



COMMONWEALTH NURSES AND MIDWIVES FEDERATION

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World Patient Safety Day is commemorated on 17 September each year. The theme of the 2020 World Patient Safety Day is *Health worker safety: a priority for patient safety*. The key message of the 2020 campaign is *Safe health workers: safe patients*.

This theme is particularly important this year as health workers, including staff such as porters, cleaners, kitchen staff, administrative staff, drivers etc, as well as traditional front line health workers such as doctors and nurses, have an increased risk of compromised health as a result of the highly infectious COVID-19.

At the 72nd World Health Assembly in May 2019, a resolution was passed on developing a Global Action on Patient Safety (https://apps.who.int/gb/ebwha/pdf_files/WHA72/A72_R6-en.pdf).

Following on from this resolution, the World Health Organisation (WHO) is developing a global action plan on patient safety. The first draft, *Toward Zero Patient Harm in Health Care: Global Patient Safety Action Plan 2021-2030* is now open for public consultation. This is an important opportunity for health workers to provide input from their unique perspective, and all health workers are strongly encouraged to view the draft and provide comment.

Go to:
<https://www.who.int/news-room/articles-detail/public-consultation-for-review-of-draft-global-patient-safety-action-plan-2021-2030/>.

The public consultation closes on 28 September 2020.

The WHO point out that every point in the care-giving process contains a certain degree of inherent risk for patients. They suggest that clear policies, organisational leadership, accurate data, skilled health care professionals, and effective involvement of patients in their care are all needed to ensure sustainable improvements in the safety of health care. For more information about World Patient Safety Day and for campaign ideas and materials go to <https://www.who.int/patientsafety/en/>.

COVID-19 AND THE SAFETY OF THE HEALTH WORKFORCE

COVID 19 caught most countries health systems poorly prepared for a global pandemic. The uncertainty, the constantly changing advice as more information became available, and the aggressiveness of the virus were all confounding factors.

Health workers were caught poorly prepared also. Reports from nurses and midwives to the CNMF, highlighted insufficient or outdated information about infection prevention and control; lack of experience or understanding in the correct use of personal protective equipment; lack of confidence in suddenly having to care for critically ill patients; constant confusion by the changing advice; a lack of physical resources; and insufficient staff for the heavy workloads especially when staff became infected and other staff, as close contacts, had to quarantine.

A study in The Lancet published in July on figures from 41 countries in April found that health care workers comprised 10.04% of cases of COVID -19 with a case fatality rate of 0.8%. The median age of the health workers who died was 62 years.
[https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lanpub/article/PIIS2468-2667\(20\)30164-X/fulltext](https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lanpub/article/PIIS2468-2667(20)30164-X/fulltext)

The International Council of Nurses (ICN) estimated in early June that globally around 230,000 health care workers had contracted COVID-19 through their work, with 600 nurses globally dying from the disease. Health care workers such as porters and cleaners appeared to have the highest incidence of contracting COVID-19 through their work.
<https://www.icn.ch/news/more600-nurses-die-covid-19-worldwide>.

On page 2 of the e-News, data on COVID-19 in Commonwealth countries from the beginning of July is compared with the data from the end of August. It is important to remember that globally, the statistics for COVID-19 are self-reported by countries, and countries do not always count or report cases or deaths in the same way. Some countries only report deaths that occur in hospitals; some countries do not count deaths that occur in aged care facilities; and not all people who die are tested for COVID-19 even if they had symptoms suggestive of COVID-19. Likewise with health workers, not all countries specifically count infections and deaths amongst health workers and if they do, the definition of "health worker" is not consistent across countries.



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COMMONWEALTH COVID-19 DASHBOARD

<https://www.thecommonwealth.io/covid19dashboard/#/>

Monday 31 August 2020

COUNTRY	CASES PER 100,000 POPULATION		DEATHS PER 100,000 POPULATION		FATALITY RATE %	
	08.07.20	30.08.20	08.07.20	30.08.20	08.07.20	30.08.20
Singapore	771.6	969.5	0.44	0.46	0.1	0.0
Maldives	462.7	1,401.9	2.22	5.18	0.5	0.4
United Kingdom	421.8	490.2	65.39	61.13	15.5	12.5
South Africa	364.0	1,049.7	5.9	23.57	1.6	2.2
Canada	281.3	338.3	23.08	24.15	8.2	7.1
Malta	152.4	418.3	2.04	2.26	1.3	0.5
Cyprus	114.7	169.3	2.17	2.40	1.9	1.4
Pakistan	107.5	133.8	2.23	6.29	2.1	2.9
Bangladesh	102.4	187.6	1.31	2.55	1.3	1.4
eSwatini	91.0	388.7	1.21	7.84	1.3	2.0
Seychelles	82.4	138.3	0.00	0.00	0.0	0.0
Antigua and Barbuda	71.5	96.0	3.06	3.06	4.3	3.2
Ghana	70.7	142.0	0.42	0.87	0.6	0.6
Cameroon	56.2	72.1	1.35	1.55	2.4	2.1
India	53.8	256.7	1.50	4.60	2.8	1.8
Guyana	36.2	150.5	2.03	4.45	5.6	3.0
Australia	34.3	100.2	0.42	2.35	1.2	2.3
Barbados	34.1	59.2	2.44	2.44	7.1	4.1
Brunei Darussalam	32.2	32.9	0.69	0.69	2.1	2.1
St Kitts and Nevis	30.1	32.0	0.00	0.00	0.0	0.0
Mauritius	26.9	27.2	0.79	0.79	2.9	2.9
Malaysia	26.8	28.8	0.37	0.39	1.4	1.3
Bahamas	26.4	542.9	2.80	12.71	10.6	2.3
St Vincent and Grenadines	26.1	54.1	0.00	0.00	0.0	0.0
Jamaica	25.2	71.4	0.34	0.68	1.3	0.9
Dominica	25.0	27.8	0.00	0.00	0.0	0.0
New Zealand	24.6	28.6	0.46	0.46	1.9	1.6
Namibia	21.2	280.1	0.00	2.72	0.0	1.0
Grenada	20.4	21.3	0.00	0.00	0.0	0.0
Sierra Leone	19.7	25.3	0.79	0.88	4.0	3.5
Kenya	15.3	62.8	0.31	1.06	2.0	1.7
Nigeria	14.5	26.1	0.32	0.49	2.2	1.9
Botswana	13.4	69.4	0.04	0.26	0.3	0.4
St Lucia	12.0	14.2	0.00	0.00	0.0	0.0
Zambia	10.3	64.7	0.23	1.54	2.2	2.4
Sri Lanka	9.7	14.0	0.05	0.06	0.5	0.4
Malawi	9.8	28.9	0.13	0.91	1.3	3.1
Trinidad and Tobago	9.5	117.5	0.57	1.36	6.0	1.2
Rwanda	9.0	29.7	0.02	0.12	0.3	0.4
Belize	7.5	242.4	0.50	3.27	6.7	1.3
Lesotho	4.2	49.1	0.00	1.45	0.0	2.9
Mozambique	3.3	12.0	0.03	0.07	0.8	0.6
Gambia	2.5	119.8	0.12	3.97	4.9	3.3
Fiji	2.1	3.1	0.00	0.22	0.0	7.1
Uganda	2.1	6.2	0.00	0.06	0.0	1.0
Tanzania	0.9	0.9	0.04	0.04	4.1	4.1
Papua New Guinea	0.1	5.1	0.00	0.06	0.0	1.1

Note: Kiribati, Nauru, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvulu, Vanuatu, and Samoa have not reported any cases of COVID-19