

# Optimal Sleep Health for Health Care Workers during the COVID19 Pandemic

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# Learning Objectives

1. Understand the importance of physician health and wellbeing
2. Discuss and understand the different domains of optimal sleep health and the relationship with overall health and well-being
3. Learn practical tips on how to optimize sleep health, and wellbeing



# Faculty Disclosure Slide

**Faculty:** Dr. Mamta Gautam  
**Disclosure:** President and CEO, PEAK MD Inc

Relationships with commercial/pharma interests:

- Honorarium: Amgen, Merck

Disclosure of commercial support: NONE

Potential for conflict of interest: NONE

Mitigating potential bias: NOT REQUIRED

- The content of this discussion is not related to the services of commercial interest.
- No therapeutic recommendations for medications will be made.



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# Our World Has Been Changing

- Rapid unprecedented change in healthcare
- VUCA: Volatility, Uncertainty, Complexity, Ambiguity.
- Rapid spread of pandemic worldwide, and high associated mortality
- Working in healthcare is rewarding, but has been also physically difficult and psychologically demanding
- Increased stress, challenges, fatigue, worry and anxiety can occur
- Impacts all of us

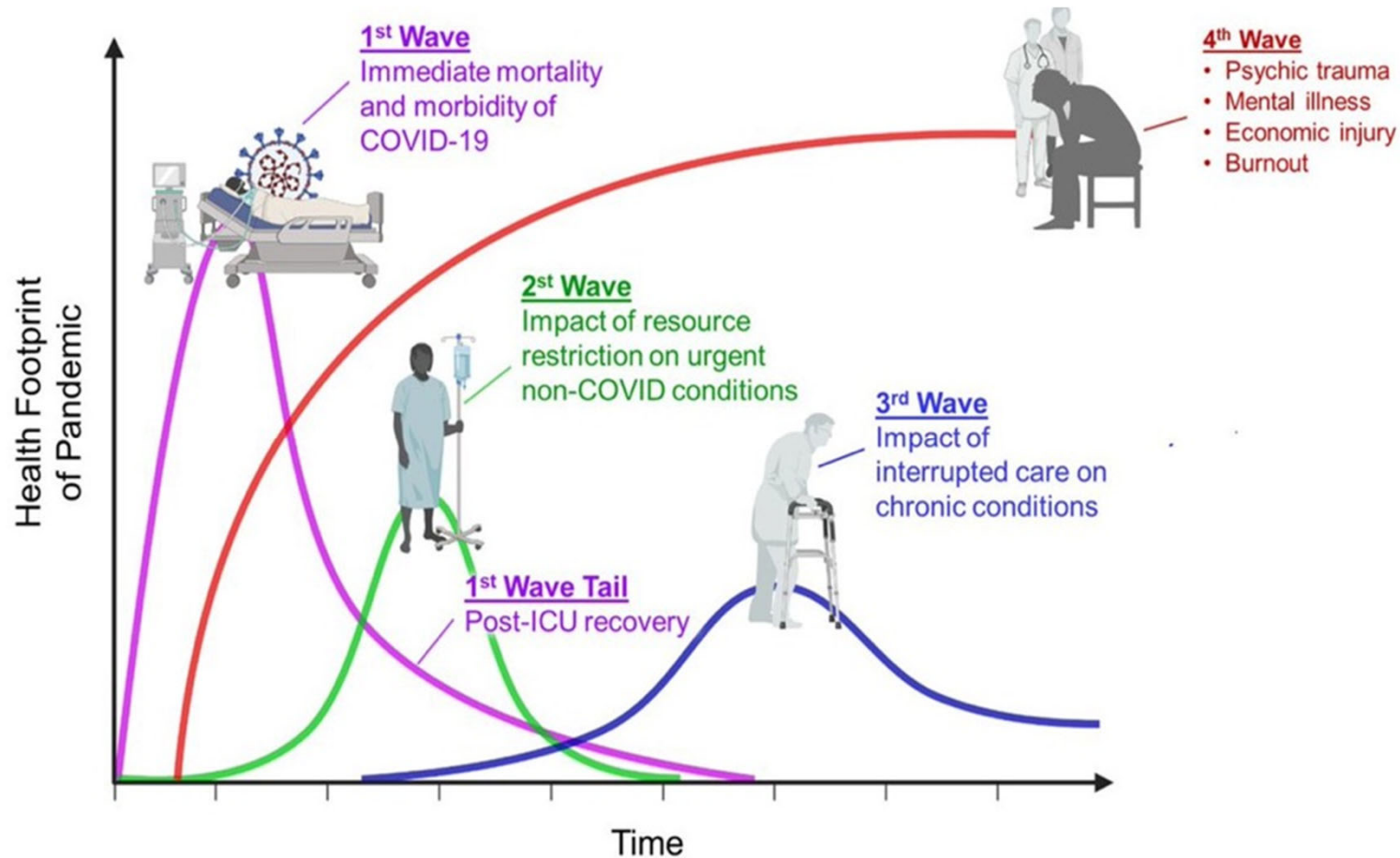


# Issues and Challenges

- Lack of access to PPE and testing
- Inconsistency in guidelines, policies, procedures; Communication of this
- High volume of patients, and surge in care demands
- Risk of exposure and infection – impact on us, our colleagues, our family, our patients
- Redeployment, and associated uncertainty about knowledge and capabilities
- Ethical issues
- Virtual care – technology, impact on patients, impact on us
- Support by organization – if develop COVID19, childcare, financial implications
- Psychological stress



# What's Ahead?



Dr. Payal Kohli, 9HealthNews

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hpszJdDik0Q>



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# Stress is normal

- Stress is a normal and natural physiological and psychological response.
- Does not mean you cannot do your job, or that you are weak
- Acute stress involves adaptive responses to meet demands
- Stress can be useful – can help you keep going or maintain a sense of purpose.
  
- What's important is how you manage stress.



# What is Distress?

When you cannot go about your usual routine

## Signs and Symptoms:

- Anxiety, worry
- Unable to relax, insomnia
- Muscle tension, aches, pains
- Irritability, negativity, problems with relationships
- Difficulty concentration, poor work performance
- Easily fatigued
- Feel demoralized, hopeless, sad





# Burnout

- Emotional exhaustion, chronic overstress. (Maslach)
- Distinct work-related syndrome – demands exceed individual resources
- Most likely to occur in jobs that require extensive care of others; thus, common among practicing healthcare workers
- Not a psychiatric diagnosis, but can lead to serious consequences
- **Three stages:**
  1. Emotional Exhaustion
  2. Depersonalization
  3. Reduced Personal Accomplishment



# Grief

- Sense of loss as the world has changed
- Loss of: normalcy, safety, touch, connection, economic, choice and control...
- Stages: Denial-Anger-Bargaining-Acceptance-Integration (Kubler-Ross)
- Sixth stage: Meaning (David Kessler)
- Allow and acknowledge it.



# The Heroes are Hurting

- Pre-COVID: High rates of burnout, depression, suicide in HCW
- As intensity and adrenaline subsides, left with the emotions and trauma of what we dealt with: inadequacy, anxiety, depression, letdown, PTSD
- We cannot keep caring like that.
- Pandemic's impact on mental health of health care workers show soaring rates of anxiety, depression and insomnia.
- From SARS, we know that HCW psychologically affected regardless of exposure to infection or high-risk work.
- What's ahead?



# Studies of HCW during COVID-19 to date

All show increased stress, PTSD, anxiety, depression, insomnia in HCW.

- Spoorthy MS. *Mental health problems faced by healthcare workers due to the COVID-19 pandemic–A review*. March 2020. *Asian Journal of Psychiatry* 51:102119. DOI: 10.1016/j.ajp.2020.102119
- Zhang C, Yang L, Liu S, et al. *Survey of insomnia and related social psychological factors among medical staff involved with the 2019 novel coronavirus disease outbreak* [published online April 14, 2020]. *Front Psychiatry*. doi: 10.3389/fpsy.2020.00306.
- Pappa, Sofia et al. “*Prevalence of depression, anxiety, and insomnia among healthcare workers during the COVID-19 pandemic: A systematic review and meta-analysis.*” *Brain, behavior, and immunity*, S0889-1591(20)30845-X. 8 May. 2020, doi:10.1016/j.bbi.2020.05.026
- Jansson M, Rello J (June 10, 2020) *Mental Health in Healthcare Workers and the Covid-19 Pandemic Era: Novel Challenge for Critical Care*. *J Intensive & Crit Care* Vol.6 No.2:6



# Stigma of Mental Illness

“Nowhere is the stigma of mental illness greater than within medicine.”  
Gautam, 2007

- Physicians have higher rates of mental illness than in the average population.
  - Physicians are less likely to reach out for help.
  - “Silence is the enemy for doctors...”
- 
- <https://www.nytimes.com/2016/01/12/upshot/silence-is-the-enemy-for-doctors-who-have-depression.html>



Even the healthiest and strongest of us  
can become unhealthy  
in an unhealthy environment.



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# Optimal Sleep Health

Stress can lead to fatigue.

Fatigue has been noted in up to 90% of HCW.

Leads to lack of physical and cognitive functioning: impairment of technical expertise, rapid decision-making, logical reasoning; and reduced vigilance (McClelland et al, Anesthesia 2019; 74: 1509-23.)

We need to ensure the Basics to remain resilient:

- Exercise
- Nutrition
- Sleep

