BMHP6020 Independent Project
Element 1: Project Proposal
Exploring the Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic on Mental Health and Coping Strategies Among Healthcare Workers

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Aim

This research aims to study the COVID-19 pandemic impact on the mental health and wellbeing of healthcare employees, as well as the stress coping strategies initiated in relation to work. It attempts to highlight identified and documented patterns in relation to wellbeing, in order to identify challenges and lessons for the development of strategies aimed at the wellbeing of the workforce (World Health Organization 2023).

Objectives

1. Define and examine the psychological effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on healthcare professionals, including anxiety, burnout, and depression (Chutiyami et. al., 2022).
2. Analyse existing research on coping strategies and mental-health interventions used by healthcare workers during the pandemic (Greenberg et al. 2020).
3. Evaluate organisational responses and support services provided to healthcare staff within the NHS and similar healthcare settings (Royal College of Nursing n.d.).
4. Provide recommendations for improving future occupational mental-health support systems in health and social-care environments (WHO 2023).

Background / Rationale

The global COVID-19 pandemic scaled the effects on healthcare systems, overworking and overstressing healthcare professionals (Bohlken et al., 2020). Burnout, anxiety and post-trauma stress disorder cases were on the rise and multiple studies documented the phenomenon among employees who had to work on the frontline (Chutiyami et. al. 2022). The study of crisis coping mechanisms among these healthcare professionals is vital to the development of recommendations on how to strengthen resilience and workforce wellbeing.

During the pandemic in the UK, NHS staff faced challenges such as shortage of protective equipment and psychological scars from witnessing patient fatalities (Royal College of Nursing, n.d.). This research is therefore valuable as it contributes to ongoing discussions in in health and social care in regard to mental health and emotional well-being, and professionally oriented workplace culture and sustainability. Through analysing secondary data and recent literature, the study will highlight effective coping mechanisms and identify systemic gaps requiring organisational attention (WHO 2023).

Methods

This study will employ secondary research using peer-reviewed journal articles, NHS reports, and government publications published between 2020 and 2025 (Greenberg et al. 2020; Chutiyami et. al., 2022). Sources will be selected for relevance, credibility, and recency. A thematic analysis will be conducted to identify common mental-health challenges and coping strategies. Ethical considerations include accurate citation of all sources, avoidance of plagiarism, and critical evaluation of authors' findings. Data will be organised according to recurring themes such as emotional impact, organisational support, and resilience practices, with conclusions drawn to inform future workforce wellbeing policy (WHO 2023).

Resources

- Online databases: PubMed, ScienceDirect, Google Scholar, UWTSD Library.
- Software: Microsoft Word, Zotero (for referencing).

Timescale

- Week 1-3: Proposal development, review and approval
- Weeks 4-6: Methodology development, review and approval
- Week 7-9: Background development, review and approval
- Weeks 10-12: Data organisation and thematic analysis (methods)
- Weeks 13–15: Draft writing to include results and discussion, recommendations and conclusion as well as introduction
- Weeks 16-18: Editing, proofreading, and submission preparation.

Self-Reflection as Researcher

My strengths include critical analysis and effective time management, which will support completion of this project. A key challenge may be synthesising extensive literature efficiently. I aim to develop stronger academic-writing and referencing skills while enhancing my understanding of mental-health policy in health-care settings (Royal College of Nursing, n.d.).

References

Bohlken, J., Schömig, F., Lemke, M.R., et al. (2020) *COVID-19 Pandemic: Stress Experience of Healthcare Workers*. Psychiatry and Clinical Neurosciences, 74(8), 405-406.

Chutiyami, M., Cheong, A.M., Salihu, D., Bello, U.M., Ndwiga, D., Maharaj, R., Naidoo, K., Kolo, M.A., Jacob, P., Chhina, N. and Ku, T.K. (2022) COVID-19 pandemic and overall mental health of healthcare professionals globally: a meta-review of systematic reviews. *Frontiers in psychiatry*, *12*, p.804525.

Greenberg, N., et al. (2020) *Managing Mental Health Challenges Faced by Healthcare Workers During COVID-19*. BMJ, 368, m1211.

Royal College of Nursing (RCN). (no date) *Workforce health and wellbeing*. Available at: https://www.rcn.org.uk/employment-and-pay/Nursing-workforce-insights/Workforce-health-and-wellbeing (Accessed: 14 October 2025).

World Health Organization (WHO). (2023) *WHO health workforce support and safeguards list 2023*. Available at: https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/9789240069787 (Accessed 14 October 2025).