

PECULIARITIES OF THE PSYCHOSOCIAL WORK ENVIRONMENT IN PERSONAL HEALTHCARE INSTITUTIONS DURING THE CHANGE: THE APPROACH OF OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY AND HEALTH PROFESSIONALS

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Introduction: EU countries are encouraged to initiate changes in the psychological work environment and workplace culture of organizations to promote mental health and well-being. The health and job satisfaction of the medical professionals is one of the objectives identified in Lithuanian and international documents in order to achieve quality of health system services. In 2019, the COVID-19 pandemic has focused attention on addressing the extreme consequences for the occupational health of medical professionals. Healthcare professionals fatigue is becoming a critical problem leading to a weakening of the human resources of the healthcare system. In this stressful pandemic period, new psychosocial risk factors are emerging in the work environment, which causes unforeseen challenges to the occupational health of healthcare specialists.

Objective of the research: to reveal the psychosocial features of the work environment in healthcare institutions in a period of change, from the perspective of occupational safety and health (OSH), occupational health specialists (OHS), and the specialists who carry out their functions.

Tasks: 1) To reveal the approach of OSH and OHS professionals towards the changes in the psychosocial environment of medical staff during the COVID-19 pandemic; 2) Provide a structured analytical framework of the psychosocial processes, staff interactions, foreseen institution resources, and disturbances, others relevant elements.

Methods. Qualitative research will be conducted using the Grounded Theory Methodology (GTM), which allows to analyze not only the experience of research participants, including internal psychological aspects of the research problem and meanings attributed to personal experiences, but also subjectively perceived context and processes in the organization. Data will be collected through a semi-structured interview.

Expected results. The study will provide new knowledge into the psychosocial work environment changes in healthcare institutions during a pandemic: which psychosocial risk factors in the work environment are relevant in general hospitals during a pandemic? How occupational safety and health, and occupational health professionals in general hospitals identify opportunities to influence them? Which supportive factors have enabled/are enabling healthcare specialists to remain able to work and which internal and external professional resources would enable them to help at stressful pandemic and post-pandemic period? Training materials will be made for occupational safety and health and occupational health professionals to develop their ability to recognize and respond to unfavorable psychosocial environment in the workplace and thus contribute to the mental health and emotional well-being of healthcare staff.

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