

Mental Health Problems of Nursing Practitioners during Covid-19 Pandemic - A Cross Sectional Survey

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Abstract:

Background: The novel coronavirus 2019 (COVID-19) has inflicted significant mental health problems in people all over the world. The medical staff, especially nurses who are working in hospital settings are under considerable psychological distress due to various factors. Hence, it is relevant to study the mental health problems of nurses who are working among patients with COVID-19. This study aimed to assess the psychological distress of nurses working among patients diagnosed with COVID-19.

Materials and Methods: In this cross-sectional survey study, 141 registered nurses from various parts of the world participated. The data collection tool was self-reporting questionnaire by WHO to screen for psychiatric disturbances of nurses working among patients with COVID-19. The data collected through online platform and the sampling technique used was convenience sampling. The collected data was analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics.

Results: This study shows that 55.5% of nurses has graduation in nursing as their educational qualification, 36.7% of respondents have 6-10 years of work experience whereas 52% of nurses are currently working in India, 14.2% from Saudi Arabia and 7.8% from UK and UAE each. Most of the sample 36.9% of the respondents had psychiatric disturbances during the study period.

Conclusion: Even though, majority of the nurses in this study did not report psychiatric disturbances while working with people infected COVID-19, the number of nurses who were having distress during study period cannot be neglected as the mental health of every nurse working among people is invaluable.

Key Words: Mental health, nursing practitioners, COVID-19 pandemic

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I. Introduction

A novel coronavirus, called as SARS-CoV2 evolved from Wuhan, China, resulted in a worldwide outbreak of COVID-19. World health organization has considered COVID-19 as a public health emergency and was declared as pandemic¹. As this infectious disease developed in 206 countries in the world, nurses remained as the frontline workers who did the screening and management².

Amidst the development of this infectious disease in 206 countries throughout the world, health care workers remain the main persons involved in the screening and treatment of this condition throughout. Consistent rise in the infected cases and rate of deaths, lack of COVID vaccine or any medicine, wide-ranging media coverage, over work, inadequate supply of personal protective equipment, and feeling of lack of care and support, frustration, discrimination, isolation, patients with negative emotions, a lack of contact with their families, and exhaustion can act as causative factors of psychological disturbances of frontline health care workers like nurses³. This situation triggers mental health conditions such as stress, anxiety, depressive symptoms, insomnia, denial, anger and fear which affect attention and concentration, comprehension, decision making capacity and overall wellbeing of the nurses and may hamper their work efficiency. Protecting the mental health of nurses is thus essential for control of the pandemic and their own long-term health⁴.

II. Material and Methods

This cross sectional survey study was carried out on 141 registered nurses (both male and females) of aged ≥ 18 from various parts of the world during the period of May 2020 to December 2020 through online media.

Study Design: cross sectional survey study

Study Location: The study was conducted by IMHANS

Study Duration: May 2020 to December 2020.

Sample size: 141 registered nurses

Subjects & selection method: The researchers adopted non-probability convenient sampling for the selection of study subjects.

Inclusion criteria:

The study included the registered nurses all over the world who were working during the outbreak of COVID-19 pandemic

Exclusion criteria:

The study excluded nurses who have been severely affected and not able to respond to the data collection instruments provided.

Procedure methodology

The data collected after taking informed consent from the participants and permission from the institute review board of Institute of Mental Health and Neurosciences (IMHANS), Kozhikode. A well-designed questionnaire was used to collect the data of the registered nurses. The questionnaire included socio-demographic characteristics such as age, gender, nationality, education, year of experience, marital status, working country. Self-reporting questionnaire by WHO was administered to assess mental health disturbances of the nurses who were working during the COVID -19 pandemic.

Statistical analysis

Data was analyzed using SPSS version 16.

III. Result

141 registered nurses comprised of 97 females and 42 males who were practicing nurses participated in the study.

Figure 1: Shows education qualification of the study participants

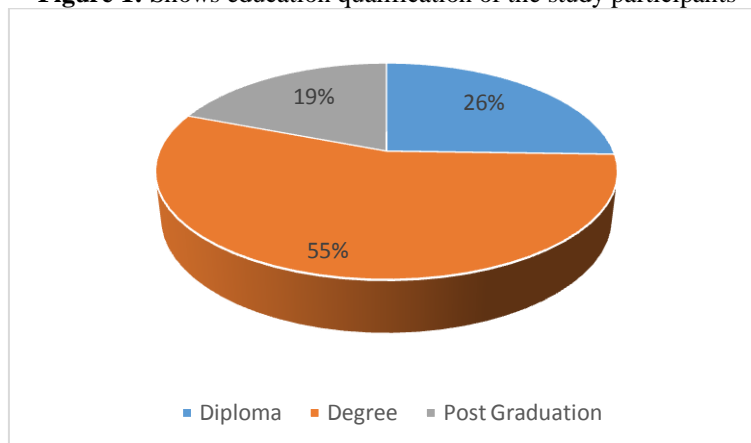
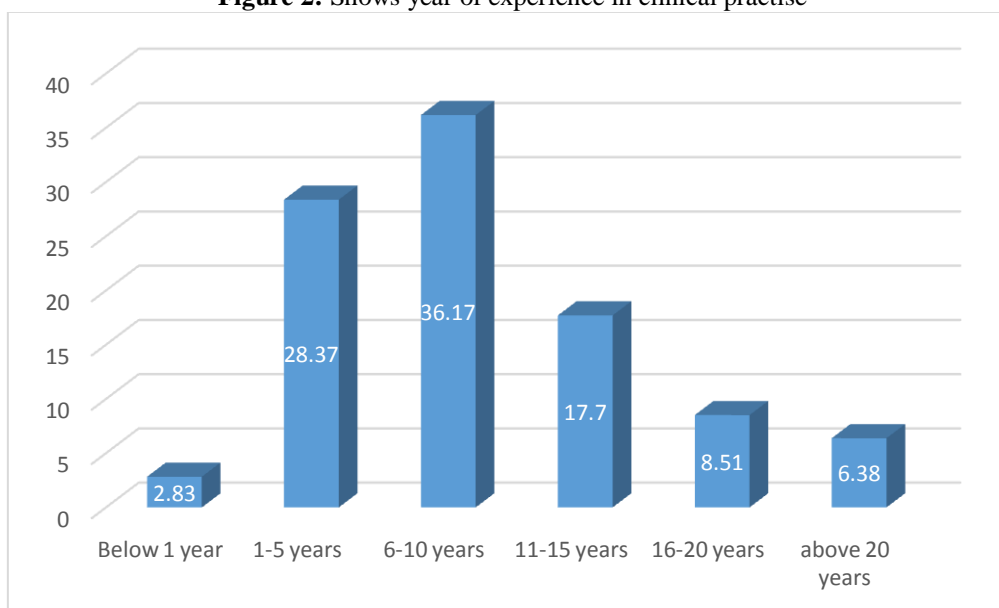


Figure 1 depicts the education qualification of the registered nurses who participated in the study. It shows that 55.5% of the respondents possess BSc Nursing as their educational status and 25.53 % of the nurses have Diploma in Nursing and 19.1% of the participants has Post graduation in Nursing.

Figure 2: Shows year of experience in clinical practise



The study reveals that majority of the respondents (36.7%) had 6- 10 years of clinical practice experience and 28.37% had 1-5 years of clinical experience whereas only 2.83% of respondents had below one year of clinical experience.

Figure 3. Shows Marital Status of the Nurses

Marital Status	Frequency	Percentage
Single	36	25.5
Married	102	72.3
Widowed	2	1.5
Living together	1	0.7

The study reveals that 72.3% of the nurses were married and 25.5 % were single.

Table: 1 Distribution of sample based on working country

Country	Frequency	Percentage
Australia	3	2.1
Bahrain	2	1.4
Bangladesh	2	1.4
Canada	2	1.4
Ethiopia	1	0.7
India	52	36.9
Indonesia	1	0.7
Ireland	5	3.5
Kuwait	7	5.0
New Zealand	3	2.1
Oman	3	2.1
Pakistan	1	0.7
Qatar	4	2.8
Saudi Arabia	20	14.2
Singapore	4	2.8
Sri Lanka	2	1.4
UAE	11	7.8
United Kingdom	11	7.8
USA	1	0.7
Zimbabwe	1	.7
Total	141	100.0

The data in Table 1 depicts that 52% of the respondents were working in India, 14.2% was working in Saudi Arabia and 7.8% was practicing in UK and UAE each and remaining nurses were doing their nursing job in other different countries.

Table 2: Shows distress experienced by the respondents

Response based on self-reporting questionnaire	Frequency	Percentage
Respondents who are having significant distress	52	36.9
Respondents who are not having significant distress	89	63.1
Total	141	100

The table depicts that 63.1 percent of the respondents did not have distress during COVID- 19 pandemic situation while 36.9 percent of the nurses had mental health issues mentioned in the self reporting questionnaire related to their work.

IV. Discussion

In March 2020, SARS-CoV-2 was declared as a pandemic by the WHO. The outbreak of this infectious disease causes mental distress among nurses who work among infected patients⁵. The current study was conducted by IMHANS from May 2020 to December 2020 among registered working nurses who were part of treatment of patients affected by COVID- 19 in various countries. The study identified that large majority of the nurses were not having distress during the study period. However, various studies found that mental disturbances were common in nurses during the outbreak of infectious disease which is inconsistent with the findings of this study. Government authorities in some countries developed psychological intervention facilities in hospitals for health care workers in order to alleviate their mental health issues⁶. For instance, Chinese government has provided psychological support by issuing emergency psychological crisis intervention guidelines for people infected with COVID-19 and health workers⁷. This includes setting up of psychological intervention teams, use of shift duties, online platforms with medical advice⁸. Similar crisis intervention plan and development of psychological crisis intervention team were suggested by various experts in this area⁹.

V. Conclusion

Nurses working abroad face unprecedented challenges as part of COVID- 19 outbreak warrant a lot of adjustments with apprehensions. Even though, majority of the nurses in this study did not report psychiatric disturbances while working with people infected with COVID-19, the number of nurses who were having distress during the study period cannot be neglected as the mental health of every nurse working among people is invaluable. Hence, this study suggests mental health interventions among working nurses with distress.

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