

ABSTRACT

Perceptions of healthcare workers in high-risk areas of a Singapore hospital during COVID-19: a cross-sectional study

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Introduction: There is worldwide concern over the psycho-emotional impact of COVID-19 on healthcare workers (HCWs). This study aimed to elicit HCWs' perceptions of the adequacy of protective measures in high-risk clinical areas and the factors associated with these perceptions.

Methods: This was a cross-sectional study conducted in April 2020. An anonymous electronic survey was sent via email to operating theatre (OT) and intensive care unit (ICU) staff of Sengkang General Hospital, Singapore.

Results: Of the 358 eligible participants, 292 (81.6%) responded to the survey. 93.2% of the participants felt that precautionary measures at work were sufficient and 94.9% acknowledged that adequate training was provided. More than 60% of the participants opined that their chances of contracting COVID-19 were moderate to high. Female gender, nursing occupation and duration of service < 10 years were significantly associated with increased fear of contracting COVID-19, less control over occupational exposure and lower perceived need to care for COVID-19 patients. Having young children at home did not significantly affect these perceptions. The most important ICU precautions were availability of personal protective equipment outside the rooms of COVID-19 positive patients (95.3%) and having visitor restrictions (95.3%). The most important OT measures were having a dedicated OT for

COVID-19 positive patients (91.2%) and having simulation as part of protocol familiarisation (91.7%).

Conclusion: Overall, there was high confidence in the adequacy of COVID-19 protective measures to prevent healthcare transmission in Singapore. The pandemic had a lower degree of psycho-emotional impact on HCWs here as compared to other countries.