

# *How The Health Professionals Seen In Two University Hospitals In Madagascar Cope With Covid-19?*

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**Abstract** – Madagascar, a developing country, is not spared by the covid-19 pandemic. Since the official declaration by the President of the Republic on the existence of the first three confirmed cases on March 19, 2020, great panic for both the general population and health professionals has been noted. In addition, the information disseminated by the media concerning mainly the number of confirmed deaths, amplified the fear of health professionals. The Covid-19 pandemic has alarming implications for individual and collective health and emotional and social functioning (1). Various reactions were reported by the nursing staff through individual interviews. Thus, twenty caregivers were interviewed, and were made up of 5 men and 15 women. The most common physical complaints were, in order of frequency: headache, insomnia, throat irritation, abdominal pain, precordial pain, hypermenorrhea, muscle tension, decreased appetite with weight loss, increased temperature. Emotional disturbances also appeared such as frustration, anger, irritability, in addition to the fear of infecting their loved one. But faced with the situation facing the country, these health professionals have had to cope with their own anguish as best they can. Front-line healthcare workers face many difficulties, such as direct exposure to patients with a high viral load, exposure to the risk of contamination, physical exhaustion, reorganization of workspaces, adaptation to rigid work organizations, management of the shortage of materials, etc... (2). Indeed, the COVID-19 pandemic has thrown all hospital caregivers into a fierce fight against the epidemic. They gave of themselves by sacrificing their physical and, above all, psychological resources. Admittedly, their psychological balance is severely tested, but this unprecedented crisis is also an opportunity to demonstrate the formidable capacities of adaptation of the human being. Using different resources, the most frequently reported coping by caregivers was the one centered on religion, followed by support from those around him. In addition to the application of barrier measures, some employed other strategies such as showering with red betadine, or with a decoction of ravintsara (*Ravintsara aromatica* its scientific name), "romba" (or African basil), a plant used for its antiseptic virtue, or use ravintsara for aerosol, which, thanks to its decongestant effect, quickly soothes anxiety linked to the respiratory gene, due to its physical and psychic relaxing property (3). One of the peculiarities in the CHUs of Madagascar is that this support for health personnel is provided by psychiatrists who also have certifications in specific therapies such as EMDR (Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing), recommended by the WHO in the management of acute and post-traumatic stress disorder (4). This is because of the non-existence of clinical psychologists in public hospitals. Thus, for the CHU Pzaga de Mahajanga, located on the west coast of the island, group psychological support was organized by psychiatrists, as well as individual interviews as needed. Indeed, if one of the main "anti-stress" in this region is walking or swimming by the sea, this is no longer possible since the emergency health measures undertaken. Health personnel therefore find themselves faced with their own psychological resources, and the main models of coping revealed are mainly the morning debriefing between colleagues, telling each other about the progress of their call, what scared them and what frustrated them. Thus, since the organization of this group support with a staff of 60 people in the week preceding the appearance of the first cases of COVID-19 for the region of Mahajanga, 2 healthcare staff have requested an individual interview until the month of July. The complaints of the latter mainly group together the anxiety of being infected or infecting their families, with a permanent feeling of tension that the patients who come to them for hospitalization or outpatient surgery in their daily life could be cases of COVID-19. Despite the daily increase in the number of confirmed cases, despite the fear expressed, everyone has their own way of dealing with the pandemic. But it is important to closely monitor the psychological state of healthcare workers in order to preserve their health and avoid the complications that the pandemic can cause.

**Keywords** – COVID-19 pandemy, psychological support, health professionals, EMDR therapy.

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