

COVID-19 RESEARCH NEWSLETTER

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E-Mental Health Solutions to Assist Healthcare Workers during COVID-19

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The COVID-19 pandemic has critically influenced health care workers (HCWs) who are working long hours under hard conditions and exposed to fatigue and other stressors such as fear of infection. These stressors have a significant impact on their mental health. Many HCWs reported suffering from different psychological issues, including anxiety, stress, and depression. There is therefore an undeniable need of mental care interventions for HCWs. e-Mental health solutions can overcome the current barriers to health care delivery created by the pandemic. A systematic literature review (SLR) was conducted by the research team to investigate e-mental health interventions developed for HCWs during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Results of the SLR showed that the number of identified interventions was limited and consisted of social media applications, online platforms, online resources, online games, mobile applications, virtual care and hotlines. The majority of the interventions received an overall positive feedback from the users and reported to be beneficial for HCWs. Results showed also that the number of identified interventions covers only a few countries, mainly China. This reveals the need for additional mental care interventions to help HCWs in other countries. A lack of empirical evaluation of available interventions was also identified. Many limitations and challenges facing e-mental health solutions were extracted, including technological and cultural limitations, confidentiality, and risk management concerns, as well as attitudes of users toward the interventions. Lessons should be learned from the current COVID-19 crisis and more attention should be given to e-mental health interventions.



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