Understanding and mitigating the psychosocial impact of COVID-19 on NHS staff in England (NHS CHECK)

NIHR | Applied Research Collaboration North Thames

Stress, depression, and anxiety are the most common reasons for sickness absence in healthcare workers. There are also well-documented problems with staff retention and turnover in the sector due to stress, all of which negatively impact patient care and outcomes.

What did we do?

NHS CHECK is a large longitudinal cohort study of the mental health and wellbeing of healthcare workers in England. Over 23,000 healthcare workers from 18 NHS Trusts across England - including all types of workers (e.g. doctors, nurses, administrators, porters, cleaners) - have completed surveys at four time points, and some have been involved in qualitative interviews, intervention testing, and diagnostic interviews. This longitudinal data across the workforce has provided answers to questions that the typically cross-sectional studies on this topic cannot, such as looking at the trajectories of mental-ill health symptoms over time and assessing the extent to which results from screening measures used in online surveys reflect the true prevalence of diagnosable mental illness.

How is it helping?

Findings have been presented at a wide range of seminars, conferences, and events, as well as at the House of Lords and on major UK television and radio programs. The team has published multiple academic papers and provided regular updates via newsletters to study participants and participating Trusts. There has also been a 'policy lab' event to engage with researchers, clinicians and policy makers about how our findings could be used to improve outcomes for staff.

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