

Psychosocial risks for healthcare

Overview of survey results

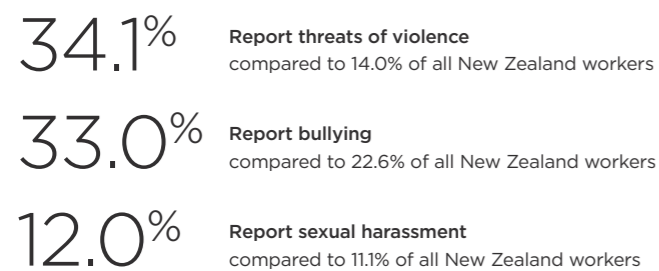
Psychosocial hazards in the workplace are a risk to workers' physical and mental health. WorkSafe New Zealand's Psychosocial Survey of Healthcare Workers provides data on a range of psychosocial risks in healthcare work.

The survey data was gathered between February and May 2022. The survey involved 1,067 respondents aged 18 years and over. It sampled people working in hospitals, medical services and other healthcare services (including physical health and mental health/counselling). People working in home and community/residential or disability care were not included in the sample.

A range of psychosocial risks are highlighted by healthcare workers, including exposure to high levels of offensive behaviours and a high level of work demands. There are also positive work aspects, also known as protective factors, that healthcare organisations can capitalise on, such as meaning of work and possibilities for development.

Offensive behaviours

Over half of healthcare workers report exposure (as a victim or witness) to at least one offensive behaviour in the previous 12 months.

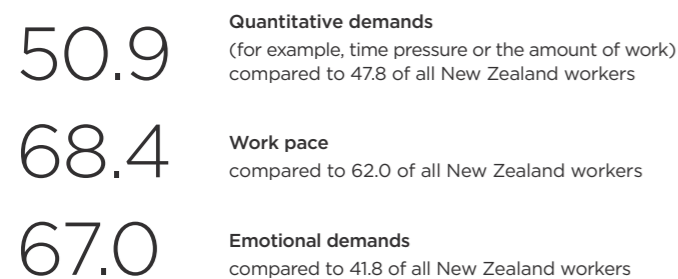


Demands at work

Job demands refer to any physical, psychological, social or organisational aspects of a job that require constant effort for the worker.

Scores are out of 100 - higher scores indicate higher risk exposure. Scores over 40 indicate moderate risk, and above 70 indicate high risk.

Healthcare workers report higher scores for:



Self-rated health

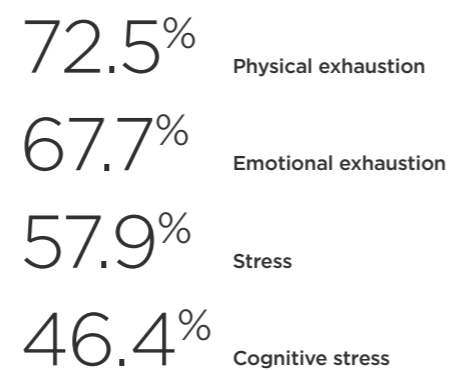
Self-rated health measures a person's perception of their overall health. 75.8% of healthcare workers rate their health as good and above (compared to 80.7% of all New Zealand workers).

Psychological distress

Psychological distress is associated with fluctuations in levels of arousal and mood. High distress can be a precursor to or part of a more serious mental health condition.

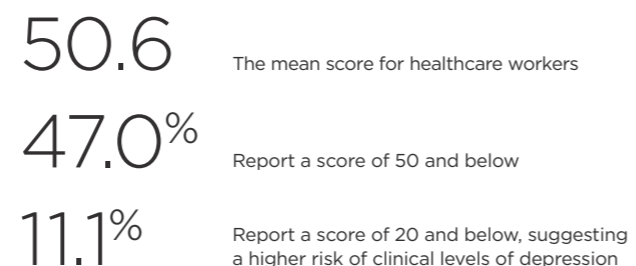
14.0% of healthcare workers report experiencing at least one form of psychological distress 'all the time'.

The percentage of healthcare workers who report signs of distress at least 'some of the time' are:



Wellbeing

Healthcare workers self-rated a score for their mental wellbeing. Workers were asked how they felt in the previous 14 days. The total score ranges from 0 to 100. A score of 50 and below indicates poor mental wellbeing and increased risk of depression.

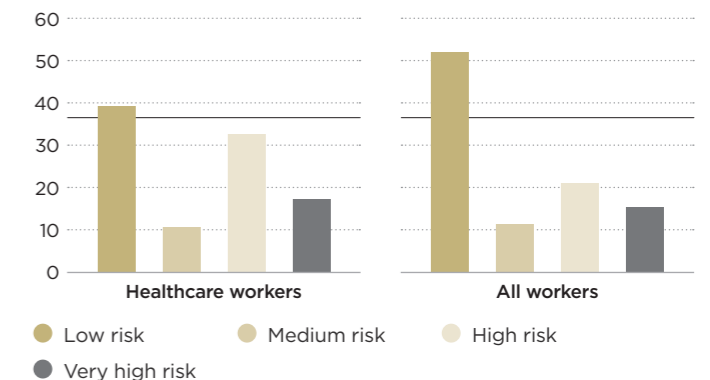


Psychosocial safety climate

An organisation's psychosocial safety climate reflects its culture and the value it places on healthy work experiences through policies, practices and procedures.

Compared to all New Zealand workers, fewer healthcare workers rated the psychosocial safety climate of their workplace as high, meaning that the organisational culture places less value on healthy work. A greater proportion rated it below the international threshold score of 37, meaning that healthcare workers are more likely to be at high risk of adverse outcomes.

Published benchmarks for psychosocial safety climate indicate that a score of 41 and over is a 'best-practice standard' threshold which is associated with a climate performing well for worker psychological health and safety and low risk of depressive symptoms and job strain. A psychosocial safety climate score of 37 and below is associated with a higher psychosocial risk, and negative outcomes such as depressive symptoms and job strain.



Psychosocial safety climate scores

- ≥41: (low risk) The work climate is performing well for worker psychological health and safety.
- 37-40: (medium risk) The work climate is just below the best practice standard threshold. More is needed to improve work climate.
- 27-36: (high risk) The work climate is likely to involve a high risk of depressive symptoms and job strain.
- ≤26: (very high risk) The work climate needs urgent action as there is very high risk of depressive symptoms and job strain.

Protective factors

Aspects of a workplace that enhance mental wellbeing are sometimes called protective factors. By incorporating protective factors, employers can improve their workers' mental and physical health.

Healthcare workers scored the following protective factors as being higher in their work, compared to all New Zealand workers:



Data on psychosocial safety climate for all New Zealand workers was obtained from the NZ Workplace Barometer (Forsyth et al., 2021). All other data for all New Zealand workers was obtained from the New Zealand Psychosocial Survey 2021 (WorkSafe New Zealand, 2022).