

# Stress, Anxiety and Depression Factors for Disaster Related Pandemic Among Physiotherapists and Nurses in India

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## Abstract

**Introduction:** The COVID-19 pandemic has had a multifaceted impact that has not only overwhelmed healthcare systems but also significantly affected the mental health of essential healthcare workers. Healthcare professionals, including physiotherapists and nurses, have been at the forefront of this emergency, the heightened levels of stress, anxiety, and depression among these professionals, which can be attributed to a complex interaction of professional demands and personal vulnerabilities at the times of disaster related pandemic. This literature review aims to explore the impact of stress, anxiety, and depression factors for disaster related pandemic among physiotherapists and nurses in India.

**Methodology:** A literature search of databases was conducted to identify relevant articles published between 2013 and 2023. The selected studies covered various disaster contexts and their implications on the mental health of healthcare professionals. The descriptive review specifically focused on stress, anxiety, and depression levels among physiotherapists and nurses in terms of disaster.

**Results:** Out of total articles the ten studies included were in this review, as per the eligibility criteria. The studies found an elevated levels of stress, anxiety, and depression among physiotherapists and nurses experienced during the pandemic. Moreover, the study found that individuals with lower DASS-21 scores demonstrated higher levels of resilience, emphasizing the association between mental health and resilience in disaster situations.

**Conclusion:** This literature review highlights the importance of addressing the mental health challenges faced by physiotherapists and nurses during disaster situations. The findings underscore the significance of building resilience and establishing support systems to protect the well-being of healthcare professionals. Prompt evaluation of mental health and the implementation of stress management programs are essential to support healthcare professionals during disasters.

**Keywords:** Resilience, Physiotherapists, Nurses, Disaster Preparedness, India

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## Introduction

Disasters, whether natural or man-made, significantly disrupt communities and societies, resulting in severe consequences for public health and safety<sup>1</sup>. In such situations, healthcare professionals, particularly physiotherapists and nurses, play an essential role in disaster preparedness, response, and recovery<sup>2</sup>. Their ability to demonstrate resilience in these challenging circumstances is crucial for maintaining the continuity and effectiveness of healthcare services<sup>3</sup>. Resilience, defined as the capacity to adapt, recover, and thrive in the face of adversity, is a critical attribute for healthcare professionals working in disaster-prone regions<sup>4</sup>. India, with its vast and diverse geography, is susceptible to a wide range of disasters, including earthquakes, floods, cyclones, and public health emergencies. The frequency and impact of these disasters underscore the need for healthcare professionals, such as physiotherapists and nurses, to possess high levels of resilience to respond effectively to the ever-changing demands of disaster situations<sup>5</sup>. However, the specific factors that contribute to resilience among these professionals in the context of disaster preparedness in India remain poorly understood<sup>6</sup>. Disaster preparedness involves planning and organizing in advance to effectively respond to and mitigate the impact of disasters<sup>7</sup>. This process includes measures taken by individuals, communities, organizations, and governments to enhance their ability to handle disasters and reduce potential risks to life, property, and the environment<sup>8</sup>. Key elements of disaster preparedness include:

1. **Risk Assessment:** Identifying potential hazards and vulnerabilities to assess disaster risks<sup>9</sup>.
2. **Early Warning Systems:** Implementing systems to detect and issue warnings about impending disasters, allowing for timely precautions and evacuations<sup>10</sup>.
3. **Emergency Planning:** Developing detailed protocols for responding to different types of disasters, setting up response teams, identifying evacuation routes, and coordinating resources and logistics<sup>11</sup>.
4. **Training and Drills:** Conducting regular training sessions and mock drills to familiarize

people with emergency procedures, enabling quick and efficient responses during actual disasters<sup>12</sup>.

5. **Resilient Infrastructure:** Building structures that can withstand disasters, stockpiling essential resources, conducting public awareness campaigns, and fostering collaboration among various stakeholders. Learning from experience: refining preparedness plans based on post-disaster assessments to improve future responses<sup>13</sup>.

Overall, disaster preparedness is a continuous process that requires ongoing evaluation, updating, and improvement to adapt to changing circumstances and emerging risks. It plays a critical role in reducing the impact of disasters, saving lives, and facilitating quicker recovery. This literature review aims to systematically examine and analyze existing research to explore the various factors influencing the resilience of physiotherapists and nurses involved in disaster preparedness in India. By synthesizing the available evidence, this review seeks to provide valuable insights into the determinants of resilience among healthcare professionals, identify gaps in current knowledge, and offer recommendations to strengthen disaster preparedness efforts.

**Factors Influencing Resilience:** A positive and active attitude towards life is essential for developing resilience among nurses. Characteristics such as avoiding stress and maintaining a work-life balance are critical when overcoming adversity. Physiotherapists, as frontline professionals, are crucial in managing critically ill patients. During events like the COVID-19 pandemic, their workload and exposure to stressors significantly increased, leading to burnout, emotional exhaustion, and poor sleep quality. Ensuring adequate staffing and support is vital to mitigate these impacts.

**Role of Resilience:** Investing in resilience enhances a nation's ability to anticipate, prepare for, absorb, recover from, and adapt to adverse events. Improved resilience allows for better disaster anticipation and planning, reducing disaster losses rather than reacting after the event.

**Study Aim:** The study titled “Review of Factors Affecting Resilience among Physiotherapists and Nurses for Disaster Preparedness in India” aims to conduct a comprehensive and systematic analysis of existing literature to understand the key factors influencing the resilience of physiotherapists and nurses in disaster preparedness. The primary objective is to identify and categorize the factors contributing to resilience, including individual characteristics, psychological traits, social support systems, organizational support, training, and coping strategies.

**Need for the Study:** This study is significant due to its potential impact on disaster management and healthcare preparedness. Disasters pose immense challenges to public health and infrastructure,

making the role of physiotherapists and nurses vital in providing immediate and continuous medical aid. By exploring the factors that contribute to their resilience, the study aims to enhance disaster preparedness and response strategies, ultimately improving healthcare outcomes during crises.

### Methodology

#### Research Framework

The Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) framework was utilized to ensure a structured and transparent review process. This framework facilitated the systematic identification, screening, eligibility assessment, and inclusion of relevant literature. The PRISMA flowchart is depicted in Figure 1.

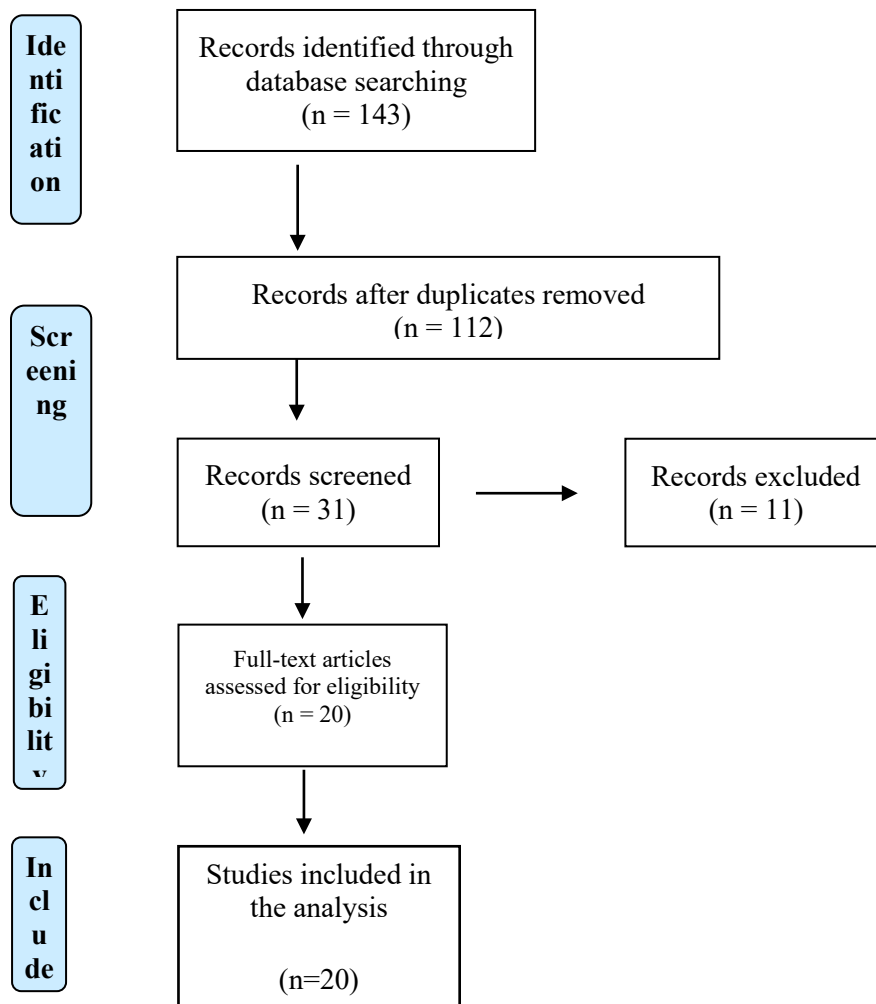


Figure 1: PRISMA Flow Diagram

### Search Strategy

A comprehensive search was conducted across multiple databases, including PubMed, CINAHL, PsycINFO, Scopus, Google Scholar, and ERIC. The search focused on peer-reviewed articles and observational studies published between May 2012 and May 2023 to ensure the inclusion of recent and relevant research. Key search terms included "Stress", "Anxiety", "Depression", "Nurses", "Physiotherapists", "Disaster", "Pandemic". and related combinations. Boolean operators (AND, OR) were used to refine the search, and filters were applied to include studies in English.

### Literature Screening

The literature screening involved three stages: initial screening of titles and abstracts to assess relevance, detailed evaluation of full-text articles based on methodological rigor and quality, and final selection of outcome-based, peer-reviewed studies.

Priority was given to research focusing on stress, anxiety, and depression among physiotherapists and nurses during pandemics, particularly in the Indian context or similar healthcare settings.

### Data Extraction

Relevant data from included studies were extracted using a standardized data extraction sheet. The sheet captured the following information:

1. Study title, author(s), and year of publication.
2. Research objectives and study design.
3. Population characteristics, including profession and geographical location.
4. Key findings related to stress, anxiety, and depression.

### Results

Post screening of the articles through PRISMA, final 20 studies are listed in Table 1

**Table 1. Summary of the findings of the inclusion studies**

SI No.	Study Reference	Research Design	Participant Selection	Comparability	Findings
1	(Pavan Kumar et al., 2024) <sup>14</sup>	Cross-sectional survey	Indian HCPs (doctors, nurses, allied professionals)	High, diverse representation	Secondary traumatic stress (STS), optimism, mood states
2	(Mohamed & Subbarayalu, 2022) <sup>15</sup>	Survey study	Physical therapists with direct patient contact	Moderate, focused on a specific group	Knowledge, attitude, practices (KAP), job stress
3	(Nayak et al., 2021) <sup>15</sup>	Cross-sectional survey	Healthcare workers in Trinidad and Tobago	High, cross-sectional analysis	Depression, anxiety, stress levels
4	(Sunil et al., 2021) <sup>16</sup>	Cross-sectional survey	Clinical and nonclinical HCWs in India	Moderate, mixed roles in healthcare	Insomnia, anxiety, depression
5	(Sidiq et al., 2024) <sup>17</sup>	Cross-sectional survey	HCWs in India	High, comprehensive for nurses	Burnout, CBI scores

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6	(Rifat, 2022) <sup>18</sup>	Cross-sectional survey	Physiotherapists in Dhaka	Moderate, selected age range	Mental health subscales, quality of life
7	(Khasne RW et al., 2020) <sup>19</sup>	Survey study	Indian HCWs (doctors, support staff)	High, national representation	Burnout, work-related stress
8	(Moumita Basu et al., 2017) <sup>20</sup>	Observational analysis	DFY personnel in Nepal	High, stage-by-stage resource needs	Resource needs in disaster zones
9	(Wilson et al., 2020) <sup>21</sup>	Survey study	Indian HCWs	High, nationwide distribution	Stress, depression, anxiety symptoms
10	(Jose et al., 2022) <sup>22</sup>	Survey study	Nurses in North India	High, focused group	Resilience, distress, anxiety, insomnia
11	(Pandey et al., 2021) <sup>23</sup>	Survey study	Healthcare workers in Nepal	Moderate, varied professional roles	Stress, anxiety, depression
12	((Das et al., 2023)) <sup>24</sup>	Survey study	Indian HCWs	High, cross-sectional	Anxiety, stress, depression
13	(Gupta et al., 2020) <sup>25</sup>	Survey study	Indian HCWs aged 45-60 years	Moderate, age-focused	Severe anxiety, sleep quality
14	(Menon et al., 2022) <sup>26</sup>	Telephonic interviews	HCWs across 12 cities in 10 states	High, diverse urban representation	Psychological distress, burnout
15	(Parchani et al., 2021) <sup>27</sup>	Survey study	COVID-19 patients and HCWs	High, disease-specific focus	Stress, anxiety, depression
16	(Tamrakar et al., 2021) <sup>28</sup>	Comparative survey	Nurses in COVID and non-COVID ICUs	Moderate, focused on specific ICUs	Anxiety, depression, sleep disturbances
17	(Karadag et al 2023) <sup>29</sup>	Comparative survey	Nurses Working in COVID-19	Moderate, focused on specific ICUs	Anxiety, depression, sleep disturbances
18	(Uvais et al 2023) <sup>30</sup>	Cross-sectional study	Psychological Morbidities Among Hospital Staff during second Covid 19 wave	Focussed on All departments	Psychological Morbidities
19	Sidiq et al 2025 <sup>31</sup>	Cross-sectional study	Knowledge, Awareness, and Practice of Evidence-Based Medicine among Indian Physiotherapists	Focussed on Indian Physiotherapist	EBP
20	(Saravanabavan et al., 2019) <sup>32</sup>	Cross-sectional study	Burnout among Nurses and Doctors in Icy	Focussed on Nurses and Doctors	Psychological and Physical burnout

## Discussion

The study by Ghogare et al. (2023) highlighted high levels of unhappiness, apprehension, and stress among postgraduate health sciences students in Maharashtra, India, during the COVID-19 pandemic<sup>33</sup>. It emphasized the importance of mental health evaluations and stress management programs for long-term coping. Similarly, Pigati et al. (2022) found that physiotherapists working with COVID-19 patients experienced lower quality of life and subjective happiness, emphasizing the need for support and interventions to improve their emotional well-being<sup>34</sup>. Al-Sum BAet al reported high prevalence rates of depression, anxiety, and stress among medical personnel in India, especially among women and those involved in COVID-19-related jobs. The study underscored the need for emotional support and effective preventive measures to address mental health issues<sup>35</sup>. Labrague et al. (2020) investigated anxiety levels among Filipino nurses during the pandemic, finding that social support, personal resilience, and organizational support significantly predicted anxiety levels<sup>36</sup>. Khasne et al. (2020) explored burnout among healthcare workers in India, revealing that over half of the participants experienced burnout due to the pandemic, emphasizing the need for interventions to prevent and treat burnout<sup>19</sup>. Saravanabavan et al. (2019) examined burnout among ICU medical staff in India, highlighting the high prevalence of burnout among healthcare workers and the importance of education and awareness programs to address it. The burnout among intensive care unit (ICU) medical staff in India among 204 healthcare professionals from different clinical departments at a tertiary care hospital was investigated. The Maslach Burnout Inventory-Human Service Survey was used to assess burnout levels. The findings indicated that 8 out of 10 healthcare workers experienced significant burnout. Nurses were found to be at the highest risk of burnout, followed by dentists and physiotherapists, and then medical physicians and scientists. The study emphasized the importance of education, awareness, and training programs to prevent and address burnout in the healthcare industry<sup>32</sup>.

Kannan et al. (2017) focused on disaster preparedness among dental surgeons in India, emphasizing the need for emergency preparedness education and adequate training for handling mass casualty disasters. The survey included 132 dental surgeons, and the results indicated that approximately one-third of the population were experts in handling major calamities, but their technical knowledge fell short. The study emphasized the importance of including emergency preparedness education as part of internships and called for dental surgeons to be adequately trained and involved in disaster response teams<sup>37</sup>. The literature review on factors affecting resilience among physiotherapists and nurses for disaster preparedness in India reveals the significant impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the mental health and well-being of healthcare professionals. Stress, anxiety, and burnout were found to be prevalent among healthcare workers, especially those directly involved in COVID-19 patient care. The studies highlight the need for comprehensive mental health support, stress management programs, and interventions to build resilience in healthcare professionals. Additionally, education and training on disaster preparedness are essential to enhance the capacity of healthcare workers to cope with crises effectively. These findings underscore the importance of a long-term strategy to protect the mental health and well-being of healthcare professionals during and beyond the COVID-19 pandemic.

## Conclusion

The review of factors affecting resilience among physiotherapists and nurses for disaster preparedness in India provides valuable insights into the psychological challenges faced by healthcare professionals during times of crises. The studies included in the review shed light on the impact of stress, anxiety, and depression on the capacity of physiotherapists and nurses to cope with the pandemic threat posed by events such as the COVID-19 pandemic. The findings from various studies indicate that a significant proportion of

healthcare professionals experienced high levels of stress, anxiety, and depression during the COVID-19 pandemic. These psychological challenges were particularly pronounced among physiotherapists and nurses who directly interacted with COVID-19 patients. The review also reveals that individuals with lower depression, anxiety, and stress levels showed higher levels of resilience, indicating the importance of addressing mental health concerns to enhance resilience among healthcare professionals. The studies included in the review point towards the need for rapid evaluations of mental health and stress management programs to support the well-being of physiotherapists and nurses during disaster situations. Additionally, the findings highlight the significance of implementing measures to protect healthcare professionals from mental health issues arising from extreme stress. Overall, the review underscores the importance of building resilience among physiotherapists and nurses to enhance their capacity to respond effectively to disaster situations. Long-term strategies aimed at promoting psychological well-being and providing emotional support are essential to mitigate the impact of stress, anxiety, and depression on healthcare professionals during such challenging times.

### Limitations

The study focussed on stress, anxiety, and depression among physiotherapists and nurses during pandemics. Only full-text English articles were considered for the review.

**Source of Funding:** There was no funding for the study

**Conflict of Interest:** There is no conflict of interest

**Ethical Clearance:** No intervention was conducted for the review, ethical clearance is not required

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