Research topic proposal – Charline VINCENT – May 2024

The COVID-19 pandemic directly impacted the health sector and the professionals working within it. Several systematic reviews have highlighted a high level of depression, anxiety and post-traumatic stress disorders (PTSD) among healthcare workers who worked during the pandemic in different countries (1–4).

Multiple studies have examined the relationship between specific individual factors and mental health disorders in healthcare professionals following the COVID-19 pandemic. These factors include: socio-demographic characteristics (e.g. : being a women) (5–13), work-related factors (e.g. : being nurse) (7,10–12,14–17), pandemic related factors (e.g. : high exposure to the pandemic) (5,10–12,18) and mental health comorbidities (e.g. : presence of anxiety, depressive or post-traumatic stress disorders symptoms) (5,9,11,12,14,19–21). **Relationship between lack of social support** and depressive symptoms (11,22) or PTSD symptoms (7,23–25) **was rarely studied** in the pandemic context, however given that healthcare workers include socially diverse categories of professionals, it is essential to explore the association between mental health and social support.

Some studies in **general population** have found a relationship between contextual factors such as **living in urban than rural area** and depressive symptoms (26–28), post-traumatic stress disorders (29,30) and anxiety (26,31). However, the relationship between urban/rural residence and mental health disorders among healthcare professionals exposed to the COVID pandemic remains unknown. **We thus hypothesize that healthcare workers exposed to the COVID-19 pandemic and living in urban areas could feel a lack of social support and are more at risk for developing symptoms of PTSD, depression, and anxiety.**

Additionally, these various studies leaded in general population about urban/rural residence did not consider some **individual factors**, such as: pandemic related-factors (worries about COVID, having been tested COVID, loved ones passed away due to COVID-19, etc.), worked-related factors (being nurse, working in a COVID-19 unit, etc.), discrimination as healthcare workers and confidence in government and the working environment to manage the pandemic and some contextual factors such as economic support index or mobility index during the pandemic who are very important to take into account.

At last, the different studies did not investigate the **evolution of mental health disorders** one and two years after the pandemic began taking into account the various factors mentioned above whereas we hypothesize these mental health symptoms have become chronic or appeared at a later time.

Objectives: **Investigate the evolving relationship between social support and mental health disorders among healthcare professionals, one and two years after the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic taking into account individual and contextual factors, including the degree of urbanization of the place of residence, and aim to quantify the proportion of total variance attributable to the variance of contextual factors**.

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