Comparison of emotional approaches of medical doctors against COVID-19 pandemic: Eastern and Western Mediterranean countries

Gulsum Ozen1, Angela Zanfardino2, Gulsah Ozen3, Burak Acan4, Alessia Piscopo2, Francesca Casaburo2, Francesca Gicchino2, Santino Confetto2, Alda Troncone2, Dario Iafusco2

1Department of Pediatrics, University of Health Science, Kecioren Training and Research Hospital, Ankara, Turkey
2Regional Centre for Pediatric Diabetes, Department of Pediatrics, University of Campania “Luigi Vanvitelli”, Naples, Italy
3Department of Emergency Medicine, Ataturk Chest Diseases and Thoracic Surgery Training and Research Hospital, Ankara, Turkey
4Department of Emergency Medicine, Hacettepe University, Ankara, Turkey

Correspondence
Gulsum Ozen, Department of Pediatrics, University of Health Science, Kecioren Training and Research Hospital, Ankara, Turkey.
Email: ozen_gulsum@hotmail.com

Funding information
This study was supported by “Valere” Project of University of Campania “Luigi Vanvitelli”.

Abstract

Background: Pandemics are states of disease that occur worldwide and sharply increase in populations. It causes life events which trigger anxiety, depression, anger, sleep deprivation, emotional distress and stress. World Health Organization (WHO) declared coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) a pandemic on March 11, pointing to the over 118,000 cases in over 110 countries. Many healthcare workers became ill during the pandemic and some among them died. In this study, we aimed to evaluate and compare level of stress against COVID-19 pandemic among doctors from Turkey and Italy.

Methods: This research is a cross-sectional study in which Perceived Stress Scale (PSS-10) and Secondary Traumatic Stress Scale (STSS) are administered online via social networks. All data collection tools were delivered to individuals between 1 and 15 June 2020 and filled in online with Google Forms application. In total, 618 individuals were included in this study and all of them were medical doctors.

Results: Higher PS and STS levels were found related to female gender, being married, working in pandemic hospital and older ages. Stress levels were found statistically higher in Turkish doctors when compared to Italian doctors for both stress scales (Turkish/Italian PSS: 20.18 ± 7.90/19.35 ± 6.71, STSS: 44.19 ± 13.29/38.83 ± 13.74).

Conclusion: The number of doctors per 1000 of population is lower and per capita visits to a physician are higher in Turkey when compared to Italy. Besides pandemic, these heavier working conditions, increased weekly working hours can cause stress for Turkish doctors. Reporting information such this study is important and international collaborations are essential to plan future prevention strategies. We need to strengthen international ties and build more international collaborations rather than staying within our national silos. Additionally, interventions to promote mental well-being in health care professionals exposed to COVID-19 need to be immediately implemented.
Pandemics are states of disease that occur worldwide and sharply increase in populations around the world. Pandemics cause life events, which trigger anxiety, depression, loss of control, anger, sleep deprivation, emotional distress and stress.\(^1\) The World Health Organization (WHO) declared coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) a pandemic on March 11, pointing to the over 118 000 cases of the coronavirus illness in over 110 countries and territories around the world and the sustained risk of further global spread. Despite the security and mitigation measures, including quarantine in Hubei Province, the infection spread across China and COVID-19 outbreak has currently affected more than 200 million people globally during the period from December 2019 to August 2021.\(^2\)

COVID-19 causes worries about one’s own health and that of loved ones, economic disruption and losses, lifestyle disruptions, social isolation and loneliness.\(^3\) Frontline health professionals against COVID-19 are considered particularly susceptible to development of psychiatric disorders because of lack of satisfactory personal protective equipment, staying away from their families, fear of being infected and infecting loved ones. Together, these conditions could create a “perfect storm” for inducing emotional distress.\(^4\)

In Italy, a couple of Chinese tourists arrived in Milan on 23 January 2020. Unfortunately, on 30 January, they showed relevant symptoms of COVID-19 and the positivity for COVID-19 was confirmed. That was the first case described in Italy. The next day, 78-year-old man died because of COVID-19 so the first death was registered in Italy. In a short period, Italian government took the first containment measures in limited areas. Exiting and entering cities were banned, and schools, shops and museums were closed. Then with the increase in the numbers of cases and deaths, measures and prohibitions were imposed in whole country. International flights were terminated, border gates were closed and curfews had begun.\(^5\)

In Turkey, the first case was diagnosed on 11 March 2020 after a man who had returned to Turkey from Europe tested positive. The first death caused by COVID-19 in the country occurred on 15 March 2020 and by 1 April, it had spread all over Turkey. First measures were announced. All schools and universities were closed. Sportive activities were done behind closed doors. All flights to and from some countries were stopped. All kinds of cultural, educational, artistic and scientific meetings/activities were postponed. Turkish health system has 39 955 intensive care beds and 17,852 mechanic ventilators.\(^6\)

In this study, we aimed to evaluate and compare the level of stress, emotional distress with COVID-19 pandemic among pediatricians from Turkey and Italy.

What’s known
- COVID-19 causes worries about one’s own health and that of loved ones, economic disruption and losses, lifestyle disruptions, social isolation and loneliness.
- Frontline health professionals against COVID-19 are considered particularly susceptible to development of psychiatric disorders because of lack of satisfactory personal protective equipment, staying away from their families, fear of being infected and infecting loved ones.
- Together, these conditions could create a “perfect storm” for inducing emotional distress.

What’s new
- There are limited number of studies on the effects of COVID-19 pandemic on health professionals in literature.
- Most of these studies are typically based on cross-sectional study designs in one country, which cannot discern whether there is difference between the ways and levels of being affected by doctors from different countries.
- If international comparisons done carefully, they can play a major role in our learning what works best for COVID-19 pandemic.
- There needs to be more thoughtful and thorough analyses of country differences as it is probably the most important and most valid evidence for informing COVID-19 policy in real time.
- This study is the first comparative study that evaluates the psychological effects of COVID-19 pandemic in both Eastern and Western Mediterranean countries.

There are limited number of studies on the effects of COVID-19 pandemic on health professionals in literature. Most of these studies are typically based on cross-sectional study designs in one country, which cannot discern whether there is difference between the ways and levels of being affected by doctors from different countries. If international comparisons done carefully, they can play a major role in our learning what works best for COVID-19 pandemic. There needs to be more thoughtful and thorough analyses of country differences as it is probably the most important and most valid evidence for informing COVID-19 policy in real time. This study is the first comparative study which evaluates the psychological effects of COVID-19 policy in real time.

What’s new
- There are limited number of studies on the effects of COVID-19 pandemic on health professionals in literature.
- Most of these studies are typically based on cross-sectional study designs in one country, which cannot discern whether there is difference between the ways and levels of being affected by doctors from different countries.
- If international comparisons done carefully, they can play a major role in our learning what works best for COVID-19 pandemic.
- There needs to be more thoughtful and thorough analyses of country differences as it is probably the most important and most valid evidence for informing COVID-19 policy in real time.
- This study is the first comparative study that evaluates the psychological effects of COVID-19 pandemic in both Eastern and Western Mediterranean countries.

2 | MATERIAL AND METHOD

This research is a cross-sectional study in which the scales are administered online via social networks and looked for the snowball effect in order to evaluate the state and trait stress levels and hopelessness levels of doctors in both countries. A stratified random sampling method was chosen to select the respondents.

Perceived Stress Scale (PSS-10) and Secondary Traumatic Stress Scale (STSS) were created in Google Forms delivered to participants.
All data collection tools were delivered to individuals between 1 and 15 June 2020 and filled online with the Google Forms application. Only the forms in which socio-demographic data and scales were filled completely were evaluated. Missing or abandoned forms were not evaluated.

In total, 632 individuals were included in this study and all of them were medical doctors. Three hundred and seventeen of them were from Turkey and 315 from Italy. After the elimination of missing or abandoned forms, 303 Turkish and 310 Italian doctors’ data were evaluated and then proceeded with the assessment of PSS-10 and STSS.

The questionnaire began with basic demographic information related to sex, age, marital status, working statuses in pandemic hospital.

PSS-10 is the most widely used 10-item self-report measure of global perceived stress (PS) and created by Cohen. Items in the scale were designed to tap how unpredictable, uncontrollable and overwhelming respondents find their lives in the last month. A total score ranged from 0 to 40. Subscale scores were computed by summing the six negatively worded items which show perceived helplessness (Items 1, 2, 3, 6, 9, and 10) for Factor 1 (“Negative”) and the four positively worded items which show perceived self-efficacy (Items 4, 5, 7 and 8) for Factor 2 (“Positive”), with higher scores indicating greater negative distress/stress feelings and greater positive stress feelings and coping abilities, respectively. Items are on a 5-point Likert scale (0 = never, 1 = almost never, 2 = sometimes, 3 = fairly often, 4 = very often). Total scores ranging from 0 to 13 would be considered low stress, 14 to 26 would be considered moderate stress, 27 to 40 would be considered high PS.

PSS-10 Turkish adaptation study was made by Eskin et al. PSS-10 was translated to Italian and validated in 2010 by Fossati (Vita-Salute San Raffaele University of Milan). STSS is a self-report inventory which is designed by Bride et al. to measure the reactions of helping professionals who have experienced traumatic stress through their work with their traumatised clients. In the last decade, the STSS became a standard tool for assessing Secondary Traumatic Stress (STS) in helping professionals such as social workers, nurses, mental health workers, midwives and paediatric care providers.

Respondents indicate on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = never 2 = rarely 3 = occasionally 4 = often 5 = very often) how often they experienced each of the 17 STS symptoms during the last week. The 17 items are organised in intrusion, avoidance and arousal subscales. Higher STSS total score indicating a higher frequency of symptoms. A total score below 28 corresponds to “little or no STS,” a score between 28 and 37 means “mild STS,” between 38 and 43 “moderate STS,” between 44 and 48 “high STS,” and beyond 49 “severe STS”.

In order to mention the presence of STS symptoms, the substance in question must be marked as “occasionally” (3), “often” (4) or “very often” (5); represented by items marked “never” (1) and “rarely” (2) is not accepted. At the same time, in order to legitimise the presence of these PTS diagnostic criteria, at least one of the items measuring the intrusion, at least three of the items measuring the signs of avoidance and at least two of the items measuring the signs of arousal, should be marked as “occasionally” and above. STSS: Turkish adaptation study was made by Yildirim et al and was translated and validated in Italian in 2012 by Setti and Argentero. Studies have consistently identified a two-factor structure with six negatively worded items (Items 1, 2, 3, 6, 9, 10) comprising the first factor and four positively worded items (Items 4, 5, 7, 8) comprising the second factor.

The study was approved by the Ethics Committee as part of the project entitled: “The remote and live doctor-patient relationship during the Covid-19 Pandemic – Valere Project” (Prot. 0028414/i) and was conducted according to the Declaration of Helsinki.

Statistical analysis was performed using IBM SPSS Statistics 22 (Statistical Package for Social Sciences, IBM Inc, Chicago, IL, USA). Histogram, Skewness and Kurtosis values were used in addition to Kolmogorov-Smirnov test for normality distribution. Chi-square was used to compare categorical groups. In correlation evaluation, Pearson correlation for normal distribution values and Spearman correlation for those without normal distribution values were performed.

Independent Samples T-Test was used to compare the averages of two independent groups with normal distribution and Mann-Whitney U test was used to compare the median of two independent groups with no normal distribution. Significance level was accepted if p-value was less than 0.05 (P < .05).

3 RESULTS

The sample of this study consists of 303 Turkish and 310 Italian in total 613 participants. All participants were medical doctors.

Socio-demographic attributes of the respondents are presented in Table 1.

Demographic attributes of the respondents were compared with their PSS and STSS points and the results are shown in Table 2.

For Turkish participants, there was significant difference between gender and PS level (P = .001). Additionally being married, working in pandemic hospital and older ages resulted in higher PSS and STSS scores but no significant difference was found (P > .05).

For Italian participants, STSS scores of women, married ones, doctors who worked in pandemic hospital and elder were found significantly higher than men, single, doctors not working in the pandemic hospital and younger (P < .05). Although similar results were found for PS levels, only for gender and marital status statistically significant difference was found. (P = .00 , .001, respectively). Participants between 45 and 54 years old had the highest scores for PSS and STSS; the lowest scores were in the youngest group (Table 2).

Turkish women and men doctors had higher scores when compared to Italians for both scales and Turkish were found related to scoring significantly higher points in the STSS (female P = .00, male P = .001; Table 3).
Married and single Turkish doctors had higher scores than Italian doctors for PSS, STSS and statistically significant difference was found \( P < .05 \).

Turkish doctors who work in pandemic hospital had higher scores when compared to Italians for both scales but there was significant difference just for doctors who did not work in pandemic hospital in STSS \( P = .00 \).

At all ages, Turkish doctors' stress levels were higher than Italian doctors. Compared to Italian doctors, Turkish doctors' PS levels were significantly higher in older ages and STS levels were significantly higher in younger ages.

Mean score of Turkish doctors' PS level was 20.18 ± 7.90. 19.5% of them had low, 59.1% moderate, 21.5% high PS levels. Mean score of Italian doctors' PS level was 19.35 ± 6.71. 17.1% of them had low,

| Gender   | Turkish (303) \( M \pm SD \) | Italian (310) \( M \pm SD \) |
|----------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Female   | 21.57 ± 6.39                | 20.62 ± 6.16                |
| Male     | 18.61 ± 9.10                | 17.58 ± 7.07                |
|          | \( P \) value .001           | \( P \) value .000           |

| Marital status | Turkish (303) \( M \pm SD \) | Italian (310) \( M \pm SD \) |
|---------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Married       | 20.84 ± 8.57                | 20.22 ± 6.26                |
| Single        | 19.51 ± 7.23                | 17.41 ± 7.30                |
|          | \( P \) value .463          | \( P \) value .001          |

| Working in pandemic hospital | Turkish (303) \( M \pm SD \) | Italian (310) \( M \pm SD \) |
|-------------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Yes                           | 20.62 ± 7.70                | 19.40 ± 6.67                |
| No                            | 20.01 ± 8.00                | 19.24 ± 6.87                |
|          | \( P \) value .547          | \( P \) value .858          |

| Age                       | Turkish (303) \( M \pm SD \) | Italian (310) \( M \pm SD \) |
|---------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 18-29 y                   | 19.82 ± 7.18                | 17.75 ± 7.51                |
| 30-44 y                   | 20.16 ± 8.54                | 19.14 ± 6.79                |
| 45-54 y                   | 21.47 ± 7.34                | 20.88 ± 6.05                |
| 55-64 y                   | 24.85 ± 11.02               | 18.98 ± 6.84                |
|          | \( P \) value .355          | \( P \) value .230          |

Note: \( M \pm SD \) = mean ± standard deviation.

\( \text{TABLE 1} \) Demographic attributes of participants

\( \text{TABLE 2} \) Comparison of PSS and STSS scores according to demographic attributes

| Gender   | Turkish (303) \( M \pm SD \) | Italian (310) \( M \pm SD \) |
|----------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Female   | 161 (53.1%)                | 181 (58.4%)                |
| Male     | 142 (46.9%)                | 129 (41.6%)                |

| Marital status | Turkish (303) \( M \pm SD \) | Italian (310) \( M \pm SD \) |
|---------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Married       | 147 (48.5%)                | 214 (69%)                  |
| Single        | 156 (51.5%)                | 96 (31%)                   |

| Working in pandemic hospital | Turkish (303) \( M \pm SD \) | Italian (310) \( M \pm SD \) |
|-------------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Yes                           | 216 (71.3%)                | 85 (27.4%)                 |
| No                            | 87 (28.7%)                 | 225 (72.6%)                |

| Age                       | Turkish (303) \( M \pm SD \) | Italian (310) \( M \pm SD \) |
|---------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 18-29 y                   | 146 (48.2%)                | 8 (2.6%)                   |
| 30-44 y                   | 131 (43.2%)                | 49 (15.8%)                 |
| 45-54 y                   | 19 (6.3%)                  | 62 (20%)                   |
| 55-64 y                   | 7 (2.3%)                   | 191 (61.6%)                |

\( \text{The number and percent of cases.} \)
TABLE 3 Comparison of PSS and STS scores according to demographic attributes between Turkish and Italian doctors

| Attribute                        | Turkish (303) | Italian (310) | P value |
|----------------------------------|---------------|---------------|---------|
|                                  | M ± SD        | M ± SD        |         |
| Gender                           |               |               |         |
| Female                           | 21.57 ± 6.39  | 20.62 ± 6.16  | 0.164   |
| Male                             | 18.61 ± 9.10  | 17.58 ± 7.07  | 0.299   |
| Marital status                   |               |               |         |
| Married                          | 20.84 ± 8.57  | 20.22 ± 6.26  | 0.622   |
| Single                           | 19.51 ± 7.23  | 17.41 ± 7.30  | 0.001   |
| Working in pandemic hospital     |               |               |         |
| Yes                              | 20.62 ± 7.00  | 19.40 ± 6.67  | 0.167   |
| No                               | 20.01 ± 8.00  | 19.24 ± 6.87  | 0.437   |
| Age                              |               |               |         |
| 18-29                            | 19.82 ± 7.18  | 17.75 ± 7.51  | 0.429   |
| 30-44                            | 20.16 ± 8.54  | 19.14 ± 6.79  | 0.455   |
| 45-54                            | 21.47 ± 7.34  | 20.88 ± 6.05  | 0.726   |
| 55-64                            | 24.85 ± 11.02 | 18.98 ± 6.84  | 0.031   |
| STSS score                       |               |               |         |
| <14                              | 20.18 ± 7.90  | 19.35 ± 6.71  | .047    |
| 14-26                            | 179 (59.1%)   | 211 (68.1%)   | .584    |
| >26                              | 65 (21.5%)    | 46 (14.8%)    | .122    |
| STSS score                       |               |               |         |
| <18                              | 20.18 ± 7.90  | 19.35 ± 6.71  | .047    |
| 18-29                            | 179 (59.1%)   | 211 (68.1%)   | .584    |
| >26                              | 65 (21.5%)    | 46 (14.8%)    | .122    |
| STSS score                       |               |               |         |
| <14                              | 20.18 ± 7.90  | 19.35 ± 6.71  | .047    |
| 14-26                            | 179 (59.1%)   | 211 (68.1%)   | .584    |
| >26                              | 65 (21.5%)    | 46 (14.8%)    | .122    |
| STSS score                       |               |               |         |
| <14                              | 20.18 ± 7.90  | 19.35 ± 6.71  | .047    |
| 14-26                            | 179 (59.1%)   | 211 (68.1%)   | .584    |
| >26                              | 65 (21.5%)    | 46 (14.8%)    | .122    |

Note: M ± SD = mean ± standard deviation.

TABLE 4 Different distribution of Turkish and Italian doctors of PSS and STS scores

| Turkish (303) | Italian (310) | P value |
|---------------|---------------|---------|
| M ± SD        | M ± SD        |         |
| PSS score     |               |         |
| <14           | 20.18 ± 7.90  | 19.35 ± 6.71 | .047    |
| 14-26         | 179 (59.1%)   | 211 (68.1%) | .584    |
| >26           | 65 (21.5%)    | 46 (14.8%) | .122    |
| STSS score    |               |         |
| <14           | 20.18 ± 7.90  | 19.35 ± 6.71 | .047    |
| 14-26         | 179 (59.1%)   | 211 (68.1%) | .584    |
| >26           | 65 (21.5%)    | 46 (14.8%) | .122    |
| PSS score     |               |         |
| <14           | 20.18 ± 7.90  | 19.35 ± 6.71 | .047    |
| 14-26         | 179 (59.1%)   | 211 (68.1%) | .584    |
| >26           | 65 (21.5%)    | 46 (14.8%) | .122    |
| STSS score    |               |         |
| <14           | 20.18 ± 7.90  | 19.35 ± 6.71 | .047    |
| 14-26         | 179 (59.1%)   | 211 (68.1%) | .584    |
| >26           | 65 (21.5%)    | 46 (14.8%) | .122    |

Note: M ± SD = mean ± standard deviation.

68.1% moderate, 14.8% high PS levels. Turkish doctors’ PS level was found significantly higher than Italian doctors’ (P = .047; Table 4).

Mean score of Turkish doctors’ STS level was 24.19 ± 13.29. 11.2% of them had little or no STS, 19.8% had mild, 19.1% had moderate, 11.9% had high and 38% had severe STS levels. Mean score of Italian doctors’ STS level was 38.83 ± 13.74. 23.2% of them had little or no STS, 27.7% had mild, 16.1% had moderate, 10.3% had high and 22.6% had severe STS. Turkish doctors’ STS level was found significantly higher than Italian doctors’ (P = .00; Table 4).

4 | DISCUSSION

Studies showed that COVID-19 causes fear, anxiety, stress, worries about one’s own health and that of loved ones, economic disruption and losses, lifestyle disruptions, social isolation and loneliness (Cacioppo, 2010). Issues such as psychological and neuropsychiatric aspects, changed daily routines because of quarantine, socioeconomic problems and worries about future become more involved in their conversations. ¹⁶

Higher PS and STS levels were found related to being a woman as it was showed in previous studies.¹⁷ Meta-analyses of studies yielding sex-specific risk of potentially traumatic events (PTEs) and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) indicated that female participants were more likely than male participants to meet criteria for PTSD, although they were less likely to experience PTEs.¹⁸

Some doctors started to live apart from their families, some of them were living with high-risk groups at home and they were forced to work. In both countries, schools were closed. Some babysitters left their job. This situation caused so many problems for working parents. Fear of infecting loved ones, worries about their families, isolating themselves caused feeling lonely and triggered stress. Our study results are compatible with this. Being married was found to be a predictor of determining the level of stress.

The mean PS and STS levels of doctors who worked in pandemic hospital were higher than others. Working in pandemic hospital causes and increases the stress levels. Being under high risk of developing disease, contaminating family members, heavy working conditions, increased working hours and treating COVID-19 cases, confronting with more difficult cases can be the reason of it.¹⁹

Our study findings showed that PS and STS levels were higher for elder doctors. Older people are at greater risk for COVID-19. In fact, high morbidity and potential death occurred mostly in elderly individuals and those with chronic disease.²⁰ To the point that, additional safety measures were taken for older citizens in some countries. Our results can be related to these risk factors.
Most of the doctors had at least moderate stress levels. During the pandemic, healthcare workers have a higher risk of developing disease and contaminating their family members than those non-healthcare workers. We know that in quarantine, doctors feel more emotions such as anger, frustration, fear, helplessness and they experience more trauma symptoms in the long term and are frequently exposed to stigmatisation by the community.\(^{21}\)

For both stress scales, stress levels were found statistically higher in Turkish doctors. 71.3% (n = 216) of the participating Turkish doctors were working in pandemic hospitals. This was the 71.2% of all participating doctors who worked in a hospital where COVID-19 is treated. Comparing to Turkish, only 24.9% (n = 87) of participating Italian doctors were working in pandemic hospital.

According to the most recent OECD data, Italy has 4,02 doctors and 6,73 nurses and Turkey has 1,93 doctors and 2,38 nurses per 1,000 of their population.\(^7\) Per capita visits to a physician in healthcare facilities in Turkey are 98 and in Italy 68.\(^{22}\) This can cause heavier working conditions, uncertain and increased weekly working hours for Turkish doctors. Turkish residents are subject to run times of up to 33 hours continuously, increased workload, weekly working times which exceed 110 hours. These can cause higher stress level for Turkish participants. Despite these negative factors, high mortality rates in Italy comparing to Turkey can be a greater risk factor for the increase in stress levels of Italian doctors.

There are various limitations of this research. One of the limitations is that surveys were conducted online instead of face-to-face interviews. Using online questionnaires was inevitable for this period. The strengths of the study are the high number of participants, the careful choice of the sample selection, the exclusion of the participants with any missing data, and seeing and comparing the stress levels of doctors by two different scales. Correlation between different scales showed the poverty of the results.

**5 | CONCLUSIONS**

As a result, in the long run, this tragic health crisis should significantly enhance our understanding of the mental health risk factors which could have long-term psychological implications among the healthcare professionals facing the COVID-19 pandemic. Reporting information such this study is important and international collaborations are essential for planning future prevention strategies and making rapid progress on COVID-19. We need to strengthen these international ties and build more international collaborations rather than staying within our national silos. Interventions to promote mental well-being in healthcare professionals exposed to COVID-19 need to be immediately implemented and to strengthen prevention and response strategies by training healthcare professionals on mental help and crisis management.

**ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**
The authors are very grateful to Michele lafusco, Clotilde Ciampa, Lucia Ciampa, Francesco De Maddi, Gianluigi Palamone, Flavio Quarantiello, Carlo Iannello, Simone Pisano, Agostino Nocerino, Rocco Russo, Francesca Orlando, Fernanda lafusco and all the members of the PediaVirus Network and Stefano Marseglia who participated with enthusiasm to the study.

**DISCLOSURES**
The authors declared no conflict of interest.

**AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS**
All Authors critically reviewed and accepted the paper. GO conceived the study, collected data and drafted the paper. AZ, GO, BA, AP, FC, MFG, SC, DI critically revised the manuscript. GO collected data, conceived the study. DI drafted the paper, revised the manuscript and is the guarantor of the paper. Authors have no conflict of interest to declare.

**ETHICAL STANDARDS**
The study was approved by the Ethics Committee of University of Campania (Naples, Italy) as part of the project entitled: “The remote and live doctor-patient relationship during the Covid-19 Pandemic – Valere Project” (AOU Università della Campania Vanvitelli – Prot. 0028414/i) and was conducted according to the Declaration of Helsinki.

**ORCID**
Gulsah Ozen [https://orcid.org/0000-0002-9049-2875](https://orcid.org/0000-0002-9049-2875)
Angela Zanfardino [https://orcid.org/0000-0003-0641-1321](https://orcid.org/0000-0003-0641-1321)
Gulsum Ozen [https://orcid.org/0000-0001-7659-9580](https://orcid.org/0000-0001-7659-9580)
Burak Acan [https://orcid.org/0000-0001-7020-5114](https://orcid.org/0000-0001-7020-5114)
Alessia Piscapa [https://orcid.org/0000-0002-8754-2990](https://orcid.org/0000-0002-8754-2990)
Francesco Casaburo [https://orcid.org/0000-0002-5901-5368](https://orcid.org/0000-0002-5901-5368)
Santino Confetto [https://orcid.org/0000-0002-4641-6314](https://orcid.org/0000-0002-4641-6314)
Dario lafusco [https://orcid.org/0000-0002-9398-3856](https://orcid.org/0000-0002-9398-3856)

**REFERENCES**
1. Ensel WM, Lin N. The life stress paradigm and psychological distress. J Health Soc Behav. 1991;32:321-341.
2. Worldometers; 2021. https://www.worldometers.info/coronavirus/worldwide-graphs/#total-cases. Accessed August 8, 2021.
3. Cacioppo JT, Hawkley LC, Thisted RA. Perceived social isolation makes me sad: 5-year cross-lagged analyses of loneliness and depressive symptomatology in the Chicago Health, Aging, and Social Relations Study. Psychol Aging. 2010;25:453-463. doi:10.1037/a0017216
4. Reger MA, Stanley IH, Joiner TE. Suicide mortality and coronavirus disease 2019-a perfect storm? JAMA Psychiatry. 2020;77:1093-1094. doi:10.1001/jamapsychiatry.2020.1060
5. Giovanetti M, Benvenuto D, Angeletti S, Ciccozzi M. The first two cases of 2019-nCoV in Italy: where they come from? J Med Virol. 2020;92:518-521. doi:10.1002/jmv.25699
6. RemuzziA,RemuzziG. COVID-19 and Italy:whatnext?Lancet(London, England). 2020;395:1225-1228. doi:10.1016/S0140-6736(20)30627-9
7. OECD. Doctors (indicator). 2021. doi:10.1787/4355e1ec-en. Accessed July 7, 2021.
8. Pearce N, Lawlor DA, Brickley EB. Comparisons between countries are essential for the control of COVID-19. Int J Epidemiol. 2020;49:1059-1062. doi:10.1093/ije/dyaa108

9. Cohen S, Williamson G. Perceived stress in a probability sample of the United States. In: Spacapan S, Oskamp S, eds. The Social Psychology of Health: Claremont Symposium on Applied Social Psychology. Sage; 1988:31-67.

10. Eskin M, Harlaç H, Demirkıran F, Dereboy, Ç. Algılanan Stres Ölçeğinin Türkçe uyarlanması: Güvenirlik ve geçerlik analizi. New/Yeni Symp J. 2013;51:132-140.

11. Fossati A. Scala per lo Stress Percepito Traduzione Italiana a cura di Andrea Fossati. Università Vita-Salute San Raffaele; 2010.

12. Bride BE, Robinson MM, Yegidis B, Figley CR. Development and validation of the secondary traumatic stress scale. Res Social Work Pract. 2004;14:27-35.

13. Bride BE. Prevalence of secondary traumatic stress among social workers. Soc Work. 2007;52:63-70. doi:10.1093/sw/swk12.63

14. Yıldırım G, Kidak LB, Yurdabakan I. Secondary Traumatic Stress Scale: an adaptation study. Anadolu Psikiyatri Dergisi. 2018;19:45-52.

15. Setti I, Argentero P. Vicarious trauma: a contribution to the Italian adaptation of the Secondary Traumatic Stress Scale in a sample of ambulance operators. Giunti Organizzazioni Speciali. 2012;264:58-64.

16. Iaffusco M, Ciampa C, De Maddi F, et al. PediaVirus chatline: all together against COVID-19. Arch Dis Child. 2021;106:e12. doi:10.1136/archdischild-2021-319551

17. Barbosa-Leiker C, Kostick M, Lei M, et al. Measurement invariance of the perceived stress scale and latent mean differences across gender and time. Stress Health. 2013;29:253-260. doi:10.1002/smi.2463

18. Tolin DF, Foa EB. Sex differences in trauma and posttraumatic stress disorder: a quantitative review of 25 years of research. Psychol Bull. 2006;132:959-992. doi:10.1037/0033-2909.132.6.959

19. Lai J, Ma S, Wang Y, et al. Factors associated with mental health outcomes among health care workers exposed to coronavirus disease 2019. JAMA Network Open. 2020;3:e203976. doi:10.1001/jamanetworkopen.2020.3976

20. Epidemiology Working Group for NCIP Epidemic Response, Chinese Center for Disease Control and Prevention. The epidemiological characteristics of an outbreak of 2019 novel coronavirus diseases (COVID-19) in China. Zhonghua Liu Xing Bing Xue Za Zhi. 2020;41:145-151. doi:10.3760/cma.j.issn.0254-6450.2020.02.003

21. Reynolds DL, Garay JR, Deamond SL, Moran MK, Gold W, Styra R. Understanding, compliance and psychological impact of the SARS quarantine experience. Epidemiol Infect. 2008;136:997-1007. doi:10.1017/S0950268807009156

22. Sağlık İstatistikleri Yılılığı 2019 Haber Bülteni; 2019. https://sbsgm.saglik.gov.tr/Eklenti/39024/0/haber-bulteni-2019.pdf. Accessed August 8, 2021.

How to cite this article: Ozen G, Zanfardino A, Ozen G, et al. Comparison of emotional approaches of medical doctors against covid-19 pandemic: Eastern and Western Mediterranean countries. Int J Clin Pract. 2021;75:e14973. doi:10.1111/ijcp.14973