Which Medical Specialties or Subspecialties are at a Higher Risk of COVID19- Infection or Mortality?

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Despite the introduction of COVID-19 vaccination more than one year ago and vaccination of a considerable percentage of the population in many developed countries, there is still a substantial infection and mortality rate of COVID-19. For example, despite a full vaccination coverage of around 70% in Germany the 7-day mortality of the country in the week preceding 26 November had been 1737 (about 250 deaths each day) which is a high number.[1] Meanwhile, in some countries, high mortality has been reported in healthcare workers who has been fully vaccinated against COVID-19 raising concerns on the safety of medical personnel in the pandemic despite vaccination.[2]

Previously we studied the infection and mortality rate of medical personnel in different specialties and subspecialties in our country during the early COVID-19 period.[3] We observed that the highest infection rates were among the specialties of infectious diseases (3.14%) followed by neurology (2.18%), and internal medicine (2.13%). Whilst the highest mortality rates were interestingly among specialties of forensic medicine (0.314%), anesthesiology (0.277%), urology (0.237%), and infectious diseases (0.20%) bearing only modest association with the distribution of infection rate among medical specialties.[3]

While the reason for not observing a high match of infection and mortality rates among medical specialties needs further investigations, our findings deserve attention as some specialties which are not seemingly a frontline specialty (forensic medicine and anesthesiology) were associated with a high mortality rate. The observation of a still high mortality rate in medical personnel despite vaccination in some countries brings into attention once more the importance of protection of healthcare workers against COVID-19 and once more adds importance to our previous report on the specialty-specific infection and mortality rate of medical personnel.

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