

**STRESS MANAGEMENT PRACTICES AMONG HEALTH CARE WORKERS
DURING COVID-19 PANDEMIC AT CHUKWUEMEKA ODUMEGWU OJUKWU
UNIVERSITY TEACHING HOSPITAL, AWKA.**

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Abstract

Stress is part of our everyday life and can have life threatening consequences when not managed effectively. This study determined the stress management practices among healthcare workers during COVID-19 Pandemic at Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu University Teaching Hospital, Awka. Three research questions guided the study and two hypotheses were tested at .05 level of significance. The cross-sectional survey research design was used for the study. The Multistage sampling technique was used to draw a sample of 267 out of 534 Healthcare workers (HCWs). The instrument for data collection was a researcher's designed questionnaire titled "Stress Management Practices among Healthcare workers during Covid-19 Pandemic". The data collected were analyzed using frequency and percentages for research questions while the null hypotheses were tested using Chi - square (X^2) statistics. The findings of the study revealed among others: thirteen stress management practices HCWs adopted to combat stress during COVID-19 Pandemic. Moreover, the study revealed that there is no significant difference on the stress management practice among male and female HCWs but there is a significant difference on the stress management practice among HCWs of different job types. Based on the findings, the researcher concluded that some stress management practices adopted by HCWs in COOUTH, Awka during Covid-19 pandemic were having sense of control over life, thinking positively, relaxation, taking enough sleep, listening to music, sharing jokes or humour with colleagues, engaging in team work, communicating with people, adequate use of protective devices, avoiding problem situation, understanding the clarity in my job, taking break from work and being proactive. It was also recommended among other things that it is important to emphasize on the need for exercising as a stress management practice among HCWs. Also, Annual leave, maternity leave, casual leave and break periods amidst work, etc should not be denied any job category of worker in the healthcare system to avoid break down in health of the HCWs.

Keywords: COVID-19, Healthcare workers, Stress management.

Introduction

The coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) is a communicable respiratory disease caused by new strain of coronavirus that causes illness in humans. According to Morre (2021), the novel

virus was first reported in Wuhan, China in 2019 and subsequently spread globally to become the fifth documented pandemic since the 1918 Spanish flu pandemic. COVID-19 affected a lot of countries in the world including Nigeria. The pandemic has not only caused a high mortality rate from viral infections but also psychological and mental effects on the rest of the world. The outbreak of the novel corona virus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic presented a great threat to the physical and mental health of the general population especially the healthcare workers. United Kingdom Health and Safety Executives -HSE (2021) estimated that in the year 2019 and 2020 that about 828,000 workers were affected by work- related stress and health care workers were not left out especially during Covid-19 pandemic.

A healthcare worker (HCW) is a person trained and knowledgeable in medicine, nursing, or other allied health professions or public/community health. According to Ozor (2014) healthcare workers – HCWs can be referred to as a group of practitioners with specialized education and training in their various fields of health who render curative, preventive, rehabilitative, and educational services to patients and public on matters relating to their health. They share common health goals and objectives and they include; medical doctors, nurses, pharmacist, medical laboratory scientist, physiotherapist, dieticians, radiotherapists, medical records officers, and social workers.

According to a study conducted by Cui, Jiang, Shi, Zhang, Kong, Qian and Chu (2021), Health care workers were mostly infected than any other group and out of the confirmed cases worldwide, 6%, or 90,000, were healthcare workers. In Nigeria, Nigeria Centre for Disease Control (CDC) (2020) confirmed that about 812 HCWs were infected with COVID-19. They further stated that providing care to others during Covid-19 pandemic can lead to stress, anxiety, fear, and other strong emotions and how they cope with these emotions can affect their well-

being. National Primary Health Care Development Agency (NPHCDA) (2021), also posited that frontline health workers were exposed to stress and are at risk of being infected with Covid-19 because they go to work to care for the patients, they further stated that HCWs should be among the first to be vaccinated, in order to safely care for the rest of the society. The COVID-19 pandemic has resulted in unprecedented psychological stress on HCWs, such as anxiety, fear, panic attacks, post-traumatic stress symptoms, psychological distress, stigma, avoidance of contact, depressive tendencies, sleep disturbances, helplessness, interpersonal and isolation from family and social support, as well as concerns about their friends and family being exposed to infection. It is therefore, important to be able to identify and manage these stressors early, in order to avoid the more adverse effects of stress on the health and wellbeing of the health care workers. Hence, the need for stress management practices.

Managing stress is a continuous process, it is learning about whom we are as human beings, why we act and react to the frustrations as well as its joys and pleasures. According to Silver Cloud Health (2016), the realization that you are in control of your life is the very foundation of stress management and that involves becoming aware of your thoughts, feelings, behaviours and the impact of your life on the way you deal with problems. This may be why stress management is referred to as life management. Stressors often creates a state of psychological and physiological imbalance but the good news is that re-establishing this balance can successfully be achieved via stress management practices. Olga and Terry cited in Ozor (2014), stated stress management practice as methods often employed to deal with stressful or disturbing situations. They further categorized these methods into effective and ineffective practices. Such ineffective practices are overreacting, drug abuse, aggression which may make us feel better shortly, while effective practices are positive thinking, relaxation, sense of humour e.tc.

Rose *et al.* (2021) opined that HCWs were aided by a feeling of camaraderie amongst healthcare workers working together as well as sharing jokes or humor with colleagues. In as much as the ineffective practices can expose the healthcare workers to ill health, the effective practices can energize the health care workers to render meaningful healthcare services at their various job categories.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to find out the stress management practices among Health Care workers during Covid-19 pandemic at Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu University Teaching Hospital, Awka Anambra State. Specifically, the study determined;

1. The stress management practices among HCWs during covid-19 pandemic at Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu University Teaching Hospital, Awka.
2. The stress management practices among HCWs during covid-19 pandemic at Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu University Teaching Hospital, Awka based on their gender ;
3. The stress management practices among HCWs during covid-19 pandemic at Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu University Teaching Hospital, Awka based on their Job type.

Research Questions

To guide this present study, the following research questions were posed and answered.

1. What are the stress management practices among HCWs during covid-19 pandemic at Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu University Teaching Hospital, Awka.

2. What are the stress management practices among HCWs during covid-19 pandemic at Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu University Teaching Hospital, Awka based on their gender?
3. What are the stress management practices among HCWs during covid-19 pandemic at Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu University Teaching Hospital, Awka based on their job type?

Research Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were formulated and tested at 0.05 level of significance;

1. There is no significant difference in stress management practices among HCWs during covid-19 pandemic at Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu University Teaching Hospital, Awka based on their gender.
2. There is no significant difference in stress management practices among HCWs during covid-19 pandemic at Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu University Teaching Hospital, Awka based on their Job type.

Methods

The research design used to carry out this research is the cross-sectional survey design. The study was carried out in Awka South L.G.A, Anambra State. Awka South L.G.A is made up of nine (9) towns, namely, Amawbia; Awka; Ezinato; Isiagu; Mbaukwu; Nibo; Nise; Okpuno and Umuawulu. The population of the study consists of 534 health care workers at Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu University Teaching Hospital, Awka. These will include Doctors, Nurses, Medical laboratory scientist, Pharmacist, Physiotherapists, Dental Technologists, optometrists, Radiographers, Administrative officers, Works Dept, Dietician, Scientific Officers, Health Attendants (Cleaners), Health records officers and Tutors. The sample

of the study consists of 267 HCWs working in COOUTH. Multistage sampling was used to select the sample required for the study. The instrument used for data collection was the researcher's designed questionnaire on Stress Management Practices among Healthcare workers during Covid-19 Pandemic questionnaire (SMPHCWCPQ). The data was analyzed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 25. The research questions were answered using frequency and percentage of response. The research hypothesis was tested using Chi Square (X²) at 0.05 level of significance.

Presentation and Analysis of Data

Research Question One: What are the stress management practices among HCWs during covid-19 pandemic at Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu University Teaching Hospital, Awka.

Table 1: Frequencies and percentages on Stress Management Practices among HCWs during Covid-19 pandemic at Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu University Teaching Hospital Awka.

Stress Management Practices	Yes	No
	N (%)	N(%)
1. Having sense of control over my life	254(95.8)	11(4.2)
2. Thinking positively helps me to manage stress	224(84.5)	41(15.5)
3. Relaxation helps me to manage stress (eg. spending time with intimate partner)	189(71.3)	76(28.7)
4. Taking drugs	61(23)	204(77)
5. Taking exercise	131(49.4)	134(50.6)
6. Being aggressive to others helps me to manage stress	57(21.5)	208(78.5)
7. Taking enough sleep when stressed	206(77.7)	59(22.3)
8. Listening to music helps me to manage stress	178(67.2)	87(32.8)
9. Sharing jokes or humor with colleagues and others help me to manage stress	228(86)	37(14)
10. Team work helps to reduce stress	217(81.9)	48(18.1)
11. Communicating with people	177(66.8)	88(33.2)
12. Adequate use of protective devices helps to reduce stress	203(76.6)	62(23.4)
13. Avoiding problem situation helps to manage stress	238(89.8)	27(10.2)
14. Understanding the clarity in my job role reduces stress	262(98.9)	3(1.1)
15. Taking break from work eg. shift schedule, annual/casual leave reduces stress	143(54)	122(46)
16. Being proactive helps me to manage stress (planning ahead of time)	235(88.7)	30(11.3)

The results displayed in Table 1 shows that of the 16 stress management practices listed, 13 were confirmed by over 50% of HCW in COOUTH as the stress management practices, they engage in engage in order to reduce stress in the Covid-19 pandemic.

Research Question Two: What are the stress management practices among HCWs during covid-19 pandemic at Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu University Teaching Hospital, Awka based on their gender?

Table 2: Frequencies and percentages on Stress Management Practices among Male and Female HCWs during Covid-19 pandemic at Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu University Teaching Hospital Awka.

Stress Management Practices	Male (n=94)		Female (n=171)	
	Yes	No	Yes	No
	N (%)	N(%)	N(%)	N(%)
1. Having sense of control over my life	91(96.8)	3(3.2)	163(95.3)	8(4.)
2. Thinking positively helps me to manage stress	79(84)	15(16)	145(84.8)	26(15.2)
3. Relaxation helps me to manage stress (eg. spending time with intimate partner)	75(79.8)	19(20.2)	114(66.7)	57(33.3)
4. Taking drugs	28(29.8)	66(70.2)	33(19.3)	138(80.7)
5. Taking exercise	42(44.7)	52(55.3)	89(52)	82(48)
6. Being aggressive to others helps me to manage stress	5(5.3)	89(94.7)	52(30.4)	119(69.6)
7. Taking enough sleep when stressed	73(77.7)	21(22.3)	133(77.8)	38(22.2)
8. Listening to music helps me to manage stress	69(73.4)	25(26.6)	109(63.7)	62(36.3)
9. Sharing jokes or humor with colleagues and others help me to manage stress	83(88.3)	11(11.7)	145(84.8)	26(15.2)
10. Team work helps to reduce stress	78(83)	16(17)	139(81.3)	32(18.7)
11. Communicating with people	54(57.4)	40(42.6)	123(71.9)	48(28.1)
12. Adequate use of protective devices helps to reduce stress	83(88.3)	11(11.7)	120(70.2)	51(29.8)
13. Avoiding problem situation helps to manage stress	82(87.2)	12(12.8)	156(91.2)	15(8.8)
14. Understanding the clarity in my job role reduces stress	94(100)	-	168(98.2)	3(1.8)

15. Taking break from work eg. shift schedule, annual/casual leave reduces stress	47(50)	47(50)	96(56.1)	75(43.9)
16. Being proactive helps me to manage stress (planning ahead of time)	87(92.6)	(7.4)	148(86.5)	23(13.5)

The results displayed in Table 2 shows that of the 16 stress management practices listed, 11 were common stress management practices among male and female HCWs in COOUTH since over 50% both groups endorsed them. The stress management practices included: Having sense of control over life (male = 96.8%; female = 95.3%), thinking positively (Male = 84%, female 84.8%), relaxation (male = 79.8%, female = 66.7), taking enough sleep (male = 77.7%, female = 77.8%), listening to music (male = 73.4%, female = 63.7), sharing jokes or humour with colleagues (male = 88.3%, female = 84.8), engaging in team work (male = 83%, female = 81.3%), communicating with people (male = 57.4%, female = 71.9), adequate use of protective devices (male = 88.3%, female = 70.2%), avoiding problem situation (male =87.2%, female = 91.2), understanding the clarity in my job (male = 100%, female = 98.2%) and being proactive (male = 92.6, female = 86.5%).

Research Question Three: What are the stress management practices among HCWs during covid-19 pandemic at Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu University Teaching Hospital, Awka based on their job type?

Table 3. Frequencies and Percentages on Stress Management Practices among HCWs During Covid-19 pandemic at Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu University Teaching Hospital Awka based on Job Type

Stress Management Practices	Doctor (n=72)		Nurse (n=87)		M.L.S (=27)		H.R.O(n=18)		H.A.(n=61)	
	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
	N(%)	N(%)	N(%)	N(%)	N(%)	N(%)	N(%)	N(%)	N(%)	N(%)
1. Having sense of control over my life	71(98.6)	1(1.4)	80(92)	7(8)	26(96.3)	1((3.7)	18(100)	-	59(96.7)	2(3.3)
2. Thinking positively helps me to manage stress	59(81.9)	13(18.1)	71(80.6)	16(18.4)	22(81.5)	5(18.5)	17(94.4)	1(5.6)	55(90.2)	6(9.8)
3. Relaxation helps me to manage stress (eg. spending time with intimate partner)	59(81.9)	13(18.1)	58(66.7)	29(33.3)	22(81.5)	5(18.5)	12(66.7)	6(33.3)	38(62.3)	23(37.7)
4. Taking drugs	12(66.7)	60(83.3)	18(20.7)	69(79.3)	6(22.2)	21(77.8)	6(33.3)	12(66.7)	19(31.1)	42(68.9)
5. Taking exercise	22(30.6)	50(69.4)	65(74.7)	22(25.3)	7(25.9)	20(74.1)	9(50)	9(50)	26(42.3)	33(53.7)
6. Being aggressive to others helps me to manage stress	-	72(100)	36(41.4)	51(58.6)	1(3.7)	26(96.3)	-	18(100)	20(32.8)	41(67.2)
7. Taking enough sleep when stressed	62(86.1)	10(13.9)	59(67.8)	28(32.2)	24(88.9)	3(11.1)	15(83.3)	3(16.7)	46(75.4)	15(24.6)
8. Listening to music helps me to manage stress	46(63.9)	26(36.1)	66(75.9)	21(24.1)	22(81.5)	5(18.5)	6(33.3)	12(66.7)	38(62.3)	23(37.7)
9. Sharing jokes or humor with colleagues and others help me to manage stress	64(88.9)	8(11.1)	63(72.4)	24(27.6)	27(100)	-	18(100)	-	56(91.8)	5(8.2)
10. Team work helps to reduce stress	51(70.8)	21(29.2)	67(77)	20(23)	27(100)	-	18(100)	-	54(88.5)	7(11.5)
11. Communicatin	42(58.3)	30(41.7)	63(72.4)	24(27.6)	11(40.7)	16(59.3)	14(77.8)	4(22.2)	47(77.1)	14(22.9)

g with people	8.3)	1.7)	2.4)	7.6)	0.7)	9.3)	7.8)	.2)	7)	3
12. Adequate use of protective devices helps to reduce stress	70(9 7.2)	2(2. 8)	45(5 1.7)	42(4 8.3)	24(8 8.9)	3(11 .1)	14(7 7.8)	4(22 .2)	50(8 2)	11(1 8)
13. Avoiding problem situation helps to manage stress	65(9 0.3)	7(9. 7)	79(9 0.8)	8(9. 2)	24(8 8.9)	3(11 .1)	16(8 8.9)	2(11 .1)	54(8 8.5)	7(11. 5)
14. Understanding the clarity in my job role reduces stress	72(1 00)	-	84(9 6.6)	3(3. 4)	27(1 00)	-	18(1 00)	-	61(1 00)	-
15. Taking break from work eg. shift schedule, annual/casual leave reduces stress	42(5 8.3)	30(4 1.7)	31(3 5.6)	56(6 4.4)	5(18 .5)	22(8 1.5)	5(27 .8)	13(7 2.2)	60(9 8.4)	1(1.6)
16. Being proactive helps me to manage stress (planning ahead of time)	66(9 1.7)	6(8.3)	69(7 9.3)	18(2 0.7)	24(8 8.9)	3(11. 1)	18(1 00)	-	58(95 .1)	3(4.9)

*M.L.S = Medical Lab. Scientist; H.R.O = Health Records Officer; H.A = Health Attendant (Cleaner)

Table 3 shows that out of the 16 stress management practices listed, 9 were common stress management practices among the different categories of HCWs in COOUTH since over 50% both groups endorsed them. The stress management practices included: Having sense of control over life, thinking positively, relaxation, taking enough sleep, sharing jokes or humour with colleagues, engaging in team work, adequate use of protective devices, avoiding problem situation, understanding the clarity in my job and being proactive.

Hypothesis One: There is no significant difference in stress management practices among HCWs during covid-19 pandemic at Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu University Teaching Hospital, Awka based on their gender.

Table 4: Chi-square analysis on the difference in Stress Management Practices among Male and Female HCWs during the Covid-19 pandemic at Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu Teaching Hospital, Awka

Stress Management Practices	Male (n=94)		Female (n=171)		$\chi^2(1)$	<i>P</i>	Decision
	Yes	No	Yes	No			
	N (%)	N(%)	N(%)	N(%)			
1. Having sense of control over my life	91(96.8)	3(3.2)	163(95.3)	8(4.)	.34	.56	NS
2. Thinking positively helps me to manage stress	79(84)	15(16)	145(84.8)	26(15.2)	.03	.87	NS
3. Relaxation helps me to manage stress (eg. spending time with intimate partner)	75(79.8)	19(20.2)	114(66.7)	57(33.3)	5.11	.02	S
4. Taking drugs	28(29.8)	66(70.2)	33(19.3)	138(80.7)	3.77	.05	S
5. Taking exercise	42(44.7)	52(55.3)	89(52)	82(48)	1.32	.25	NS
6. Being aggressive to others helps me to manage stress	5(5.3)	89(94.7)	52(30.4)	119(69.6)	22.62	.00	S
7. Taking enough sleep when stressed	73(77.7)	21(22.3)	133(77.8)	38(22.2)	.00	.98	NS
8. Listening to music helps me to manage stress	69(73.4)	25(26.6)	109(63.7)	62(36.3)	2.57	.11	NS
9. Sharing jokes or humor with colleagues and others help me to manage stress	83(88.3)	11(11.7)	145(84.8)	26(15.2)	.62	.43	NS
10. Team work helps to reduce stress	78(83)	16(17)	139(81.3)	32(18.7)	.12	.73	NS
11. Communicating with people	54(57.4)	40(42.6)	123(71.9)	48(28.1)	5.74	.02	S
12. Adequate use of protective devices helps to reduce stress	83(88.3)	11(11.7)	120(70.2)	51(29.8)	11.12	.00	S
13. Avoiding problem situation	82(87.2)	12(12.8)	156(91.2)	15(8.8)	1.03	.30	NS

	helps to manage stress							
14.	Understanding the clarity in my job role reduces stress	94(100)	-	168(98.2)	3(1.8)	1.67	.20	NS
15.	Taking break from work eg. shift schedule, annual/casual leave reduces stress	47(50)	47(50)	96(56.1)	75(43.9)	.92	.34	NS
16.	Being proactive helps me to manage stress (planning ahead of time)	87(92.6)	7(7.4)	148(86.5)	23(13.5)	2.18	.14	NS

The results presented in Table 4 indicates that male and female HCWs were not significantly different in their responses on the stress management practices they engaged in during the Covid-19 pandemic since the *p*-values for 11 out of the 16 items were greater than 0.05 level of significance. Therefore, the null hypothesis was not rejected.

Hypothesis Two: There is no significant difference in the stress management practice among HCWs during covid-19 pandemic at Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu University Teaching Hospital, Awka based on their Job type.

Table 5: Chi-square analysis on the difference in the Responses on Stress Management Practices of HCWs during the Covid-19 pandemic at Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu Teaching Hospital, Awka Based on Job Type

Stress Management Practices	Doctor (n=72)		Nurse (n=87)		M.L.S (=27)		H.R.O(n=18)		H.A.(n=61)		X ² (4)	P	Decision
	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No			
	N(%)	N(%)	N(%)	N(%)	N(%)	N(%)	N(%)	N(%)	N(%)	N(%)			
Having sense of control over my life	71(98.6)	1(1.4)	80(92)	7(8)	26(96.3)	1((3.7)	18(100)	-	59(96.7)	2(3.3)	5.61	.23	NS
Thinking positively helps me to manage stress	59(81.9)	13(18.1)	71(81.6)	16(18.4)	22(81.5)	5(18.5)	17(94.4)	1(5.6)	55(90.2)	6(9.8)	3.96	.41	NS
Relaxation helps me to manage stress (eg. spending time with intimate partner)	59(81.9)	13(18.1)	58(66.7)	29(33.3)	22(81.5)	5(18.5)	12(66.7)	6(33.3)	38(62.3)	23(37.7)	8.88	.06	NS
Taking drugs	12(16.7)	60(83.3)	18(20.7)	69(79.3)	6(22.2)	21(77.8)	6(33.3)	12(66.7)	19(31.1)	42(68.9)	5.27	.26	NS
Taking exercise	22(30.6)	50(69.4)	65(74.7)	22(25.3)	7(25.9)	20(74.1)	9(50)	9(50)	26(45.9)	33(54.1)	38.78	.00	S
Being aggressive to others helps me to manage stress	-	72(100)	36(41.4)	51(58.6)	1(3.7)	26(96.3)	-	18(100)	20(32.8)	41(67.2)	54.67	.00	S
Taking enough sleep when stressed	62(86.1)	10(13.9)	59(67.8)	28(32.2)	24(88.9)	3(11.1)	15(83.3)	3(16.7)	46(75.4)	15(24.6)	10.32	.04	S
Listening to music helps me to manage stress	46(63.9)	26(36.1)	66(75.9)	21(24.1)	22(81.5)	5(18.5)	6(33.3)	12(66.7)	38(62.3)	23(37.7)	15.84	.00	S
Sharing jokes or humor with colleagues and others help me to manage stress	64(88.9)	8(11.1)	63(72.4)	24(27.6)	27(100)	-	18(100)	-	56(91.8)	5(8.2)	22.92	.00	S
Team work helps to reduce stress	51(70.8)	21(29.2)	67(77)	20(23)	27(100)	-	18(100)	-	54(88.5)	7(11.5)	19.09	.00	S
Communicating with people	42(58.3)	30(41.7)	63(72.4)	24(27.6)	11(40.7)	16(59.3)	14(77.8)	4(22.2)	47(77)	14(23)	15.70	.00	S
Adequate use of protective devices helps to reduce stress	70(97.2)	2(2.8)	45(51.7)	42(48.3)	24(88.9)	3(11.1)	14(77.8)	4(22.2)	50(82)	11(18)	50.39	.00	S
Avoiding problem situation helps to manage stress	65(90.3)	7(9.7)	79(90.8)	8(9.2)	24(88.9)	3(11.1)	16(88.9)	2(11.1)	54(88.5)	7(11.5)	.26	.99	NS
Understanding the clarity in my job role reduces stress	72(100)	-	84(96.6)	3(3.4)	27(100)	-	18(100)	-	61(100)	-	6.21	.18	NS
Taking break from work eg. shift schedule, annual/casual leave reduces stress	42(58.3)	30(41.7)	31(35.6)	56(64.4)	5(18.5)	22(81.5)	5(27.8)	13(72.2)	60(98.4)	1(1.6)	79.34	.00	S
Being proactive helps me to manage stress (planning ahead of time)	66(91.7)	6(8.3)	69(79.3)	18(20.7)	24(88.9)	3(11.1)	18(100)	-	58(95.1)	3(4.9)	13.04	.01	S

The results displayed in Table 5 shows that there was a significant difference in the responses of HCWs of different job types regarding the stress management practices they engaged in during the covid-19 pandemic since *p*-values for 10 out of the 16 items on the stress management practices were less than 0.05 level of significance. The null hypothesis was, therefore, rejected.

Stress Management Practices among health care workers during Covid-19 pandemic.

The findings from this study showed that stress management practices among HCWs during covid-19 pandemic include – having sense of control, thinking positively, relaxation, sharing jokes and humor with others, taking enough sleep, listening to music, team working, communicating with people, adequate use of protective devices, avoiding problem situations, job clarity, taking break from work and being proactive (Table 1).

This is in line with UK's Health and Safety Executive (HSE) (2001) whose study showed that team work is required by each health care worker for the best care of the patients/ public. This is because working together increases work pace and leads to a better outcome.

The findings of this study is also in line with Akubue (2000) whose study also identified other stress management practices to be exercise, discussion, relaxation and holiday. A possible explanation to this is that stress makes our body to release hormones that increase blood pressure and raise heart rate which can be reduced through relaxation and going on holidays.

The test hypothesis in table 4 indicated that male and female HCWs were not significantly different in their responses on the stress management practices they engaged in during the Covid-19 pandemic. This means that both gender share a similar method of stress management practices during covid-19 pandemic. This is in line with Ozor (2014) whose finding showed that there was no significant differences in these stress management practices; drinking coffee,

drinking water, sleeping, relaxing, applying humor in relationship and Listening to music or watching movies according to gender. This may be because the study was also carried out among male and female healthcare professional.

The findings of this study showed that various job types had some common stress management practices that they adopted during the covid-19 pandemic and had other stress management practices that were peculiar to each of the job groups. The test hypothesis in table 5 indicated that there was a significant difference in the responses of HCWs of different job types regarding the stress management practices they engaged in during the covid-19. This is because each job type has a unique job role and description attached to it; this is in line with Moustaka and Constantinidis (2010) who stated in their study that some stressful situations are specific to a particular type of hospital unit.

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings of the study, it was concluded that stress management practices adopted by HCWs in COOUTH, Awka during Covid-19 pandemic were having sense of control over life, thinking positively, relaxation, taking enough sleep, listening to music, sharing jokes or humour with colleagues, engaging in team work, communicating with people, adequate use of protective devices, avoiding problem situation, understanding the clarity in my job, taking break from work and being proactive.

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