and experiencing burnout, even posttraumatic stress disorder. Koontalay, A et al (2021).

2. Complex problems and its scope healthcare workers faced during Covid 19 pandemic.

Covid-19 has proved to be a challenge for everybody in this world. It rapidly affected individuals' everyday lives and routines, which forced many countries into lock down to prevent the virus spreading. However, hospitals had to continue to stay open and work at extreme levels whereas frontliners of the healthcare industry had to work even harder providing care for their patients who were seriously in need of medical care, despite being physically drained themselves. Greenberg, N et al (2020) states Healthcare staff are at increased risk of moral injury and mental health problems when dealing with challenges of Covid-19 pandemic. According to Nyashanuim, M et al (2020) "we didn't know where to start from and what to do it was all confusion as this was a new pandemic never to have been experienced in health and social care set up".

The burden of Covid-19 on healthcare workers have had a significant impact on them, with many working longer hours with an increased workload therefore, missing their family time.

Furthermore, there is a higher risk of infections to frontliners with a fear of passing it on to family members therefore leading them to isolate and shielding away from their families in fear they will pass the virus on, leaving them to feel lonely.

According to the Guardian. (2020) A questionnaire was shared among 996 healthcare workers showing 50% of workers mental health had deteriorated since the virus began taking its toll. Furthermore, not only are health workers working on the frontline to care for their patients but are at greater risk of catching the virus themselves, but they also face prominent levels of distress this can lead to:

- Depression
- Anxiety
- Burnout
- Insomnia
- Post-traumatic stress
- Moral distress

Sritharan, et al (2020) stated frontline healthcare professionals described the most affected health symptoms as depression, anxiety, and poor sleep/insomnia followed by stress and fear. Evidence has shown that overworked individuals can become withdrawn through burnout leading to medical errors with their patients.

Health care workers experience emotional exhaustion which may lead to medical errors, lack of empathy in treating patients, lower productivity, and higher turnover rates. Shreffler, et al (2020). Evidence also shows 60% of healthcare workers such as physicians, nurses, and pharmacists have experienced burnout after their extreme workloads as well as working overtime have affected their ability to manage the demands of their work, and to ensure patients safety also showing lack of high-quality care. Koontalay, et al (2021). Furthermore, studies suggest professionals working on the frontline have not been equipped with enough PPE to protect themselves from Covid-19 virus moreover, surgical masks have been poorly made increasing its risks of healthcare workers catching the virus. This has implemented anxiety and fear. According to (BBC NEWS. 2020.) lack of PPE is creating a burden of immense distress and heightened levels of anxiety for the healthcare workers. As a result of insomnia amongst healthcare individuals working tirelessly and overtime has led to stressful situations where nurses have found it hard to concentrate and focus on their duties. Causing workplace accidents. It has also been associated with decreased productivity and lower levels of satisfaction with their work performance. Maria, J, et al, (2021).

As shown in the picture below a survey indicated that during Covid-19 pandemic 18% of healthcare workers left their role whilst 12% of healthcare were laid off. Furthermore, 31% of

healthcare workers who remained on the job have considered on leaving. Whereas the national workforce shortage has impacted 79% of health workers and their workplace. A further study reported that 50.4% of healthcare workers suffered high levels of depression and 71.5% have been suffering with psychological distress whereas 44.6% have been suffering with insomnia. Sahebi, A et al (2021).

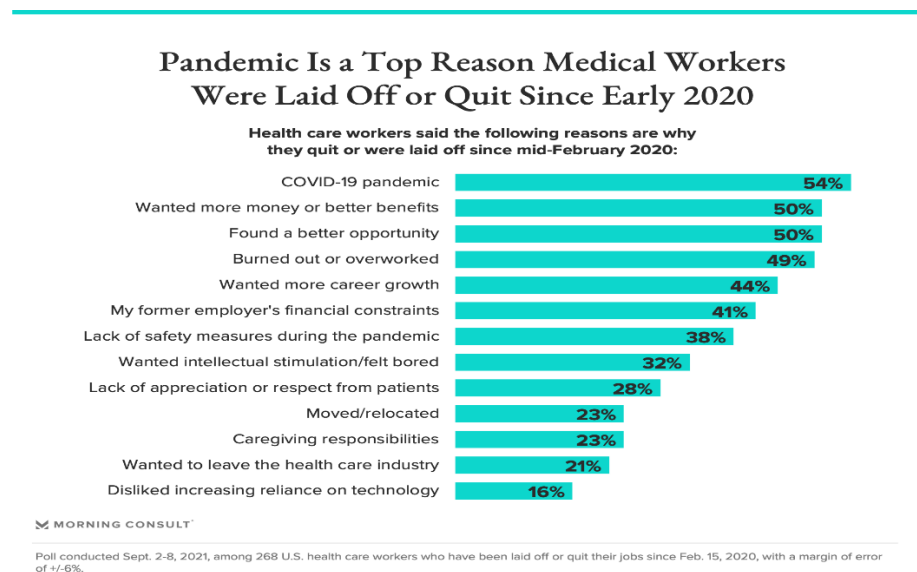


Figure 1

3. Proposing a range of solutions to the problem

3.1 Fishbone (Ishikawa) diagram

When attempting to find the cause of the problem, fishbone (Ishikawa) diagrams are excellent for brainstorming ideas. Cause and effect can help think through the problem thoroughly including its root causes as well as proposing possible solutions. East London Trust (n.d)

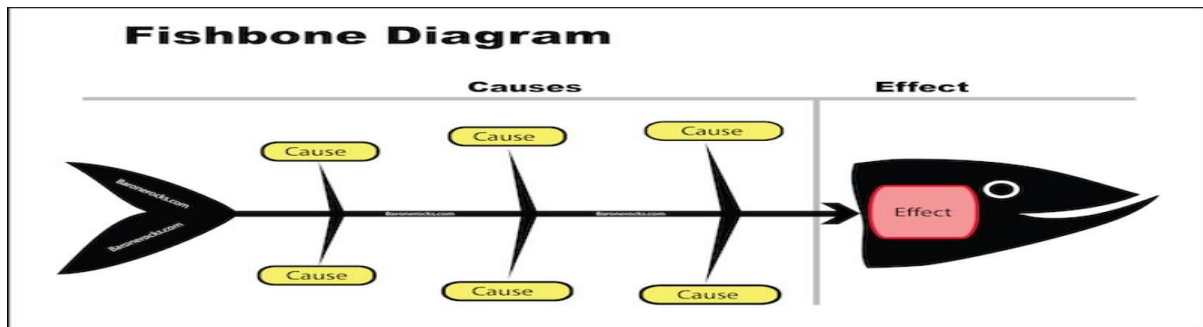


Figure 2

Cause 1 = People

- Longer working hours
- Increased workload
- Burnout
- Physically distressed
- Lonely

Cause 2 = Environment

- Lack of training
- Not enough emotional support
- Accidents to their patients

Cause 3 = Materials

- Lack of PPE surgical masks, protective gowns, and gloves

Cause 4 = procedure

- No family time
- No time for themselves

Stating the cause

- Healthcare workers are in critical distress

Research has shown healthcare workers are in distress due to increased workloads and working overtime due to the Covid-19 pandemic caring for their ill patients. Furthermore, they are having to isolate away from their families causing them to feel lonely. However, lack of training as well as lack of PPE equipment has caused burnout bringing factors of

depression, insomnia, anxiety, and moral distress. Leading to accidents in their workplaces.

3.2 SWOT analysis

SWOT analysis is abbreviated as strength, weakness, opportunity, and threat. SWOT analysis will help to find the identifying problems, their company's strengths, and weaknesses as well as opportunities and threats. A more understanding of the problems and strategic planning and decision making. SWOT analysis was designed for business and industry however, it can be used for community health and development, and even personal growth. However, SWOT analysis is not the sole method for assessing the problem. Compare this approach to the other evaluation tools in the community box to see whether it is appropriate for the situation. The key advantages of this are its simplicity and flexibility to a range of levels of operation. Renault, (2018).

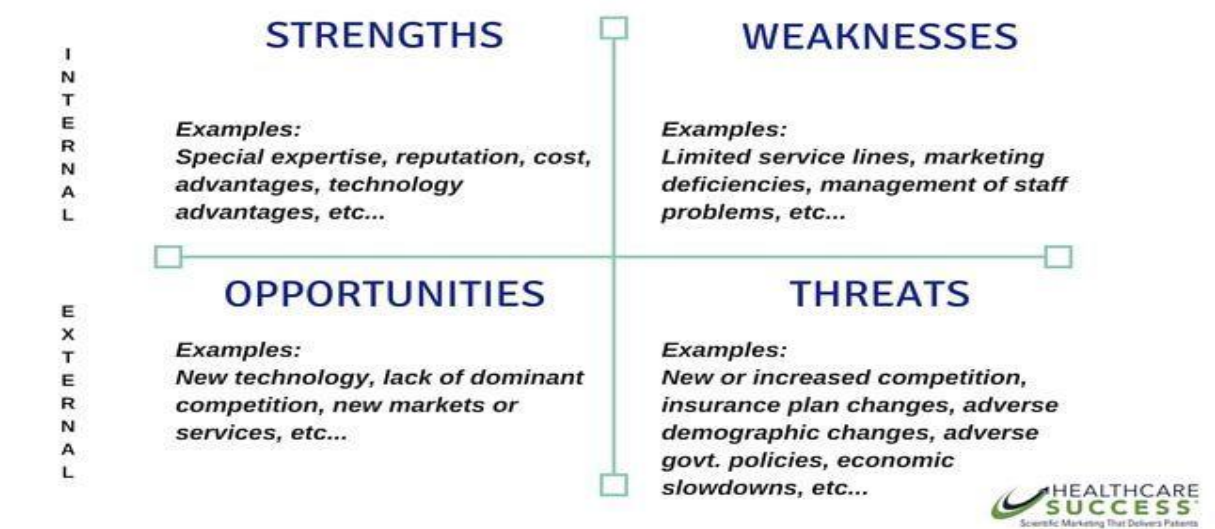


Figure 3

Strengths

- Working together

Weaknesses

- Lack of motivation
- Health issues
- Lack of PPE

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Opportunity

- Further training

Threats

- Burnout
- Making mistakes

Healthcare workers working on the frontline during the Covid-19 pandemic are facing health issues within their workplaces which is a major concern. This mean hospital settings and those who are employees are in crisis and in distress. The health workers are not receiving the emotional or wellness support that they sustainably need. There is also lack of training among the healthcare workers, causing work overload and longer working hours causing burnout and insomnia. Furthermore, there is a shortage of protective equipment in their work settings to protect them on the frontlines from the infection which is causing them anxiety.

Hospitals can face difficulties in productivity, and this can lead to shortage of staff due to health issues at they have encountered i.e., depression but also could be they are having to isolate because they have contracted the virus. Furthermore, the lower levels of productivity on the workers can cause burnout leading to accidents in the hospitals and to their patients. However, these issues can create chaos and lose patient trust. By following the proper strategies for the development of the healthcare industry and using the solution process it can help and benefit the healthcare workers in their workplaces in a healthier way. Good work enhances people's health and well-being, not only economically but also in quality of life. Excellent work entails not just a safe working environment, but also a sense of security, autonomy. Good line management and communication within an organisation. GOV-UK. (n.d.).

4. Solution to the problems

Healthcare officials may use the fishbone (Ishikawa) diagram to help improve healthcare workers mental state by proposing a list of solutions to the problems. Furthermore, using this method can impose ways to improve safety and quality and minimize adverse events like, accidents that occur in hospitals due to healthcare workers extreme tiredness and work overload.

5. Implanting the solution

5.1 Leadership

With better leadership skills health workers can feel safe and supported. This can be done by establishing a good and supportive workplace culture expert evaluation of team strengths and flaws. All levels of leadership should engage in proactive outreach and crisis support. Increased worker resilience and stress levels by creativity and innovation.

5.2 Communication

Communication, cooperation, and teamwork is proven to be a key tool. It is critical to provide clear, transparent, timely, and trustworthy information. Organizations should be prepared to provide timely and reliable assistance ahead of a crisis pandemic. However, promoting positive organisational practices such as, flexible working schedules, reduced hours, and job rotations can provide healthier benefits. Also, to distribute accessible self-care and wellness information and resources widely.

5.3 Education

Provides better resources and training for future pandemics.

5.4 Social support

healthcare workers need to have a feeling of community and togetherness. In order for this to happen creativity and innovation need to be in place. Holding virtual meeting and even virtual lunch/coffee breaks and help to increase team mental well-being. Furthermore, organize a schedule structured peer meeting during their working hours to ease feelings of loneliness, and boost their sense of effectiveness. Also creating a buddy system to monitor and balance each other's stress levels is great for morale motivation and productivity. Quitangon, et al (2020).

5. Communicate plan to stake holders

Patients, nurses, employees, employers, and government and just some examples of stakeholders in healthcare. A stakeholder is an individual or a group of individuals who collectively have a vested interest in the success of a project or organisation. Kimberly, (2021). To solve the issues within the healthcare sector, healthcare workers mental health needs to be addressed and resolved. Using the solutions above will enable staff to have more productivity and motivation in their workplaces. And standards of care with their patients could be improved.

Conclusion

This report has shown many topics discussed around problems in the workplace through my research such as, journals and articles across the internet showing its scope and statistics. The main problem in the workplace discussed was based on complex problems healthcare workers faced during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Evidence showed their mental health had extremely deteriorated since the start of the Covid-19 pandemic causing, depression, anxiety, burnout. Insomnia and lonesome. Therefore, affecting their duties at their workplaces. By applying solutions to the problem such as, the fishbone (Ishikawa) as it can help think through the problem as well as propose possible solutions.

In conclusion this report has explained and proposed different strategies to help organisations aid their healthcare workers to better and healthier work life. By applying the range of solutions stated in this report such as, leadership skills social support and, to provide better resources and training in case of another pandemic.

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