

Covid-19 nurse deaths in the thousands: federation

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More than a thousand nurses are known to have died worldwide due to COVID-19, the International Council of Nurses said Wednesday, adding that the true figure was likely far higher.

The ICN branded the situation "catastrophic" and lambasted governments for not doing enough to protect front-line health care workers during the new coronavirus pandemic.

The Geneva-based federation brings together more than 130 national nursing associations (NNAs), representing the more than 20 million nurses worldwide.

An ICN survey found that in countries where separate data for nurses was available, more than 1,000 had died from the respiratory [disease](#).

"As of August 14, the cumulative number of reported COVID-19 deaths in nurses in 44 countries is 1,097," the ICN said in a report.

"As our dataset only covers 44 countries with recorded [nurse](#) deaths, ICN believes the number significantly underestimates the situation."

It said there had been 351 COVID-19-related deaths among nurses in Brazil as of August 11—the highest figure in the dataset—and 212 in Mexico, according to the latest figures.

Broadening out from nurses, the human rights organisation Amnesty International said on September 3 that at least 7,000 health care workers of all types had died worldwide after contracting COVID-19.

The ICN report said there was still no global systematic record of the number of nurses and other [health workers](#) who have contracted or died from the disease.

'Scandalous situation'

ICN president Annette Kennedy called the report's findings "disturbing".

"Nurses and other health workers are still being exposed to COVID-19 and all its associated risks, including violence and prejudice, [mental illness](#), infection and in what we now believe to be possibly thousands of cases, making the ultimate sacrifice by paying with their lives," she said.

"Nurses are undervalued, underpaid and sometimes treated as expendable. This is a scandalous situation which ICN urges governments to rectify."

The ICN said that in data from 32 countries, 572,478 health workers have been reported infected with COVID-19 as of August 14, accounting for, on average, 10 percent of all cases.

Only 16 out of 33 NNAs reported that COVID-19 is recognised as an occupational disease for health workers—a classification that typically affects the right to entitlements and compensation for those who contract the disease at work.

Twenty-four out of 33 NNAs had received reports of incidents of violence or discrimination against [health](#) workers due to COVID-19—often because of misinformation about them spreading the virus.

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