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Why Are We Looking at First Responders and Medical Personnel as Heroes During COVID-19?

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Abstract

Healthcare professionals play a critical role throughout the Covid-19 pandemic. It is understandable that people all over the world are looking for a hero to cling to, a non-controversial hero that can save the day. In the public eye, the ultimate heroes throughout this pandemic are first responders, who face the virus on a daily basis, risking their own life.

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The COVID_19 outbreak is an event that has a global effect on modern society (Jones, 2020). Healthcare professionals play a critical role throughout the pandemic, and all medical personnel continue to face considerable challenges on a daily basis. Prior to the COVID_19 outbreak, healthcare professionals (and especially first responders) were sometimes regarded as heroes by both the media and general public. Today, it seems that it has become their primary descriptor. What are the causes behind this change? How is the COVID_19 pandemic different from other events? It seems that for the first time in many decades, the world's population is collectively affected by a threatening medical and economic disaster. Almost every country in the world is affected by COVID_19 in some way. This pandemic is a global event, and for the first time in an event like this a global communication network that provides fast-moving, continuous information for almost every person in the world is available (Cinelli et al., 2020). The flow of information regarding the pandemic to almost every person on earth has many advantages, but it can also convey both fear and misinformation. Therefore, it is understandable that people all over the world are looking for a common hero to look up to, a non-controversial hero that can help anyone, in any medical emergency. Uncertainty, fear and dealing for the first time for most people with a pandemic, requires some stable and reliable options to call for help. Knowing that whatever happens, first responders will come and help you, has a comforting effect. Since the COVID-19 pandemic is a medical disaster, the accepted heroes are those working in the health care system (Rosenbaum, 2020). While the healthcare system was perceived as "life-saving" pre-pandemic, especially for those who needed it, now, a large portion of the population needs it for the first time in

modern times, or at least are comforted by knowing first responders will come if they need them. Therefore, healthcare workers are now viewed as the ultimate common heroes for all of us, as the same threat and fears affect all of us.

First responders are unique, in the fact they are forced to expose themselves in the public eye to real dangers, while the rest of the population remains in quarantine, watching their efforts via media outlets with admiration and appreciation. For a protected person, in quarantine, first responders willing to sacrifice their own lives for the sake of others have a critical role in society. Recent data suggest that first responders are more likely to contract COVID_19 because of their work (Weiden et al., 2020). First responders are a unique staff in the medical field, operating in unknown environments, with close contact to the community and supplied with limited resources compared to a hospital's emergency room. This role differs from others within the health care system— notably those based within hospitals.

While this new pandemic might be considered a major event for health care systems, we hope the newfound appreciation for health care systems and first responders at large will continue. Acknowledging the added stress, workload and dangers even beyond this pandemic providing the necessary tools and support needed to do their job in the best way possible.

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