



INTRODUCTION

Working as an Occupational Health Nurse (OHN) during the COVID-19 pandemic has been a challenging experience.

To understand the OHN experiences since the onset of the pandemic, a survey was developed and deployed to OHNs in the US and Canada. The survey responses showed how OHNs adapted their work to focus on tasks related to the pandemic to accommodate the needs within workplaces during a rapidly changing local, regional and global environment. Findings from the surveys demonstrate the importance of continuing to study the OHN role, their needs, and how they contribute to employee health and safety while supporting workplace efficiency, safety and the bottom-line.



METHODOLOGY

- A 45-question survey was deployed to over 5,500 Occupational Health Nurses in the United States and Canada.
- Responses were received from 565 OHNs.
- A second survey was sent to 106 employers. Responses were received from 30 employers.

RESULTS

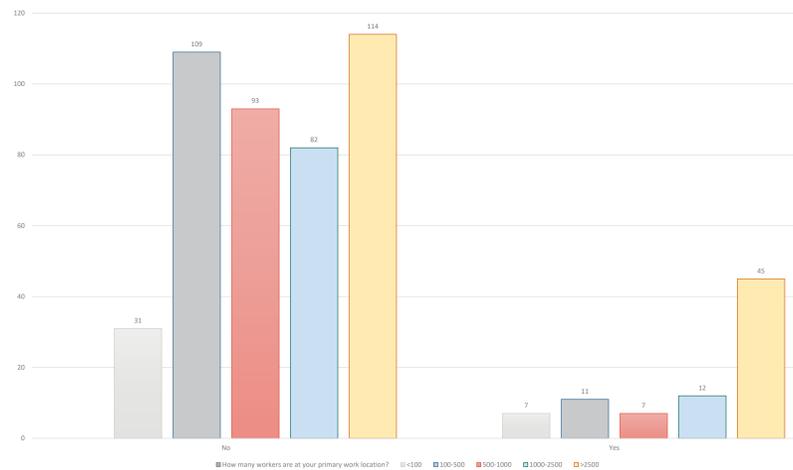
Demographics:

- 353 (68%) of those responding were certified OHNs
- 478 (92%) were from the US
- 142 (27%) work in the Hospital or Clinical business sector
- 198 (38%) work in Manufacturing or Production
- 322 (62%) of OHNs are between the ages of 46 – 65
- 344 (67%) state they work > 40 hours per week

THE OHNS DESCRIBED THEIR MOST IMPORTANT JOB DUTIES:

Prior to COVID-19 onset	During COVID-19 *	Currently
Work-related injury and illness assessment	Illness assessment, treatment and triage	Work-related injury and illness assessment
Medical Surveillance	Education about infection control	Guiding policies for infectious disease and contact tracing**.
Disability Management and return to work assistance	Return to work coordination for workers	Disability Management and return to work assistance
Immunization education and administration	Contact tracing for employees due to illness	Immunization education and administration

WAS THERE AN INCREASE IN THE THREATS OF VIOLENCE IN THE WORKPLACE?

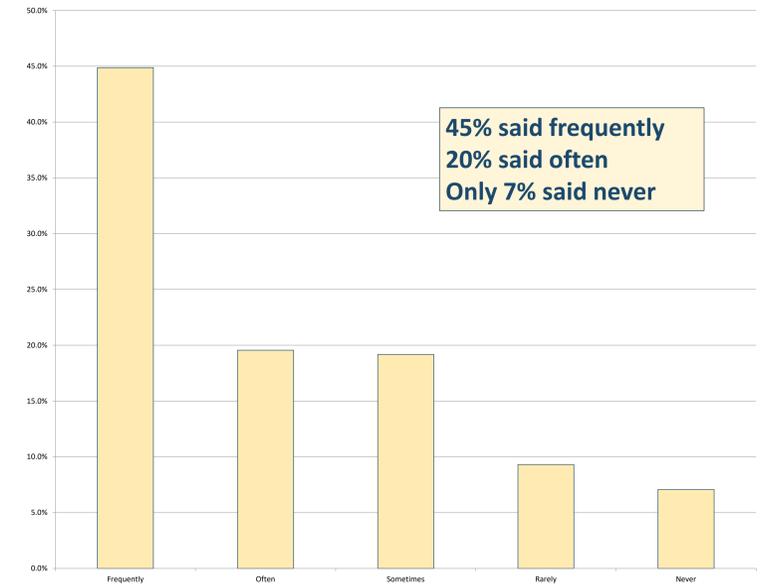


16% stated yes.
There is a statistical significance between the number of OHNs who answered yes and the size of the company.
45 of the OHNs who answered yes were in companies that had > 2,500 employees.

Key Findings:

- The survey uncovered the need for more pandemic planning.
 - 49% of the OHNs stated that they had a pandemic plan prior to the onset of the pandemic.
 - 28% stated they did not have a pandemic plan prior to the pandemic.
- 65% of OHNs stated they frequently or often felt overwhelmed during the pandemic.
 - Only approximately 28% of the OHNs felt frequently supported by their employers.
- 16% of OHNs stated that they did see an increase in threats of violence during the pandemic.
 - 28% of those working in businesses with more than 2,500 employees answered that they saw an increase in threats of violence.
- OHNs state they helped about 60% of employees with their health or well-being during the pandemic.
- 109 OHNs stated they needed additional help with their job.
- 21 out of 30 Employers stated that they frequently contacted the OHN about questions or concerns regarding COVID-19.
- 11 out of 30 employers stated that a significant contribution by the OHN was assisting in advising leadership and employees on CDC guidelines.

HOW OFTEN DID YOU FEEL OVERWHELMED BY QUESTIONS OR CONCERNS FROM EMPLOYEES REGARDING COVID-19?



CONCLUSIONS

The two surveys demonstrate the value of OHNs within the workplace by their ability to adapt to the needs of the employer during a global pandemic.

OHNs played a significant role in developing new workplace practices, creating policies and communicating new requirements to employees for supporting safety and well-being in the workplace.

The two surveys additionally show the way the OHN's work responsibilities and personal well-being have been impacted by the pandemic.

Future research is needed to identify opportunities for health and safety efficiencies in diverse workplace settings.

SUPPORT

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► Learn more: sph.umn.edu

*For this survey, During the COVID-19 pandemic is defined as March 2020 until August 2021.
** Guiding policies for infectious disease and contact tracing became a new job duty.