



## Are Healthcare authorities doing enough to protect primary health care personnel during the COVID-19 pandemic?

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The preliminary analysis of the results of the International survey “**Biosecurity & Health in primary care during the COVID-19 pandemic**” shows that despite all the steps that have been taken to preserve biosecurity and health, **Health Care Authorities are not doing enough to protect Healthcare Personnel (HCP) working in primary care.**

The survey implemented by The Centre for Research and Education in General Practice, University of Copenhagen, in collaboration with different professional associations and the NGO “Global Doctors” was open from the 1<sup>st</sup> of May until the 1<sup>st</sup> of June 2020.

It aimed to assess the implementation of the [WHO guidelines](#) to secure biosecurity and health of HCP working in primary care during the COVID-19 pandemic. Participants included 1627 HCP from 63 countries. The vast majority of the respondents (80%) come from six countries: Argentina, Brazil, France, Mexico, Nigeria, and Spain.

### PRELIMINARY RESULTS

**Three months** after the COVID-19 outbreak was declared a Public Health emergency of international concern and at least one month after the first confirmed case of COVID-19 within each country, **the WHO guidelines have not, yet, been fully implemented.**

**More than half** of all participants do not consider that all necessary preventive and protective measures to minimise health risks have been implemented.

**64%** of the participants have considered exercising their right to remove themselves from a work situation that they believe that presents an imminent and serious danger to their life and health during the COVID-19 pandemic.

**“ When health workers are at risk, we’re all at risk.”**

- **Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, WHO Director-General (Media briefing, April 10, 2020)**

45%

Have not received a refreshing course on Infection Prevention and Control (IPC), as well as use of Protective Personal Equipment (PPE)

36%

Have not been informed about mental health or counseling resources to cope with stress related to the pandemic

40%

Have not received the full kit recommended by WHO (mask, eye protection, gown, gloves) for the examination of patients with respiratory symptoms

70%

Have spent their own money to purchase biosecurity and infection control items

The emergence of the COVID-19 pandemic has caused a severe disruption of the health systems all over the world. HCP who are fighting at the frontlines of the pandemic are at increased risk of contracting COVID-19. **In many countries, HCP working in primary care are usually the first point of contact between unconfirmed cases and the healthcare system.**

Access to Protective Personal Equipment (PPE) and mental health resources for HCP in primary care is of vital importance. **Access to PPE is essential not only for protecting the health of the HCP, but it also ensures good healthcare of their patients.**

Furthermore, everyone has the right to a safe workplace; consequently, the availability of adequate PPE, as well as mental health resources, should be **of utmost priority to healthcare authorities.**

Further analysis of the data will shed light on variation across countries and regions; nonetheless, this preliminary data shows the first picture to call attention on the fact that **solutions beyond the health care system are needed, now more than ever.**

Healthcare authorities now have the imperative task to lead the **establishment of inter-sectoral work** to promote innovative solutions adapted to the specific context to secure **a satisfactory availability of PPE, training courses and mental health resources.**

The COVID-19 pandemic is not close to being over. Consequently, HCP requires the **support and commitment of the academia, industry, and governmental agencies** to be able to secure the provision of the highest quality health care during this unprecedentedly critical time.