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Title: Precarious work among personal support workers in Greater Toronto Area: a respondent driven sampling study

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Reviewer 1

General comments (author response in bold)

Introduction

PAGE 4 LINE 10 "also called healthcare aides, patient care assistants, home support workers or home care attendants.(2,3)"

I would point out that some of these other names also have different educational requirements and are often a way to further de-skill as they require less education (especially in the case of "Resident Care Aides" that emerged in Ontario thanks to efforts of certain lobby groups.

Thank you for your comment. We agree with you that the terms used to describe PSW are varied and may have different educational requirement in Ontario and other places. We mentioned the different terms in the Introduction section to convey that there are other terms used to describe PSW and to further highlight the minimal regulation of the PSW profession in Ontario.

Results

re: Sampling: Pg 7, Line 16

You recruited working PSWs in Ontario yet 5.3% of the sample was not working as a PSW. Why?

Thank you for your question. To clarify, we described in page 4 (3rd paragraph of Recruitment and data collection section under Methods) that we still recruited participants who were not working as a PSW at the time of the survey if they had worked as a PSW within a year prior to the survey administration. This approach was chosen to avoid selection bias, whereby PSWs who were precariously employed with high job insecurity might be excluded from the survey.

Interpretation

"86.5% of PSWs in the survey were precariously employed. About 53% of the PSW participants perceived their health to be very good or excellent, which is lower than the overall proportion for Canadians (61.2%).(26)"

Can you compare it to other data on healthcare specific occupations versus the just the larger Canadian population?

Thank you for your suggestion. Unfortunately, health outcome data for healthcare specific occupations is very limited. Furthermore, most health outcomes in this study were measured using validated scale (e.g., Canadian Community Health Survey) that was administered to general Canadian population and rarely reported at occupation-specific level. However, we have added the following sentence to the 3rd paragraph of the Interpretation section (pg. 15): "Over 20% of the PSWs were likely to be depressed, significantly exceeding the prevalence of major

depressive episodes among Canadians (5.4%-11.7%) but consistent with evidence on mental health burden among healthcare workers, particularly during the COVID-19 pandemic.(42-44)”