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Online publication ahead of print, AJMHS Vol 72, 2026

Perceived Need for and Expected Effectiveness of Psychological Support During the COVID-19 Pandemic Among Nurses and Midwives in Albania: A Post-Pandemic Cross-Sectional Survey

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Abstract

Background: Nurses and midwives experienced substantial psychological strain during the COVID-19 pandemic. Their own assessment of whether support was needed, and how effective it might have been, can inform workforce mental-health planning.

Objective: To estimate the retrospective perceived need for psychological support among nurses and midwives in Albania, describe the expected effectiveness of such support during the pandemic, and examine associations between the effectiveness score and selected emotional and demographic characteristics.

Methods: An analytical cross-sectional survey was conducted from March 2024 to May 2025 among 1,201 nurses and midwives employed in public healthcare institutions in Albania. The target workforce comprised 31,003 nurses and midwives. A structured anonymous questionnaire included a binary item on perceived need, a 1–10 item on the expected effectiveness of psychological support, and a separate study-specific 1–10 rating of negative emotional changes. Descriptive statistics, independent-samples t-tests, one-way analysis of variance, and Pearson correlation were used in available-case, unadjusted analyses.

Results: Among 1,187 respondents to the support item, 957 (80.6%) reported that psychological support would have been needed during the pandemic. Expected effectiveness was rated highly (median 9, interquartile range 4; observed

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range 1–10). Higher negative emotional change ratings were moderately associated with higher effectiveness ratings ($r=0.414$, $p<0.001$). Women reported higher mean effectiveness ratings than men (7.88 vs 7.15; $p=0.003$). Ratings also differed across age groups ($p<0.01$), with the highest unadjusted mean among participants aged 51–60 years (8.48).

Conclusion: A large majority retrospectively reported a need for psychological support and considered such support potentially effective. The findings support accessible, confidential, and sustained psychological support within occupational-health services, while longitudinal and adjusted analyses are needed before causal or predictive conclusions can be drawn.

Keywords: nurses; midwives; psychological support; COVID-19; occupational mental health; Albania