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FUNCTIONING OF MEDICAL INSTITUTIONS IN YEREVAN AND THE REGIONS OF ARMENIA DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

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ABSTRACT

The COVID-19 pandemic, caused by the SARS-CoV-2 virus, brought unprecedented challenges to healthcare systems across the globe, including Armenia. When the World Health Organization (WHO) declared it a pandemic in March 2020, hospitals and medical staff faced immense pressure - reallocating resources, adjusting workflows, and managing surging patient numbers, often with limited infrastructure. This study sought to understand how healthcare institutions in Yerevan and other regions of Armenia adapted during the crisis, examining both resource management and the emotional toll on medical workers.

To explore these challenges, researchers surveyed 196 healthcare professionals - 156 physicians and 40 nurses - working in Armenian hospitals with varying levels of COVID-19 reprofiling (non-reprofiled, partially reprofiled, and fully dedicated facilities). Using a carefully designed questionnaire, the study assessed key issues such as training, workload, protective equipment availability, and psychological stress. Responses were analyzed using statistical methods to identify trends and correlations.

The findings reveal a strained but resilient healthcare workforce. Only about 38.7% of participants received specialized COVID-19 training, and just over a third worked in officially designated COVID-19 centers. Many (21.2%) were reassigned to pandemic-related units, often with heavier workloads. More than half (53.6%) reported heightened stress, strongly linked to increased demands and shortages of critical supplies such as oxygen and medications. While most (73.7%) had sufficient protective gear, over a third faced shortages of essential resources. Financially, salaries remained unchanged for 69.1% of participants, even as concerns about understaffing and burnout grew.

Despite these struggles, Armenia's healthcare system demonstrated adaptability and dedication. The study underscores the urgent need for better pandemic preparedness - ensuring proper resource distribution, adequate mental health support for frontline workers, and stronger infrastructure to handle future health crises effectively.

KEYWORDS: COVID-19, Armenia, healthcare system, operational effectiveness, stress, healthcare workforce, pandemic preparedness.

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