

Mariner mental health & wellbeing during COVID-19 and beyond: What's DEI got to do with it?

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US Merchant Mariner Survey

WHAT: Online survey of US Merchant Mariners

WHY:

- > Characterize mental health outcomes, determinants, and barriers to accessing care
- > Prioritize interventions to improve mariner well-being during COVID-19 and beyond

WHO: Conducted by UW School of Public Health, Supported by CDC, CMTS C-19 WG, SOCP

WHEN: January 25—July 31, 2021



Survey Topics

- > Validated scales: PTSD, Anxiety, Perceived Stress, Depression, Suicidal Ideation
- > Determinants of stress
- > Job satisfaction
- > Safety climate
- > General health
- > Concerns/experiences while sailing during COVID-19
- > Mental health stigmas and barriers to accessing care
- > Mental health communication needs



Our respondents

- > 1,559 USCG credentialed mariners took our survey
 - <1% of the total number of USCG credentialed mariners
- > 1,384 (91.5%) had actively sailed during the COVID-19 pandemic
- > Of those who choose to disclose...
 - 89% male, 10% female, <1% other gender
 - 83% white
 - 87% between ages of 25-64
- > Not all respondents answered all questions



Assessing Mental Health Outcomes

- > In this survey we used validated scales to assess:
 - Major depressive disorder
 - Generalized anxiety disorder
 - High stress
 - Suicidal ideation
 - Post-traumatic stress disorder
- > Mariners were coded as either “likely” or “unlikely” to have the conditions listed above based on scores

Mental Health Outcomes by Gender

Gender	Depression n=1312	Anxiety n=1318	Suicidal Ideation n=1319	Perceived Stress n=1285	PTSD n=1367
	% High	% High	% High	% High	% High
Male	20.4%	21.8%	8.6%	37.0%	17.3%
Female	21.0%	33.6%	12.0%	48.0%	29.6%
No answer	15.7%	19.6%	8.8%	38.1%	16.6%
All	20.7%	22.7%	8.9%	38.2%	18.4%

Mental Health Outcomes by Age

	Depression n=1312	Anxiety n=1318	Suicidal Ideation n=1319	Perceived Stress n=1285	PTSD n=1367
Age	% High	% High	% High	% High	% High
18-24	25.9%	32.2%	10.0%	41.4%	6.7%
25-34	28.7%	37.0%	13.8%	48.6%	22.0%
25-44	23.7%	25.1%	9.6%	43.2%	20.6%
45-54	18.8%	19.7%	5.9%	36.0%	21.1%
55-64	16.5%	11.9%	7.0%	30.6%	17.2%
65+	12.6%	14.6%	5.6%	22.1%	17.8%
All	20.7%	22.7%	8.9%	38.2%	18.4%

Experiences women mariners shared with me

“When we weren’t allowed ashore by the host nation, we suffered more. We couldn’t get hygiene supplies. We had to buy shampoo and soap on Amazon and cross our fingers it would arrive quickly. We had to share tubes of toothpaste. We couldn’t get feminine sanitary products which were severely limited for most of the 17 months I was on the ship.”

The lack of shore leave has definitely lowered crew morale on the ship. I have noticed a huge increase in stress levels among my shipmates. I'm considering a new profession because I enjoy my job less now. I can't get home when I'm supposed to which affects my whole family.

I think its crazy that we were locked down, not allowed to go ashore, yet contractors were allowed to come and go with just a temperature check and a questionnaire. We were exposed to the contractors everyday yet we could not go ashore.



Experiences women mariners shared with me

“I already feel singled out and harassed for being a woman on a ship. Now, the pandemic isolates the people who are actually concerned with the virus and it’s not like I can tell the guys I work with to put on a mask or leave me alone.”

“Never knowing when you are actually going to get to go home (pandemic or no pandemic) is very stressful and degrading to enjoy-ability of life onboard.”



Amplified risks for women



PPE may not appropriately fit women

Sexual harassment is common

Gender discrimination in training and hiring practices

Lack of available sanitary facilities/supplies

Inconsistent shore leave/scheduling can affect women more than men

Lack of support—might be only woman on ship

Amplified risks for women



Overcompensation

Tokenism

Fear of layoff for reporting concerns

Macho culture

Hazing

Pay gap

Gender differences in job satisfaction

	% that agree or strongly agree	
	Men	Women
I like the people I work with.	91.5%	86.4%
I like doing the things I do at work.	93.1%	91.2%
I get enough time to relax and recharge when on the vessel.	64.2%	44.7%
If I am feeling sad or stressed there is usually someone on the vessel I can talk to.	52.1%	52.4%

Gender differences in workplace support

	% that agree or strongly agree	
	Men	Women
Vessel senior officers generally encourage employees to work in accordance with safety rules, including COVID-19 protocols.	90.5%	87.8%
Vessel senior officers encourage the crew to get mental health help if needed.	65.6%	56.6%
Organization's management generally encourage employees to work in accordance with safety rules, including COVID-19 protocols.	85.4%	85.3%
Organization's management encourage the crew to get mental health help if needed.	62.6%	50.8%

Barriers to accessing care

“Mental health care is a literal joke on board. There are no accommodations made while on board. Even when management explicitly states that mental health care accommodations should and will be made, it is made clear by senior officers that any request will be denied and seen as negative behavior.”

*****66% of male respondents said they would not be able to start or maintain mental healthcare while aboard a vessel.***

*****81% of female respondents said they would not be able to start or maintain mental healthcare while aboard a vessel***

What does this mean?

- > Female mariners may need additional supports for mental health
- > Compounding stressors likely disproportionately impact women mariners during and beyond the pandemic
- > If maritime industry wants to meet hiring objectives, job will need to be attractive to younger mariners and female mariners

For a full report, please visit:



<http://deohs.washington.edu/mariner-mental-health>

or

email: bakermg@uw.edu

