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OPEN PEER REVIEW

The Correlation Between Medical Staff Mental Health and Perceived Social Support During the COVID-19 Pandemic, Sistan and Baluchestan Province, Iran (2020)

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About this report

This open peer review (OPR) report shows the public comments made on this article during peer review, by the reviewers, the associate editor and the editor-in-chief, for every revision round, together with the authors' replies. Comments appear only with the consent of the people who wrote them. Reviewers who chose to sign their report are named; the others are shown as "Referee". Comments are edited for language only, and confidential remarks to the editors are not included.

More about open peer review: brieflands.com/knowledgebase/opr

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1 Original submission

4 comments · 12 Sep 2022 – 26 Sep 2022

Referee 1 Reviewer

MAJOR REVISION 12 Sep 2022

Dear Authors
Thank you very much for submitting your article to the MEJRH. Because of the subject, I read the manuscript a few times. I think the subject, concept, procedure, and academic English writing are the strengths of your manuscript. However, there are issues in your article that made it difficult to reach a firm decision at this point. I summarize my comments below in the hope of helping you improve the quality of the manuscript and bring it closer to meeting the MEJRH's criteria.
1- Title: The title should represent all the work you have done. You evaluated mental disorders in medical staff + you evaluated the social support they received + you tried to identify the possible correlation between these two concepts + you ran a regression analysis + you tried to determine the predictive value of social support. Your title does not highlight the work you have done. Please refine it.
2- Abstract: The abstract should stand alone as a summary of the whole manuscript. At this moment, I can say your abstract is not informative and does not convey your message. Please revise the background, aim, and method. Please rewrite the results & conclusion.
3- Introduction: To me, this section seemed quite long and full of redundancy and irrelevant information. When you revise your title, please follow the key concepts in your title to revise the introduction.
4- Objectives: Please follow my comment in the title section. You should have at least three aims in this section, since your results are presented that way.
5- Methods:
a) Please tidy up this section with subheadings such as Participants, tools, procedure, and statistical analysis.
b) I believe a biostatistician can help you find a better phrase to define the sampling method. Based on your explanation, I think you did not use the convenient/simple sampling method.
c) Please provide further information regarding the online approach you used to collect data.
d) Line 135: four-choice question? Four options (0-3)? I do not understand what you mean. Please ask a colleague to help you revise this line.
e) Line 115: What did you mean by "Information was collected using Iran's demographic statistics and standardized questionnaires.????"
f) Line 118: the General Health Questionnaire-28 Items (GHQ-28)? Add a reference.
g) You devoted lines 123-158 to explaining the two instruments you used, which is too much information. We do not need most of it. Please rewrite these lines like this: "The Persian version of General Health Questionnaire (GHQ) with ???? items were administered to search for mental health problems in medical staff. The validity and reliability of this questionnaire have been reported as ???? and ???? sequentially. The client's score in this tool would be between ?? and ???; the higher the score, the worse situation of mental health. To interpret scores, the original developers defined a benchmark as 0-20 = no mental health problem; 21- 40 = ...". Please consider this an example, and please use it to rewrite the descriptions of both tools.
h) You MUST describe the statistical analysis in detail in the method section.
6- Results:
a. I cannot follow the demographic information as you have written it. Please revise these lines: 163-179.
b. You referred to the research hypotheses a few times: where did you state them?
c. Please tidy up this section as well with subheadings such as demographic information, mental health disorders, social support, and the correlation between ?? & ??. Please remember these are just examples; you can use your own subheadings with better wording.
d. In some lines, you reported the SD first and then the mean. Please reverse the order so that the mean comes

first, followed by the SD; for example, line 184.
e. The numbers in the tables sometimes do not correspond to the numbers in the text, for example, line 186.
f. You provided interpretations of the findings in your results section, for example, lines 187-188. As I said before, you must provide the benchmark for data interpretation in your explanation of the tools. The scores in the results section should then be interpreted in the discussion, not here.
7- Discussion
a. Start with your major, stunning, and eye-catching aims and findings. Remove line 238: "This study was conducted on 320 healthcare workers in Sistan and Baluchestan, Iran." (Example: "The present study examined the mental health issues in medical staff in Sistan and Baluchestan, Iran. All of the medical staff in the present study suffered from anxiety. …") Your findings related to the major aim of this study should be your opening line. Then compare them with other studies, whether consistent or inconsistent.
b. You then need to move on to other findings and compare them with other studies, whether consistent or inconsistent.
c. Please do not talk about things that you did not examine in your study. For example: "Acknowledgment and appreciation of the efforts of healthcare workers can reduce the prevalence of mental health problems, especially depression, anxiety, and stress, by promoting social support and hopefulness". Did you examine these points in your study?
8- Conclusion
a. "The mental health problems and inadequate social support of healthcare workers affect the treatment provided for the patients.": Where did this conclusion come from?
b. "In this study, 33.9% and 23.7% of COVID-19 patients with low perceived social support from their caregivers had anxiety and depression symptoms, respectively, resulting in their poor quality of life." Where did these lines come from? What about the subsequent lines?
c. Please delete the whole conclusion and give your readers a conclusion based on your findings. Example: "present study indicated that social support, especially from the family and friends, can reduce the mental health problems in medical staff."
9- Please add a heading named "limitation" and highlight the problems that might affect the quality of your manuscript.
10- Check all references. You can see that most of them lack information. Page numbers, publishers, and journal names … must be checked.
Best of Luck

Referee 2 Reviewer

REJECT 21 Sep 2022

- The introduction is long, and the arrangement of the content in all the sections should be revised or rewritten according to the writing standards related to cross-sectional studies (STROBE CHECKLIST).
- Inclusion and exclusion criteria are not clear.
- The job categories of employees involved in COVID-19 should be clear because not all employees have been involved in this disease to the same extent.
- How was the sample size determined? It is not clear.
- The link to data collection should be included in the method section.
- - What do the authors mean by Iran's demographic statistics?
- - This questionnaire assesses social support from different domains (family, friends, and significant others). But the authors stated in the method section that this tool measured people's mental health, and this is a very serious problem for this article.

Associate Editor

MAJOR REVISION 21 Sep 2022

Thank you for submitting your manuscript. I believe substantial changes and revisions have been made correctly to your manuscript.

Editor-in-Chief

MAJOR REVISION 26 Sep 2022

Dear Authors
According to the reviewers' and associate editor's comments, your article requires major revision. When revising your manuscript, please consider all issues mentioned in the reviewers' comments carefully: please outline every change made in response to their comments and submit the required files.

2

Revision 1

AUTHORS' RESPONSE TO REVIEWERS

Authors' reply to reviewers

The next pages contain the authors' point-by-point reply to the comments of this revision round, as submitted with the revised manuscript. It is published as the authors wrote it.

We wish to express our appreciation to the Reviewers for their insightful comments, which have helped us significantly to improve our manuscript. According to the suggestions, we have thoroughly revised our manuscript and its final version is enclosed. Point-by-point responses to the comments are listed below.

Reviewer 1:
Dear Authors
Thank you very much for submitting your article to the MEJRH. Because of the subject, I read the manuscript a few times. I think the subject, concept, procedure, and academic English writing are the strengths of your manuscript. However, there are issues in your article that made it difficult to reach a firm decision at this point. I summarize my comments below with the hope to help you to elevate the quality of the manuscript and be close to the MEJRH's criteria.
1- Title: The title should stand for the whole job you have done. You evaluated the mental disorders in medical staff + you evaluated the social support they received + you tried to find out the possible correlation between these two concepts + you ran a regression analysis + you tried to find the predicting value of the social support. Your title does not highlight the work you have done. Refine it Pls.

The title has been corrected:

The Role of the Mental Health Status of Healthcare Workers Involved in the Treatment of Patients with COVID-19 in Predicting of Perceived Social Support in Sistan and Baluchestan Province, Iran, 2020-2021

2- Abstract: The abstract should stand alone regarding the whole manuscript. At this moment I can say your abstract is not informative and does not convey your message. Please revise the background, aim, and method. Please re-write the results & conclusion.

Background: Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) has rapidly spread across China and many countries worldwide, and healthcare workers at the front lines of disease control are under high physical and mental pressure.
Objectives: the present study aimed to examine **the role of** the Mental State of Healthcare workers involved in the treatment of COVID-19 patients in **predicting** of perceived social support in Sistan and Baluchestan Province, Iran.
Methods: This is a descriptive correlational study. Our targeted population was all the healthcare, administrative, and non-administrative staff, which were involved in the treatment of

the coronavirus patients, of the cities of Sistan & Baluchestan Province. According to our investigational criteria, 320 samples were selected among our targeted population due to the available sampling method. General health questionnaire (GHQ-28) and perceived social support questionnaire were information collecting tools. The respondents completed and submitted the questionnaires online. The collected data was analyzed with SPSS software version 22, using descriptive statistics (i.e., mean, standard deviation, and frequency percentage), and inferential statistics (i.e., correlation analysis and regression analysis).

Results: There were significant relationship and negative correlation between perceived social support and mental health (R= -0/334 , P≤ 0/01). The least prevalent mental health problem was depression (SD=56.3, M=31.10), while the most prevalent mental health problem was social dysfunction (SD=06.3, M=14.24). The regression model is significant in the prediction of mental health (P<0/0001, F=14/06).
Conclusions: Overall, the medical staff experienced moderate mental health problems, with social dysfunction causing the greatest psychological disorders during the COVID-19 outbreak in Sistan and Baluchestan Province, Iran. More attention should be paid to the mental health and perceived social support of these workers, and their mental status should be regularly assessed. Therefore, perceived social support can significantly predict the mental health of healthcare workers, as it reduces the psychological problems of the medical staff.

3- Introduction: For me, this section looked quite long and full of redundancy and irrelevant information. When you revise your title, please follow the key concepts in your title to revise the introduction.
Comments have been applied.

4- Objectives: Please follow my comment in the title part, you should have at least three aims in this section, since your results have such a presentation.
Comments have been applied.

5-Methods:
a) Please tidy up this section with subheadings such as Participants, tools, procedure, and statistical analysis.
Participants, tools, procedure, and statistical analysis were applied.

b) I believe a biostatistician can help you to find a better phrase to define the sampling method. With your explanation, I think you did not undertake the convenient/simple sampling method.

Comments have been applied.

c) Please provide further information regarding the online approach you applied to collect data.

Comments have been applied.

d) Line 135: four-choice question? Four options (0-3)? I do not read you, please ask a colleague to help you revise this line.

Comments have been applied.

e) Line 115: what did you mean by: "Information was collected using Iran's demographic statistics and standardized questionnaires.????"

Comments have been applied.

f) Line 118: the General Health Questionnaire-28 Items (GHQ-28)? Add reference

Comments have been applied.

g) You devoted lines 123-158 to explaining the two instruments you have applied, too much information. We do not need most of it. Please re-write these lines like this: "The Persian version of General Health Questionnaire (GHQ) with ???? items were administered to search for mental health problems in medical staff. The validity and reliability of this questionnaire have been reported as ???? and ???? sequentially. The client's score in this tool would be between ?? and ???; the higher the score, the worse situation of mental health. To interpret scores, the original developers defined a benchmark as 0-20 = no mental health problem; 21- 40 = ……". please consider this as an example, and please use this example to rewrite both tools.

Comments have been applied.

h) You MUST have a statistical analysis with details in the method section.

Comments have been applied.

6- Results:

a. I cannot follow the demographic information by the way you wrote them. Please revise these lines: 163-179

Comments have been applied.

b. You mentioned the research hypotheses a few times: where did you mention them?

Comments have been applied.

c. Please tidy up this section as well with subheadings such as demographic information, mental health disorders, social support, and the correlation between?? & ??. Please remember these are just examples, you can have your own with better words.

Comments have been applied.

d. In some lines you reported SD first and then the mean, please rotate them mean comes first then SD, example: line 184

Comments have been applied.

e. The numbers in tables sometimes do not correspond to the numbers in the text, for example, line 186.

Comments have been applied.

f. You provided findings interpretation in your result section for example lines 187-188. As I said before you must provide the benchmark for data interpretation in your tools explanation. Then the scores in the result section would be interpreted in the discussion not here.

Comments have been applied.

7- Discussion

a. Start with your major, stunning, and eye-catching aims and findings. Remove line 238: "This study was conducted on 320 healthcare workers in Sistan and Baluchestan, Iran." (example: The present study examined the mental health issues in medical staff in Sistan and Baluchestan, Iran. All of the medical staff in the present study suffered from anxiety. …" Your findings for the major aim to run this study would be your initiation line. Then compare with other studies either consistent or inconsistent.

Comments have been applied.

b. You need to then go with other findings and compare with other studies either consistent or inconsistent.

Comments have been applied.

c. Please do not talk about things that you did not work on in your study. For example: "Acknowledgment and appreciation of the efforts of healthcare workers can reduce the prevalence of mental health problems, especially depression, anxiety, and stress, by promoting social support and hopefulness" was these lines in your study?

Comments have been applied.

8- Conclusion

a. "The mental health problems and inadequate social support of healthcare workers affect the treatment provided for the patients.": where did this conclusion come from?

Mental health problems and insufficient support of the medical staff during the time of exposure to Covid-19 have had a significant negative impact on the quality of work life and its relationships.

b. "In this study, 33.9% and 23.7% of COVID-19 patients with low perceived social support from their caregivers had anxiety and depression symptoms, respectively, resulting in their poor quality of life." Where did these lines come from? So the other later lines?

In this study, the results obtained from Table 3 showed that among the components Mental health, the highest correlation obtained is related to the relationship between depression and perceived social support was equal to -33.9 and anxiety and sleep problems with perceived social support was equal to -23/7.

c. Please delete the whole conclusion, and give your readers a conclusion that came out of your findings: example: "present study indicated that social support, especially from the family and friends, can reduce the mental health problems in medical staff."

The previous conclusion has been removed and the referee's suggested sentence has been included in the article:

"present study indicated that social support, especially from the family and friends, can reduce the mental health problems in medical staff."

9- Please add a heading named 'limitation", and highlight the problems that might affect the quality of your manuscript.

The questionnaires were designed as self-reports and online, and there are limitations of the online test for this study. The issue of what state the respondents were in at the time of answering may have overshadowed our information, compared to When the questionnaire is filled in the presence of the researcher.

10- Check all references, you can see most of them lack information, page numbers, publisher, and names of journals … must be checked.
Best of Luck

references were checked. In references 1, 2, 3, 8, 12, 13, 14, 15, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, corrections related to page numbers and other specifications have been made.

Reviewer 2:
I think these studies are repetitive and not worth publishing in this journal.

The present study investigated the covid-19 and its psychological effects. Considering the basic concern of the World Health Organization regarding the psychological complications of Covid-19, studies in this regard are very important.

The present study is the first study of the psychological effects of covid-19 in Sistan and Baluchistan province, and until now no comprehensive and extensive study similar to this study has been found.

Cultural issues have a significant impact on psychopathology. In Sistan and Baluchistan province, due to cultural issues, the incidence and manifestations of mental injuries may have a significant difference compared to the majority.

Another issue, in addition to the newness of the study in Sistan and Baluchistan province, this study can provide a good comparison of the occurrence of psychopathology and adds more richness to comparative studies. We have proposed another research to our colleagues to investigate the cognitive distortions and behaviors related to it after the decrease in the incidence and incidence of covid-19 in Sistan and Baluchistan province.

The issues of covid 19 have never been repeated because the issue of covid 19 has involved the human society during the last few years.

Reviewer 3:

- The volume of the introduction is large and the arrangement of the content in all the sections should be revised or rewritten according to the writing standards related to cross-sectional studies(STROBE CHECKLIST).

*Modifying and deleting parts of the first paragraph:
1- Modifying and deleting: Coronaviruses are a group of viruses in the Coronaviridae family, which infect animals and humans.
*Modifying and deleting parts of the second paragraph:
2- Modifying and deleting: and immediate measures have been taken to inform the public about the severity of this disease.
3- Modifying and deleting: Fear and anxiety about the disease have been significant, triggering intense emotions in people
4- Modifying and deleting: Burnout, chronic fatigue, secondary stress, and posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD) are common problems in intensive care units.
*Modifying and deleting parts of the third paragraph:
5- Modifying and deleting: This commission called for the improvement of psychological and social support services for the hospital staff in Wuhan and other affected areas
*Modifying and deleting parts of the four paragraph:
6- but also affect their immunity and defense against diseases and influence their general well-being. Therefore.
*Modifying and deleting parts of the Five paragraph:
7- healthcare professionals are at the forefront in the fight against diseases and are therefore exposed to high health risks.
*Modifying and deleting parts of the sex paragraph:
8- At a 95% confidence interval, it was found that stigma associated with mental health problems manifested as stress while nurses interacted with the patients, and their mental health was affected by the chronic stress at work.

- Inclusion and exclusion criteria are not clear.

1- The criteria for entering the study include informed consent, allocating 20-30 minutes of time, not being under the treatment of a psychiatrist or clinical psychologist, and not currently diagnosed with a substance use disorder. Among the exclusion criteria of the present study, lack of interest in completing the questionnaire, incompleteness of the obtained information, having a diagnosis of psychiatric disorders during the last 1 to 6 months.

- The job categories of employees involved in covid-19 should be clear.

Because not all employees have been involved in this disease to the same extent.

The main purpose of the present study was to investigate the mental health status of treatment staff and its relationship with perceived social support, and there was no intention to compare treatment and non-treatment staff. However, the sample of the treatment staff of the present study includes doctors, specialist doctors, assistants, residents, nurses, midwives, paramedics, and administrative staff with less involvement, including hospital employees, university headquarters, guards, revenue department employees, discharge have been.

- How do determine the sample size? it is not clear

according to Morgan's sample size estimation table and Cochran's number formula:

$$n = \frac{\frac{z^2 pq}{d^2}}{1 + \frac{1}{N}\left[\frac{z^2 pq}{d^2} - 1\right]}$$

total of 320 healthcare workers were selected as the study population.

- The link to data collection should be included in the method section.

Online questionnaire link and collect information through https://survey.porsline.ir/s/kjLDY9W

- - What do the authors mean by Iran's demographic statistics?

The word "Iran" was removed and it was entered by mistake. Purpose Demographic features are considered in the present project, whose information was collected.

- - This questionnaire assesses social support from different domains(family, friends, and significant others). But the authors of the method said that with this tool, people's mental health was measured and this is a very serious problem for this article.

Mental health questionnaire and perceived social support questionnaire evaluate related areas. . In the tools section, there is a complete explanation about the mental health questionnaire and the perceived social support questionnaire. Perhaps by mistake in the text, such an issue occurred unintentionally somewhere. If possible, please provide the paragraph in question so that it can be corrected.

2 Revision 1

4 comments · 15 Feb 2023 – 20 Feb 2023

Referee 1 Reviewer

MAJOR REVISION 15 Feb 2023

Dear author/s
Thank you very much for revising the manuscript. I am not satisfied with your revisions. All issues are still there without any change. I leave a few more comments to help you with the revision, and I do insist that you return to my previous comments in revision 0, reviewer 1.
Best of luck

I think a title like this would work much better to introduce your work: "The correlation between medical staff mental health and perceived social support during the Covid-19 pandemic, Sistan & Baloochestan, 2020"
Your introduction is still too long. Please remove the unnecessary information, such as lines 35-61. Start your introduction, for example, with these lines: The coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) has spread around the world since 2019. This pandemic left governments and health staff on the front line to treat and protect people. However, the medical staff's mental health was affected by negative aspects of the pandemic, such as confronting patients' problems, shortages of medicine, repeated variations of the virus, changing protocols, and being among those most vulnerable to contracting COVID-19. Additionally, inadequate protection against infection, work overload, frustration, discrimination, isolation, contact with patients with negative emotions, lack of contact with family, and fatigue caused mental health issues in this specific population.
X & Y (year) reported that medical staff experience serious mental health issues. Stress, anxiety, depression, insomnia, denial, anger, and fear have frequently been reported by studies…
You can still make the rest of the introduction more cohesive, coherent, and purposeful.
Your objectives: lines 100-103: you must report your aims according to what you have done. Please return to my previous comments on your Revision 0. I am not happy at all. When you change the title, change the aims accordingly.
3.2: procedure: you need to write how, where, … you did the study.
Line 141: an abbreviation cannot be a heading: full term (abbreviation)
3.4: you must tell your readers what statistical analyses you used. Name the statistical tests, please…
You have totally ignored my comments regarding your results & discussion. Please return to them and revise properly (reviewer 1).
Just a quick search can show that your study has been done in other countries during 2020, 2021, … We need in-depth and almost perfect insight in your paper; otherwise, a repeated study is not worth publishing in a journal.

Referee 2 Reviewer

MINOR REVISION 16 Feb 2023

- Please write the index values of the formula so that the reviewer and authors can repeat the calculation.

Associate Editor

MAJOR REVISION 19 Feb 2023

According to the reviewer's comments, the revised manuscript still needs to be revised.

Editor-in-Chief MAJOR REVISION 20 Feb 2023

Dear Authors
According to the reviewers' and associate editor’s comments, your article requires major revision. When revising your manuscript, please consider all issues mentioned in the reviewers' comments carefully: please outline every change made in response to their comments and submit the required files.

3

Revision 2

AUTHORS' RESPONSE TO REVIEWERS

Authors' reply to reviewers

The next pages contain the authors' point-by-point reply to the comments of this revision round, as submitted with the revised manuscript. It is published as the authors wrote it.

We wish to express our appreciation to the Reviewers for their insightful comments, which have helped us significantly to improve our manuscript. According to the suggestions, we have thoroughly revised our manuscript and its final version is enclosed. Point-by-point responses to the comments are listed below.

Reviewer 1:

Dear author/s

Thank you very much for revising the manuscript. I am not satisfied with your revisions. All issues are still there without any change, I leave few more comments to help you with revision and I do insist to get back to my previous comments in revision 0, reviewer 1.

Best of luck

I think a title like this is working much better to introduce your job: “The correlation between medical staff mental health and perceived social support during the Covid-19 pandemic, Sistan & Baloochestan, 2020”

The title has been corrected:

The correlation between medical staff mental health and perceived social support during the Covid-19 pandemic, Sistan & Baloochestan, 2020

Your introduction is still too long, please remove the unnecessary information such as lines 35-61, start your introduction for example with these lines: The coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) spread around the world since 2019. This pandemic left the governments and health staffs in front line to treat and protect people. However, the medical staff mental health was exposed to the side effects of negative aspects of the pandemic such as confronting the patients’ problems, shortage of medicine, the repeated variations of the virus, changing the protocols, and being one the most vulnerable cases to catch the covid-19. Additionally, inadequate protection against infection, work overload, frustration, discrimination, isolation, contact with patients with negative emotions, lack of contact with the family, and fatigue caused mental health issues in this specific population.

X & Y (year) reported that the medical staff experience serious mental health issues. Stress, anxiety, depression, insomnia, denial, anger, and fear frequently have been reported by the studies….

Comments have been applied.

You can still make the rest of the introduction more cohesive, coherent and purposeful.

Comments have been applied.

Your objectives: lines 100-103: you must report your aims according to what you have done, please get back to my previous comments on your Revision 0, I am not happy at all. When you change the title, change the aims properly.

Comments have been applied.

3.2: procedure: you need to write how, where, … you did the study.

Line 141: an abbreviation cannot be a heading: full term (abbreviation)

Comments have been applied.

3.4: you must tell your readers what statistical analysis, name the statistical tests please…

Just a quick search can show that your study has been done in other countries during 2020, 2021, … We need an in-depth and almost perfect insight in your paper, otherwise a repeated paper does not worth to be published in a journal.

You have totally ignored my comments regarding to your results & discussion, please get back to them and revise properly (reviewer 1).

5-Methods:
a) *Please tidy up this section with subheadings such as Participants, tools, procedure, and statistical analysis.*

Response: Participants, tools, procedure, and statistical analysis were applied. As you can see in the text of the article, the following changes have been made:
3.1 Participants- 3.2 Procedure- 3.3 Tools- 3.4 Statistical Analysis
b) *I believe a biostatistician can help you to find a better phrase to define the sampling method. With your explanation, I think you did not undertake the convenient/simple sampling method.*
According to the reviewer's objection regarding the sampling method, information was obtained from the professor of biostatistics regarding this, the purposeful sampling method is the sampling method of the study, considering that in the research, we select a number of characteristics as samples. We had a criterion in mind. It was corrected in the text of the article.

c) *Please provide further information regarding the online approach you applied to collect data.*

Regarding the provided comment, the details of the online method of collecting information have been applied in the text. It is highlighted.

d) Line 135: four-choice question? Four options (0-3)? I do not read you, please ask a colleague to help you revise this line.

According to the comment, the previous text was removed and clearer information about the Likert scoring system of the questionnaire was given in the text. It was also explained about the way of scoring the questionnaire. It is highlighted.

e) Line 115: what did you mean by: "Information was collected using Iran's demographic statistics and standardized questionnaires.????"
The meaning of the demographic information of the current study and the information obtained is based on the questionnaire to evaluate the subjects of the research.

The ambiguous line in the article was corrected. And another text was provided for more clarity. It is displayed as a highlight.

f) Line 118: The General Health Questionnaire-28 Items (GHQ-28)? Add reference
We applied the reference in the text and the error was corrected. It is highlighted in the text. We applied reference 17 for this problem.

g) You devoted lines 123-158 to explaining the two instruments you have applied, too much information. We do not need most of it. Please re-write these lines like this: "The Persian version of General Health Questionnaire (GHQ) with ???? items were administered to search for mental health problems in medical staff. The validity and reliability of this questionnaire have been reported as ???? and ???? sequentially. The client's score in this tool would be between ?? and ???; the higher the score, the worse situation of mental health. To interpret scores, the original developers defined a benchmark as 0-20 = no mental health problem; 21- 40 = ……". please consider this as an example, and please use this example to rewrite both tools.

In this part, according to the reviewer's opinion, corrections were made again based on the suggestion of the respected reviewer and it is highlighted in green in the tools section.

h) You MUST have a statistical analysis with details in the method section.

Changes were made in the text as follows.

"First, the frequency and percentage of the demographic variables of the present study, including gender, age, workplace, education level, type of profession, and city, were checked based on the frequency and percentage. Then we examined the mean and standard deviation of the research variables, namely mental health and its subscales and perceived social support. In the following, we used Pearson's correlation coefficient to investigate the relationship between mental health and perceived social support, as well as regression analysis for prediction. Finally, the collected data were described and analyzed in SPSS Version 22."

6- Results:
a. I cannot follow the demographic information by the way you wrote them. Please revise these lines: 163-179.

all sentences related to demographic findings were rewritten and modified.

"In the present study, there were 320 samples. Overall, in the gender variable, 139 participants were female, equivalent to 43.4%, and 181 were male equivalent to 56.6%. in the age variable, the majority of healthcare workers were in the age range of 30-39 years (n=142, 44.4%). in the literacy/education level variable, In the literacy/education level variable, 133 participants in the research, equal to 41.6%, had a bachelor's degree, also 58 participants, equal to 18.1%, had a high school diploma or lower, and the number of other

58 participants was equal to 18.1%. percent had a master's degree and 35 other participants, equivalent to 10.9%, had an associate's degree. In addition, the studied samples were selected from different cities under the supervision of Zahedan University of Medical Sciences in Sistan and Baluchistan province (Iran). The number of 116 people from Zahedan was equal to 36.2%, 99 participants were from the city of Iranshahr, which was equal to 30.9%, 71 participants were from the city of Khash, which was equal to 22.2%, 31 participants were from the city of Saravan, which was equal to 9.7%, and 3 participants were from the city of Mirjaveh, which was equal to 0.9%. Regarding the frequency of the participants' workplace, 170 of the participants, equivalent to 53.1%, were working in the hospital, 40 of the participants equivalent to 12.5% worked in medical centers, 37 of the participants, equivalent to 11.6% worked in healthcare centers, 25 of the participants, equivalent to 7.8% worked in the network center, 24 of the participants, equivalent to 7.5% worked in emergency departments, and 24 of the participants, equivalent to 7.5% worked in the central headquarters".

b. You mentioned the research hypotheses a few times: where did you mention them?

In part 2. The objectives of the research, we stated the hypothesis of the research. This change has been applied in the text.

c. Please tidy up this section as well with subheadings such as demographic information, mental health disorders, social support, and the correlation between?? & ??. Please remember these are just examples, you can have your own with better words.

In the Results section, the subheadings were applied separately with the title suggested by the evaluator of the article.

d. In some lines you reported SD first and then the mean, please rotate them mean comes first then SD, example: line 184.

This change has been applied in the text.

e. The numbers in tables sometimes do not correspond to the numbers in the text, for example, line 186.

In one case, a change was needed and implemented. If there is an exact part in question, please let me know.

f. You provided findings interpretation in your result section for example lines 187-188. As I said before you must provide the benchmark for data interpretation in your tools explanation. Then the scores in the result section would be interpreted in the discussion not here.

This change has been applied in the text.

"According to the results presented in Table 5, the Beta Coefficient obtained in the Fixed Model was equal to 41.47 and the obtained t-score was equal to 21.44, which was also significant (P>0/0001)"

7- Discussion
a. Start with your major, stunning, and eye-catching aims and findings. Remove line 238: "This study was conducted on 320 healthcare workers in Sistan and Baluchestan, Iran." (example: The present study examined the mental health issues in medical staff in Sistan and Baluchestan, Iran. All of the medical staff in the present study suffered from anxiety. …" Your

findings for the major aim to run this study would be your initiation line. Then compare with other studies either consistent or inconsistent.

In the discussion section, the beginning of the article was modified based on the reviewer's recommendation. This change has been applied in the text and is highlighted in green.

b. You need to then go with other findings and compare with other studies either consistent or inconsistent.

In the discussion section, we proceeded in the same way as you mentioned. First, we changed the information obtained from the research and made it based on the evaluator's opinion. Then we brought the aligned or inconsistent obedience's, then we started to open some researches and at the end we explained and discussed about the results.

c. Please do not talk about things that you did not work on in your study. For example: "Acknowledgment and appreciation of the efforts of healthcare workers can reduce the prevalence of mental health problems, especially depression, anxiety, and stress, by promoting social support and hopefulness" was these lines in your study?

Based on the opinion of the evaluator of the article, this sentence was deleted" "Acknowledgment and appreciation of the efforts of healthcare workers can reduce the prevalence of mental health problems, especially depression, anxiety, and stress, by promoting social support and hopefulness"

8- Conclusion
a. "The mental health problems and inadequate social support of healthcare workers affect the treatment provided for the patients.": where did this conclusion come from?

Based on the opinion of the evaluator of the article, the previous sentence was modified and is given as follows" Mental health problems and insufficient support of the medical staff during the time of exposure to Covid-19 have had a significant negative impact on the quality of work life and its relationships."

b. "In this study, 33.9% and 23.7% of COVID-19 patients with low perceived social support from their caregivers had anxiety and depression symptoms, respectively, resulting in their poor quality of life." Where did these lines come from? So the other later lines?

These results are shown in Table 3. However, due to the fact that this sentence may introduce ambiguity and of course these results are shown in Table 3, the sentence was removed.

c. Please delete the whole conclusion, and give your readers a conclusion that came out of your findings: example: "present study indicated that social support, especially from the family and friends, can reduce the mental health problems in medical staff."

The previous conclusion has been removed and the referee's suggested sentence has been included in the article:

"present study indicated that social support, especially from the family and friends, can reduce the mental health problems in medical staff."

9- Please add a heading named "limitation", and highlight the problems that might affect the quality of your manuscript.

The questionnaires were designed as self-reports and online, and there are limitations of the online test for this study. The issue of what state the respondents were in at the time of answering may have overshadowed our information, compared to When the questionnaire is filled in the presence of the researcher.

10- Check all references, you can see most of them lack information, page numbers, publisher, and names of journals … must be checked.
Best of Luck

references were checked. In references 1, 2, 3, 8, 12, 13, 14, 15, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, corrections related to page numbers and other specifications have been made.

Reviewer 2:

- Please write the index values of the formula so that the reviewer and authors can recalculate again

In this formula, N is the population size. The p-statistic is the percentage distribution of the trait in the society, that is, the proportion of people who have the studied trait. The q statistic is also the percentage of people who do not have the trait under study. If the amount of p and q is not known, we used their maximum value, i.e. 0.5.

3 Revision 2

4 comments · 18 Apr 2023 – 25 Apr 2023

Referee 2 Reviewer — ACCEPT — 18 Apr 2023

No comment.

Referee 1 Reviewer — MINOR REVISION — 21 Apr 2023

Dear Author/s
Thank you very much for considering my comments to elevate the quality of your manuscript. I am more satisfied now, but a few issues must be considered before a concrete decision can be made.
1- You need to introduce a table before presenting it; only table 5 has not been properly introduced beforehand.
2- In the discussion, the first paragraph is fine; however, in the second and third, please start your paragraphs with your own findings and then compare them with those of others.
3- The conclusion in your abstract has been written well; please copy and paste it at the end of your discussion.
4- There are a few—I mean really few—grammatical issues in your text; please resolve them.
Best of luck

Associate Editor — MINOR REVISION — 24 Apr 2023

Dear authors

Thank you so much for your efforts to improve the quality of the manuscript.
Based on the reviewer's comments, the manuscript requires minor revision.
Best regards

Editor-in-Chief — MINOR REVISION — 25 Apr 2023

Dear Authors
According to the reviewer and associate editor's comments, your article needs minor revision. When revising your manuscript, please consider all issues mentioned in the reviewers' comments carefully: please outline every change made in response to their comments and submit the required files.

4

Revision 3

AUTHORS' RESPONSE TO REVIEWERS

Authors' reply to reviewers

The next pages contain the authors' point-by-point reply to the comments of this revision round, as submitted with the revised manuscript. It is published as the authors wrote it.

We wish to express our appreciation to the Reviewers for their insightful comments, which have helped us significantly to improve our manuscript. According to the suggestions, we have thoroughly revised our manuscript and its final version is enclosed. Point-by-point responses to the comments are listed below.

Manuscript Title: The Correlation Between Medical Staff Mental Health and Perceived Social Support During the Covid-19 Pandemic, Sistan & Baluchestan Province, Iran (2020)

Manuscript ID: 130745

Reviewer 1:

No comment.

Reviewer 2:

Dear Author/s

Thank you very much for considering my comments to elevate the quality of your manuscript. I am more satisfied now but few issues must be considered before a concrete decision could be made.

1- You need to introduce a table before presenting, just table 5 has not been introduced properly before.

Comments have been applied.

2- In discussion, the first paragraph is fine, however, in the second and third, please start your paragraphs with your own finding and then compare yours with others'.

Comments have been applied.

3- The conclusion in your abstract has been written fine, please copy and paste it at the end of your discussion.

Comments have been applied.

4- Few -I mean really few- grammatical issues are in your text, please resolve them.

Best of luck

Comments have been applied.

4 Revision 3

3 comments · 21 May 2023 – 22 May 2023

Referee 1 Reviewer

ACCEPT 21 May 2023

Well done

Associate Editor

ACCEPT 21 May 2023

According to the reviewer's report, the manuscript is ready for publishing.

Editor-in-Chief

ACCEPT 22 May 2023

Dear Authors,
We are pleased to inform you that your article has been accepted for publication in the MEJRHS. We hope to receive other high-quality articles from your group.