

ABSTRACT

Studies have shown that social support essentially predicts the outcome of physical and mental health for everyone. Social support has been found to improve a person's well-being and is a major factor in preventing negative symptoms such as depression and anxiety from developing. The main objective of this study was to establish the effect of social relationships on the psychological well-being of medical professionals in hospitals in Baringo County. The specific objectives of the study were as follows: To determine the effect of relationships with supervisor on psychological wellbeing; to determine the effect of relationships with patients and their families on psychological wellbeing; to determine the effect of relationships with colleagues on psychological wellbeing. The study population comprised of doctors, nurses and clinical officers from four sub county hospitals within Baringo County, Kenya. A correlational research design survey was conducted and Purposive sampling was used to select the four (4) hospitals as they had the largest staff population as compared to the health centres. Stratified random sampling was used to select the respondents of the study, consisting of 22 doctors, 36 Clinical officers and 106 nurses forming a total sample of 164 employees. Data was collected using questionnaire method and data obtained was processed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). Both descriptive and inferential statistics were used in data analysis; that is, Frequencies, means, standard deviation and Percentages which were presented in tables and charts. Pearson's Correlation analysis and Regression analysis were used to test the study hypotheses. The results of the multiple regression analysis showed that the relationship with patients and their families, and relationship with colleagues were the only significant predictors of employee psychological well-being. This suggests that employees who dealt with patients and their family members were stressed when dealing with unreasonable demands or abuse from patients and their families and also employees treated with disregard by supervisors or colleagues resulted to poor psychological wellbeing. The study recommends that improving medical professionals' psychological well-being requires professional counselling and social support in order to understand and cope with the unreasonable demands, expectations of patients, their relatives and toxic relations with colleagues. Hospital management should create a hospital support system in order to manage the physical, social and psychological effects of work-induced stress on workers. Further studies should be carried out to investigate other occupational related variables that may influence employee psychological wellbeing. Also, similar study should be broadened to medical professionals in other counties in Kenya.

Keywords: Biographical characteristics, Psychological well-being, Social support, Supervisor, Colleagues, Patients