STRESS AND DEPRESSION AMONG RURAL SOCIAL WORKERS IN OHIO DURING COVID-19

This presentation details the findings of a 2020-2021 study that explored how rural social workers report their depression and stress levels during COVID-19 in Ohio.

OVERVIEW

AGENDA

Background

Methodology

Results

Conclusions

Q & A

BACKGROUND

- Knowledge about mental health and COVID-related status among rural social workers in Ohio

- Associations of rural social worker's mental health, COVID-related factors, and protective factors
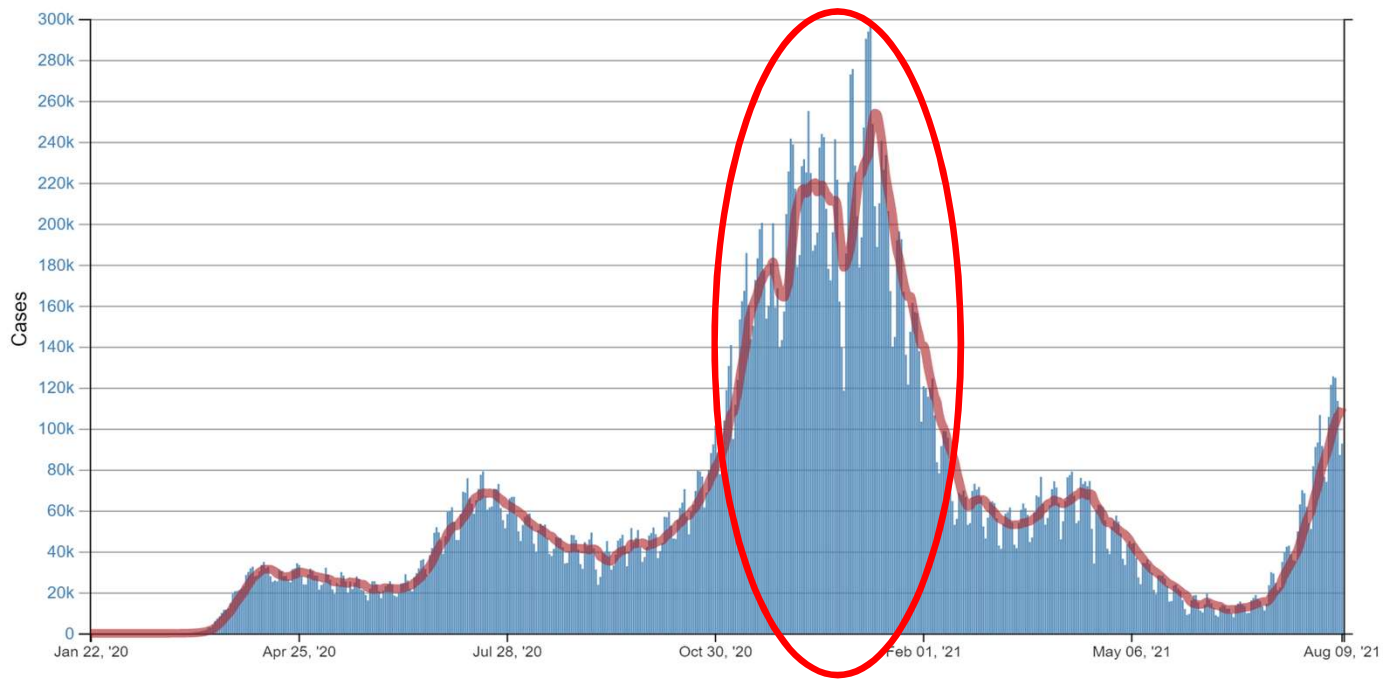
STUDY OBJECTIVE

COVID-19 Cases:
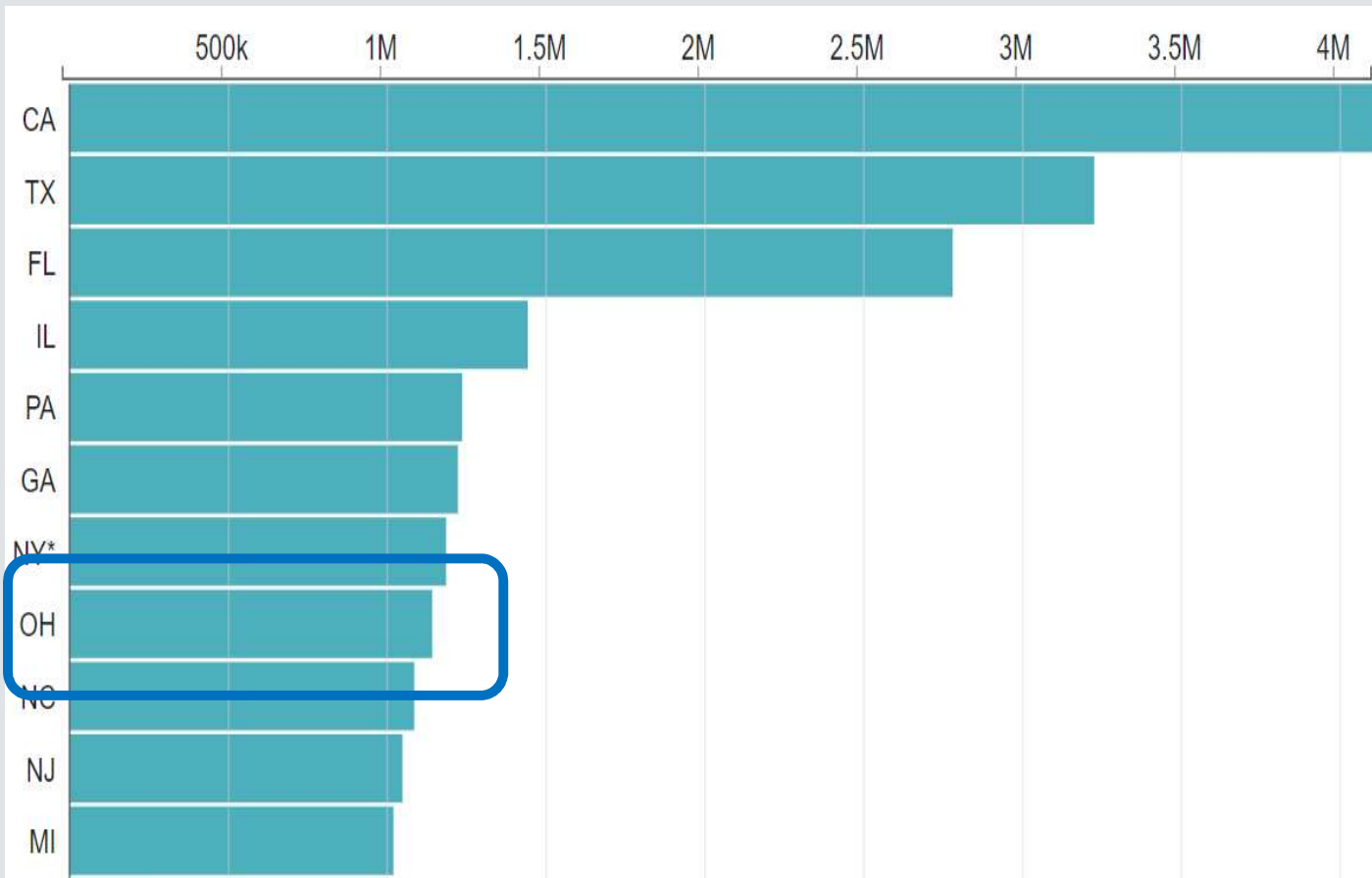
Ohio was one of the states with the highest number of cases of COVID-19.

Daily Trends in Number of COVID-19 Cases in the United States Reported to CDC

COVID-19 STATUS

COVID-19 STATUS

I. Physical and emotional stress because of fear of infection and unsafe environments during COVID-19

II. Emotional demands and compassion fatigue that have negative effects on existing mental health problems

III. Rural social workers' work experience and burnout

BACKGROUND

I.   The role of self-care as a protective factor

II.   A self-care practice for a social worker will be negatively associated with an increase in the social worker's perceived stress and depressive symptoms.

STUDY AIMS

METHODS

- 3,000 samples using disproportionate stratified sampling

- Survey period: December 2020 to January 2021

- Respondents = 150 Rural Social Workers in Ohio

SAMPLE

Measurement

- Depression: PHQ-8 (Kroenke et al., 2009).

- Perceived stress: PSS-10 (Cohen & Williamson, 1988)

- Social connectedness: SCS-R (Lee, Draper, & Lee, 2001)

- Mindful Self-Care Scale (Cook-Cottone, 2015).

MEASURES

1. A descriptive analysis
2. Two hierarchical multiple regressions
- Model 1: sociodemographic variables, health, social connectedness, COVID-19 cases
- Model 2: Self-care
3. Stata

ANALYSIS PLAN

RESULTS

N = 150
34% of Social Worker Participants

Categorical variable	Urban (n = 291)	Rural (n = 150)	chi-square test
	n (%)	n (%)	
Gender			$\chi^2(2) = 1.80$
Male	30 (10.3)	10 (6.7)	
Female	260 (89.4)	139 (92.7)	
Other	1 (0.3)	1 (0.7)	
Race			**$\chi^2(4) = 19.39$****
White	236 (81.1)	143 (95.3)	
African American	38 (13.1)	2 (1.3)	
Hispanic	11 (3.8)	4 (2.7)	
Asian/other	6 (2.1)	1 (0.7)	
Age			$\chi^2(2) = 0.32$
Less than 40 yrs	120 (41.2)	60 (40.0)	
40-54 yrs	99 (34.0)	55 (36.7)	
55 yrs+	72 (24.7)	35 (23.3)	
Social work degree			**$\chi^2(3) = 8.23$***
BSW	61 (21.0)	47 (31.3)	
MSW	209 (71.8)	89 (59.3)	
DSW/PHD	2 (0.7)	3 (2.0)	
Other	19 (6.5)	11 (7.3)	
Annual income			$\chi^2(2) = 1.82$
Less than $40,000	44 (15.1)	29 (19.3)	
$40,000-$79,999	207 (71.1)	105 (70.0)	
$80,000+	40 (13.8)	16 (10.7)	
COVID-19 positive[b]			
Social worker	27 (9.3)	28 (18.7)	**$\chi^2(1) = 7.91$****
Client	222 (76.3)	97 (64.7)	**$\chi^2(1) = 6.68$***

DEMOGRAPHICS

Continuous variable	Urban (n = 291) M (SD)	Rural (n = 150) M (SD)	t-test
Social connectedness	80.33 (8.95)	79.83 (9.92)	-0.54
Mindful self-care	79.20 (14.64)	75.54 (14.52)	**-2.49***
Mindful Relaxation	12.12 (3.61)	11.13 (3.80)	**-2.70****
Physical Care	11.44 (3.86)	10.71 (3.73)	**-1.92†**
Self-Compassion and Purpose	13.23 (3.83)	12.41 (3.60)	**-2.17***
Supportive Relationships	16.31 (3.39)	16.04 (3.51)	-0.77
Supportive Structure	15.22 (3.45)	14.91 (3.40)	-0.87
Mindful Awareness	10.92 (3.19)	10.39 (3.09)	**-1.69†**
Perceived stress	15.55 (7.06)	16.15 (6.61)	0.87
PHQ-8	6.51 (5.69)	6.56 (5.65)	0.09

DEMOGRAPHICS

Variable	Depression n/M(SD)	No Depression n/M(SD)	% of Depression	χ^2/ t-test
Age				**5.28†**
Less than 40 yrs	20	40	33.33	
40-54 yrs	14	39	26.42	
55 yrs or more	4	30	11.76	
Annual income				**5.42†**
Less than $40,000	12	17	41.38	
$40,000-$79,999	24	78	23.53	
$80,000+	2	14	12.50	
Health status	2.97 (0.68)	3.28 (0.56)		**2.78****
Social connectedness	76.26 (13.18)	81.13 (8.30)		**2.64****
Self-Care	64.66 (11.73)	78.91 (13.32)		**5.82****
Mindful Relaxation	10.05 (3.74)	11.37 (3.74)		**1.86†**
Physical Care	9.08 (3.22)	11.21 (3.68)		**3.17****
Self-Compassion and Purpose	10.61 (3.23)	12.99 (3.53)		**3.67****
Supportive Relationships	14.05 (4.42)	16.64 (2.87)		**4.12****
Supportive Structure	12.61 (3.18)	15.61 (3.09)		**5.11****
Mindful Awareness	8.26 (2.74)	11.09 (2.89)		**5.26****

DEPRESSION

Variable	Stress n/M(SD)	No Stress n/M(SD)	% of Stress	χ^2/ t-test
Age				4.90†
Less than 40 yrs	45	15	75.00	
40-54 yrs	31	23	57.41	
55 yrs or more	20	15	57.14	
Annual income				8.13*
Less than $40,000	25	4	86.21	
$40,000-$79,999	63	41	60.58	
$80,000+	8	8	50.00	
Health status	3.18 (0.63)	3.26 (0.56)		0.84
Social connectedness	78.75 (10.77)	81.89 (7.98)		1.86†
Self-Care	71.71 (14.52)	81.79 (11.49)		4.35**
Mindful Relaxation	10.61 (4.01)	11.96 (3.23)		2.10*
Physical Care	10.41 (3.90)	11.08 (3.17)		1.07
Self-Compassion and Purpose	11.81 (3.58)	13.38 (3.40)		2.60*
Supportive Relationships	15.30 (3.71)	17.30 (2.69)		3.45**
Supportive Structure	14.05 (3.34)	16.38 (2.94)		4.24**
Mindful Awareness	9.63 (3.03)	11.70 (2.74)		4.13**

STRESS

Variable	Depression (n=147)		Perceived Stress (n=148)	
	Model1	Model2	Model1	Model2
Race				
White	1.45	1.46	2.98	3.72†
Other	–	–	–	
Age				
Less than 40 years	–	–	–	
40-54 years	-0.70	0.61	-2.24†	-0.96
55 year or more	-1.38	-0.37	-1.93	-0.43
Annual income				
Less than $40,000	–	–	–	
$40,000-$79,999	-3.35**	-2.84*	-4.38**	-3.61**
$80,000+	-2.54	-3.99*	-4.08*	-5.87**
COVID-19 positive (client)				
No	–	–	–	
Yes	1.09	0.98	1.75	1.82†
Overall health status	-1.43†	-0.95	0.13	1.10
Social connectedness	-0.13*	-0.07	-0.21**	-0.11*
Self-Care				
Mindful relaxation		0.27*		0.02
Physical care		-0.30*		-0.25†
Self-compassion & purpose		-0.06		-0.24
Supportive relationships		-0.17		-0.13
Supportive structure		-0.48**		-0.74**
Mindful awareness		-0.32†		-0.07
ΔR2		0.22**		0.24**
Total R2	0.17	0.38	0.21	0.45

ASSOCIATIONS

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CONCLUSIONS

Social workers have faced serious threats to their mental health during COVID-19

- Younger Age & Low income

- A positive association between a positive COVID-19 diagnosis for clients and stress levels
  - ✓ Need for self-care strategies (Acker, 2018)

- The greater level of social connectedness, the lower levels of stress and depression.

CONCLUSIONS

Social workers have faced serious threats to their mental health during COVID-19

- The greater level of self-care, the lower levels of stress and depression.
  - ✓ Mindful relaxation
  - ✓ Physical care
  - ✓ Supportive structure
  - ✓ Mindful awareness

CONCLUSIONS

- Need for an investigation into states that had higher prevalence rates.

- Better survey designs for a greater response rate.

- A longitudinal study that can verify relationships between variables

- The effects of vaccination on mental health status among rural social workers

RECOMMENDATIONS

▪Self-care is never a selfish act—it is simply good stewardship of the only gift I have, the gift I was put on earth to offer others.

—PARKER PALMER

SELF-CARE

Q & A