

Disease perception and coping with emotional distress during COVID-19 pandemic

Milena Man¹, Claudia Toma², Nicoleta Motoc¹, Viana Necrelescu³, Cosmina Bondor¹, Ana Chis¹, Andrei Lesan¹, Carmen Pop⁴, Doina Todea¹, Elena Dantes⁵, Ruxandra Puiu³, and Ruxandra Rajnoveanu¹

¹Iuliu Hațieganu University of Medicine and Pharmacy

²Affiliation not available

³Pneumology Hospital Leon Daniello Cluj-Napoca

⁴Iuliu Hațieganu University of Medicine and Pharmacy Faculty of Medicine

⁵Ovidius University of Constanta

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Abstract

Background: The novel coronavirus disease, COVID 19, is a highly contagious infectious disease declared by the World Health Organization pandemic and a global public health emergency. During outbreaks, health care workers are submitted to enormous emotional burden as they must balance the fundamental “duty to treat” with the parallel duty to family and loved ones. The aims of our study is to evaluate disease perceptions, levels of stress, emotional distress, and coping strategies among medical staff (COVID 19 versus non-COVID 19 department) in tertiary pulmonology teaching hospital in the first month after the outbreak of COVID 19. Methods: One hundred fifteen health care workers completed four validated questionnaires (the brief illness perception questionnaire, perceived stress scale, the profile of emotional distress emotional, cognitive coping evaluation questionnaire) that were afterward interpreted by one psychologist. Results: There was a high level of stress and psychological distress among health care workers in the first month after the pandemic outbreak. Interestingly, there was no difference between persons that work on COVID 19 department versus those working in non-COVID 19 department. Disease perceptions and coping mechanism were similar in the two groups. As coping mechanism, refocusing on planning and positive reappraisal were used more than in general population. Conclusions: there is no difference in disease perceptions, levels of stress, emotional distress, and coping strategies in medical staff handling COVID 19 patients versus personal that does not handle COVID patients the first month after the pandemic outbreak

Disease perception and coping with emotional distress during COVID-19 pandemic:
a survey among medical staff

Milena Adina MAN^{1,2}, Claudia TOMA³, Nicoleta Stefania MOTOC^{1,2}, Viana NECRELESCU², Cosmina Ioana BONDOR⁴, Ana CHIS^{1,2}, Andrei LESAN^{1,2}, Carmen Monica POP^{1,2}, Doina TODEA^{1,2}, Elena DANTES⁵, Ruxandra PUIU², Ruxandra RAJNOVEANU^{1,2}

MAN MA^{1,2}, TOMA C³, MOTOC NS^{1,2}, NECRELESCU V², BONDOR CI⁴, CHIS A^{1,2}, LESAN A^{1,2}, POP CM^{1,2}, TODEA D^{1,2}, DANTES E⁵, PUIU R², RAJNOVEANU R^{1,2}

1. Department of Medical Sciences- Pulmonology, Faculty of Medicine, “Iuliu Hațieganu” University of Medicine and Pharmacy, Cluj Napoca, Romania
2. “Leon Daniello” Clinical Hospital of Pulmonology, Cluj Napoca, Romania
3. Faculty of Medicine, “Carol Davila” University of Medicine and Pharmacy, Bucharest, Romania

4. Department of Biostatistics, “Iuliu Hatieganu” University of Medicine and Pharmacy, Cluj Napoca, Romania
5. Faculty of Medicine, “Ovidius” University, Constanta, Romania

Corresponding author:

Nicoleta Stefania MOTOC

motoc_nicoleta@yahoo.com

nicoleta.motoc@umfcluj.ro

“Leon Daniello” Clinical Hospital of Pulmonology

no 6, BP Hasdeu street, Cluj Napoca , Romania

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