Mental health interventions in healthcare workers in infectious disease outbreak-A systematic review

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Background:
Extended evidence has established that healthcare workers face several mental health problems during a disease outbreak, which could have a long-term impact. To address these issues, elaboration and implementation of psychological/psychiatric interventions or strategies is of utmost importance. In this context, this systematic review aimed at identifying strategies to manage mental health issues in healthcare workers during infectious disease outbreaks.

Methods:
PubMed, Cochrane, Scopus and Web of Science were searched to retrieve pertinent articles published in English until May 2020. Articles reporting measures, interventions, strategies, or recommendations to manage mental health problems in healthcare workers during an infectious disease outbreak, of any study design were included. The quality assessment was performed according to the study design of the included articles.

Results:
Our search strategy produced a total of 2358 articles. After the screening process 33 articles met the inclusion criteria, addressing COVID-19 (40%), followed by SARS (21%) and Ebola Virus (15%). The findings emphasized that organisations should follow an evidence-based approach and establish comprehensive programs to assist hospital staff during disease outbreaks. The preliminary results show that the creation of a psychological response team, training, e-learning, courses, psychosocial counselling, screening instruments and telemedicine activities could improve the capacity of response and coping, and reduce mental health issues in healthcare workers.

Conclusions:
To minimize the psychological impact of future infectious disease outbreaks, evidence-based intervention strategies should be implemented to retain mental health among healthcare workers. Our results may provide the necessary insights that could be applied during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Key messages:
- During infectious disease outbreaks healthcare workers are faced with mental health issues, that need to be addressed through tailored interventions offering coping strategies and increase resilience.
- Mental health related interventions or strategies include the implementation of professional training, psychosocial counselling, courses, and the creation of a psychological response team.