

## **Anxiety and Depression among the Field Midwives in Selected MOH Areas in Matara District, Sri Lanka during Covid-19 Pandemic**

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COVID-19 outbreak was a novel experience for the mankind and it generated a psychologically difficult period for Field Midwives (FMs) who provide care to mothers and children in the community, in Sri Lanka. Hence, this study was aimed at evaluating the levels of anxiety and depression and their associated factors among FMs in selected MOH areas in Matara district, Sri Lanka, during the COVID-19 Pandemic. A descriptive cross-sectional design was used among purposively selected 145 FMs in randomly selected MOH areas in the Matara district. A pretested, interviewer-administered questionnaire consisted of GAD-7 and PHQ-9 was used to collect the data. Descriptive statistics were used to analyze the data with the support of the SPSS 26 version. Ethical approval was obtained from the relevant authorities before conducting the study. Mean values of Anxiety and depression were  $4.88 \pm 4.94$  and  $5.75 \pm 4.63$  respectively. The results showed that 54.5%, 31.0%, 8.3% and 6.2% of the participants had minimal, mild, moderate and severe levels of anxiety, respectively. Factors associated with anxiety are age, parental status, accommodation, years of experience, death of family members, relatives or friends due to COVID-19, history of chronic diseases, and economic status according to the chi-square test. The results showed 46.2%, 32.4%, 17.2%, 1.4%, and 2.8% of the participants had none or minimal, mild, moderate, moderately severe, and severe levels of depression, respectively. According to the chi-square test factors associated with depression are family type, place of residence, history of chronic diseases, family members, relatives, or friends infected with COVID-19. Most of the FMs were mild depressed 32.4%, and 55% were suffered with minimal anxiety or none during the COVID-19 Pandemic. Similar studies should be conducted with a larger population. Training sessions are recommended for the FMs to cope with anxiety and depression during a pandemic.

**Keywords:** *anxiety, depression, field midwife, Sri Lanka*