

How did South African health care workers cope during the pandemic?

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A new study by UC Berkeley Anthropology Professor Andrew Wooyoung Kim reveals resilient coping mechanisms used by health care workers during the COVID-19 pandemic in metro Johannesburg, South Africa.

Titled "Coping strategies employed by public psychiatric health care workers during the COVID-19 pandemic in southern Gauteng, South Africa," Kim's paper was published in *PLOS ONE* in August. It explores the diverse coping strategies employed by public psychiatric health care workers during the pandemic in the metropolitan Johannesburg area.

"This research illuminates the adaptability and creativity of individuals facing unprecedented health care challenges," Kim said. "The psychiatric health care workers' ability to innovate in the face of extreme adversity is particularly inspiring. Understanding these [coping strategies](#) is vital for building short-term support systems for health care workers, providing a roadmap for bolstering psychiatric service delivery while also improving patient outcomes in times of health care emergencies."

The study identified seven major coping mechanisms and emphasized the success of various strategies that helped preserve well-being and overcome pandemic-related adversity in metro Johannesburg.

More information: Ann Scheunemann et al, Coping strategies employed by public psychiatric healthcare workers during the COVID-19 pandemic in southern Gauteng, South Africa, *PLOS ONE* (2023). [DOI: 10.1371/journal.pone.0277392](https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0277392)

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