Assessing Levels of Moral Injury Among Nurses and Caregivers

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Assessing the Prevalence of Moral Injury Among Healthcare Professionals and Students

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Introduction

- Moral injury, a term classified as the resulting distress from being exposed to morally injurious events, has been overlooked when it comes to its association to healthcare professionals and students.
- Healthcare professionals are likely to be exposed to these possible situations due to the nature of their profession.
- In regards to prevalence, about 32% of United States healthcare workers that were on the frontlines of the COVID-19 pandemic experienced moral injury (Rabin et al., 2023).
- While moral injury may not be a mental health disorder in itself, it is still significantly associated with mental health illnesses that are detrimental to the well-being of an individual, such as depression, anxiety, and clinician burnout (Wang et al., 2022).
- The consequences of increased levels of moral injury within nurses has demonstrated to also be a predictor for decreased performance when it comes to self-evaluation (Callis et al., 2022).
- By better comprehending and managing the occurrence of moral injury experienced by nurses and caregivers, the overall wellness of the population can be promoted and safeguarded.

Research Goal

This study is aimed toward measuring current levels of MI experienced by healthcare professionals and students, along with its possible association to mental health issues. Through this, it can be better understood how to provide the support necessary to minimize MI.

Methods

A comprehensive online survey will be utilized to collect data regarding the prevalence and influence of moral injury. It is a voluntary research study through Qualtrics that presents a variety of questions involving other concepts such as burnout, compassion fatigue, and hope. The Moral Injury Symptom Scale (MISS) will be utilized to specifically measure MI in healthcare workers and students.

Results

Currently, the collection of data is ongoing.

Moral Injury Scores:
- Participants’ MI scores ranged from 28-80 with an average of 52
- A score of 36 or higher is considered clinically significant for potential MI symptoms

Discussion

- The mental health of healthcare professionals and students should receive a substantial amount of attention and support.
- To better support these professionals and the hardships they may be exposed to through their rigorous work, changes on an individual, administrative, and legislative level must be made.
- On an individual level, these professionals may implement changes to their daily lives that promote self-care and overall well-being. Some examples of this may include speaking with others who have faced similar situations, or talking to a licensed therapist.
- Administratively, organizational policies that specifically focus on managing moral injury among the staff can be useful. This also includes remaining consistent when providing support to workers and students.
- Changes to legislation regarding healthcare workers could also be implemented to improve the mental health of these professionals. Through the involvement of the government and Congress, systematic alterations can be made on a nationwide scale.

Conclusion

- By continuing to collect data, a contribution can be made toward further comprehending MI and its influence on the mental health of healthcare professionals and students.
- Providing support to healthcare professionals allows them to better care for themselves and their patients.

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References