Impact of Covid -19 on Healthcare Workers

Sapana N. Jaiswal[1]

sapana.jaiswal@yahoo.com

Abstract

During the crisis of Covid-19, healthcare workers (HCWs) face several challenges treating patients of Covid-19, reducing the spread of infection; developing suitable short-term strategies; and formulating long-term plans. The psychological burden and overall wellness of HCWs has received keen awareness in news and research publications. Covid- 19 has negative impact on healthcare workers as they suffered both physically and mentally while performing their duties of saving lives of patients. This paper will highlight the various challenges faced by healthcare workers during this pandemic and guidelines issued by the government for the protection of healthcare workers. Government has enacted some laws for safeguarding healthcare workers against some insensitive and disrespectful act of people in society. Presently the Covid -19 vaccines are ready and are being distributed to the frontline worriers including healthcare workers in phases.

Keywords

Covid - 19, Healthcare workers, Pandemic, psychological impact and

Social impact

Introduction

A person, who takes care and delivers services to the ill and also provides help either directly as doctors and nurses or indirectly and includes helpers, laboratory technicians, or even medical waste handlers, is known as healthcare worker. While the whole country is fighting against the Covid-19 crisis, the ones on the frontline, doctors and healthcare workers, are working dreadfully hard for the welfare of the patients and to minimize the damage to the society due to the pandemic.

Since the World War 2, the covid-19 was the greatest challenge that we have faced. Corona virus disease (covid-19) is an infectious disease that is caused by newly discovered corona virus.

This corona virus has not only caused millions of death across the world but the human family has suffered intolerable burdens of loss. Covid-19 has affected all the persons of all the age groups only the children are less affected by corona virus. But the most affected group is of the healthcare workers who were trying day and night to save the patient suffering from the corona virus. The healthcare workers were suffering not only physically but mentally, emotionally and economically too. They were suffering physically as they were working day and night to save the patients, they were suffering mentally because they know the risk involved in doing their duties, but they didn't care for their lives and work selflessly. To reach up to the goal of this research, Researcher has adopted doctrinal or secondary method to collect the information, and data is collected after the review of various websites, e-news and e- data on internet.

Objective of the research paper

- To understand the conditions of healthcare workers during pandemic.
- To highlight the impact of Covid- 19 on healthcare workers.
- To draw certain effective suggestions for minimizing the negative impact of Covid- 19 on health care workers.
- To know legal provisions for protection of the rights of healthcare workers

Impact of corona virus on doctors and healthcare workers

As there was no specific medicine for curing the corona virus infection, it makes their work tougher and all the doctors and other healthcare workers were under pressure to calm down the nerves of the patients and their families. The doctors are attending the patients in person and also in connection with them through phone and video calling. After doing their duty, which lasts for 15 or even 18 hours in a day, doctors were taking rest in solitary accommodation. They were under threat of catching the disease and infecting their own families. The Doctors and other healthcare workers faced many challenges during pandemic like, there was a shortage of PPE kit, mask, gowns and respirators also, long working hours, violence against them from some reckless and unwise people within the hospitals and within society, increased risk of infection, social and family impacts. As we all know that medicine is a humanitarian profession, doctors are considered as God by many of us as they save many lives by their skill. Many healthcare workers willingly enter into this profession knowing the risk involved in it and that they are susceptible to it. However, they need to maintain balance between their obligations as professionals and their duties to their family members too. The risk of the corona virus to personal health of healthcare workers is frightening enough, but the threat of infecting their families because of exposure on the job is more disturbing ,unjustified and not acceptable. A number of HCW have been forced to vacate their rented houses on the assumption that they may carry and increase this disease from their place of work (hospitals) to society. Government has provided some guidelines for doctors and healthcare workers during pandemic to improve health worker safety and patient safety.

 Violence against health workers is not acceptable. Health workers are facing violent behavior by many people from all over the world. They are threatened or exposed to verbal aggression. Mainly violence is perpetrated by patients and visitors. Researcher has pointed out few instances of violence against healthcare workers during pandemic like woman doctor in Delhi's Lok Nayak hospital has been assaulted by Patients, in Moradabad Uttar Pradesh, duty doctors were attacked by throwing stones at them, a man who died due to Covid-19 in Hyderabad hospital, his family attacked on doctors there.

Law for the protection of healthcare workers in India

To the health care worker, law and the legal system also step ahead for the protection of their rights.

During the spread of the Covid-19 pandemic, the Epidemic Diseases (Amendment) Ordinance, 2020 was promulgated on April 22, 2020. The Ordinance amends the Epidemic Diseases Act, 1897. The Act provides for the prevention of the spread of dangerous epidemic diseases. The Ordinance amends the Act to include protections for healthcare personnel combating epidemic diseases and expands the powers of the central government to prevent the spread of such diseases. The Ordinance

specifies that no person can: (i) participate in or commit an act of violence against healthcare service personnel, or (ii) Participate in or cause damage or loss to any property during an epidemic. [1]

A person who commits any of these two offences is liable to be punished with imprisonment between 3 months to 5 years, and a fine between Rs 50,000 to 2,00000rupees. However, for such offences, charges may by dropped by the victim with the permission of the Court. If a person commits act of violence against a healthcare service personnel causes grievous harm, will be punishable with imprisonment between six months and seven years, and a fine between one lakh rupees and five lakh rupees. All offences under the Ordinance are cognizable and non-bailable (i.e., a police officer can arrest without a warrant).The healthcare service personnel, who are victims are entitled to get a compensation by the Persons convicted of offences under the Ordinance, as determined by the Court. In the case of damage or loss of property, the compensation payable to the victim will be twice the amount of the fair market value of the damaged or lost property, as determined by the Court. .

Present situation of Covid -19 in India

The increase of corona virus is reducing in India as herd immunity is developed. The Prime Minister of India virtually launched the world's largest Covid-19 vaccination drive on January 16th, 2021, The two Covid-19 vaccines – 'Covishield' developed by Oxford-AstraZeneca via Serum Institute of India (SII), and Covaxin is an indigenous vaccine developed by Bharat Biotech in collaboration with Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR). Healthcare workers in the country are the first to be treated with these vaccines. Covid vaccination drive is scheduled to start on January 16 with priority given to an estimated 3 crore healthcare workers and the frontline workers, the Health Ministry said on Saturday.

The vaccines which have been rolled out in India, both of them have been found to be safe by the Drugs Controller General of India's (DCGI) Expert Committee.

Suggestions for improving health of healthcare workers during pandemic

After the discussion, researcher is suggesting some preventive measures for the protection of the mental and physical health of HCW.

- Healthcare workers need to take steps to protect their mental health.
- Government should provide all equipments necessary to protect them from infection.
- Make sure they get proper rest, regular exercise to manage their stress.
- They should eat a healthy, balanced diet to develop their immunity system.

Conclusion

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[1] The Epidemic Diseases (Amendment) Ordinance, 2020

All the healthcare workers have faced many problems and challenges during this pandemic. Covid-19 has terrible impact on mental, social and physical life of healthcare workers. Earlier they were working for 8 to 9 hours in a day which now has been changed into 15 to 18 hours in a day and increases their psychological and physical health problems. Working for long hours by wearing PPE kit was not easy for them. Government has recognised the problems faced by healthcare workers and has given certain guidelines to protect them against violence by some insensitive people in the society. The legal system in India has also enacted some laws for their protection and violation of any such law is backed by sanction. These laws need to be implemented strictly.

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