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Causes of Stress among the Nurses Working in Intensive Care Units 2015

Manal Bilal Mohamed

manalbelal52@gmail.com

Omdurman Islamic University, Sudan

ABSTRACT

Stress is everyday life's reality. Everyone is struck by it in one way or the other. No one is safe from it. This study aimed to assess factors that can cause stress among nurses working in critical care unit and to find a relation between these factors and demographic data, it is a descriptive study done in Khartoum, hospital and Omdurman hospital June -July 2015. 56 nurses enrolled in the study, selected randomly. data were collected after applied self-administer questionnaire .in the results most of the respondents strongly agreed that lack of practice and a shortage of staff and prolonged period of working without break, and lack of support and in proper communications between their college and in proper environments all these factors cause stress for nurses in the critical care unit. Conclude: the majority of the nurses had severe stress with different stress factors and the highly significant association between these factors and the demographic variable which support our hypothesis

Keywords: Nurses, Stress Factors, Intensive Care Unit. Sudan.

1. INTRODUCTION

Stress is a non-specific response of the body to any demand. On the other hand, a stressor is an event or any stimulus that cause an individual to experience stress.(1)

Also, stress can be defined as the internal response to external events. In other words, stress is what the body and mind experience when we try to adopt a continually changing environment. The challenge of work becomes more complex and due to this, the meeting ability of the individual is disturbed. Work place stress has long been recognized as a challenge for the nursing profession.

Stress is everyday life's reality. Everyone is struck by it in one way or the other. No one is safe from it and no one can avoid it because we are living in an unpredictable world.

Everyone faces stress in different life situations and circumstances, which make them physically and emotional which make them physically and emotionally overwhelmed and vulnerable.

Workplace stress has long been recognized as a challenge for the nursing profession. Stress also occurs when there is a constant desire to achieve only the best. Stress has been the growing concern among health care professionals, especially nurses. (2)

According to McGrath, many of the stresses identified amongst nurses concerned working relationship with nurse and doctor and other healthcare staff, communication and relationship with patient and relatives, high level of knowledge and skills required, the necessity to respond immediately in emergency situation, very high work overload and understaffing, lack of support and lack of break time during duty hours. (3)

In a hospital setting, intensive care units (ICUs) are very important. In these units, critical and unstable patients are being treated. Patients are put on artificial ventilators oxygen, hemodialysis machines, Bypass and other equipment which are necessary for patients' survival. These patients require specialized care, medical and nursing. (2)

These patients are not stable and their condition may change within minutes or even seconds. Nurses are supposed to be very vigilant, cautious and active there as every second count. They are expected for continuous monitoring and support to the other medical staff and above all the patient's Nurses working in intensive care units should be very skillful, efficient, and active with complete knowledge of the medical equipment so that any technical or technological challenge can be handled well at the

appropriate time. They should have specialized knowledge and training to provide high quality care to the patients. Nurses face a lot of stress while working in such a high pressure environment. Stress may be due to working environment work overload, shortage of staff, or conflicts with physicians or co-workers and pressure from family members. Life and death situations, prolonged duty hours are other factors contributing to the work related stress. (2)

2. OBJECTIVES

To identify the causes of stress among the nurses working in ICU and to find an association between the causes of stress and selected demographic variables

3. HYPOTHESIS

H1-There will be a significant association between causes of stress among nurses and selected demographic variables.

4. MATERIALS AND METHODS

A descriptive design was adopted in the present study to accomplish the objectives from June -July, 2015.

Simple random sampling technique was used for the selection of 56 ICU nurses in public hospital khartoum state (Khartoum hospital elshaab hospital). Using face to face questionnaire as data collection tool which consist of demographic data related to age, gender, education qualification, marital status and years' experience in ICU and rest of questionnaire consists of 18 items related to stress, The tool was likert type, 5 points rating scale consisting of 5 options namely strongly agree ,agree , satisfied, strongly disagree ,disagree. Divided in scores for strongly agree 5, agree 4 satisfied 3 disagree 2 and strongly disagree is 1, the total score is 90.

Data was entered and analyzed using the statistical package of the social sciences software (SPSS). Frequency and percentage were identified. Mean, Maiden, Mode relationship among different variables were calculated and graphically portrayed in tables.

5. RESULTS

In this study 56 nurses work in critical care were enrolled in the study 41 (73.2%) of them are female and 15 (26.8%) are male, half of them 30 (53.6%) their age between 25-30 years and the rest of respondents their age more than 30 years .regard marital status 20 (35.7%) are single and 19 (33.9%) are married while 17 (30.4 %) are divorced,

34 (60.7%) spent more than 5 years working in critical care while spent between 1-5 years they are about 22(39.3%), the majority of them 34 (60.7%) have a diploma and 18 (32.1%) have B.Sc. while the minority of them have master degree 4(7.1%). Most of them from and from Khartoum hospital which represents 60.7% while 39.3% from Omdurman Teaching Hospital.

When we asked about the causes of stress in ICU we found that all the respondents strongly agree towards Lack of practice and skills causes stress, Effect of workload on the stress, Shortage of staff can cause stress, Shortage of staff can cause stress, Lack of support from supervisor/manager, Effect of prolonged shifts, Lack of motivation and recognition, Prolonged standing and lack of breaks, conflict with doctors during duty and lack of cooperation between nurses themselves, Improper work environment causes stress, all this factors can cause stress in ICU. while 35(62.5 %) said Lack of practice and skills and aggressive and demanding family members can cause stress on other hand 22(39.3 %) said inappropriate communication between nurses can cause stress, 18(32.1 %) said Lack of resources and Possibility of fear of cross infection from patients can cause stress, the Mean and SD for the respondents are 33.4107, 6.98252 respectively and p value is .000. there is a significant relation with knowledge and sociodemographic data in relation to age, gender year of experience and qualification p significant in all sociodemographic data.

Table (1) Socio Demographic Data **n (56)**

Variable	Frequency	%
gender		
male	15	26.8
female	41	73.2
age		
25-30 years	30	53.6
more than 30 years	26	46.4
Marital status		
single	20	35.7
married	19	33.9
divorecd	17	30.4
years of experieence		
1-5 years	22	39.3
more than 5 years	34	60.7
Hospital		
Khartoum hospital	34	60.7
omdurman	22	39.3

Education qualification		
diploma	34	60.7
B.Sc	18	32.1
post graduate	4	7.1

Table (2) Stress Factors among Nurses n (56)

Items	Strongly agree(%)	Agree(%)	Satisfaction(%)	Disagree(%)	Strongly disagree(%)
Knowledge about equipment handling	20(35.7%)	16(28.6%)	9(16.1%)	11(19.6%)	0
Lack of practice and skills causes stress	35(62.5 %)	(37.5 %) 21			
Effect of workload on the stress	(100 %) 56				
Shortage of staff can cause stress	(100 %) 56				
Lack of support from supervisor/manager	(100 %) 56				
Effect of prolonged shifts	(100 %) 56				
Lack of motivation and recognition	(100 %) 56				
Prolonged standing and lack of breaks	(100 %) 56				
Conflicts with doctors during duty hour causes stress	(100 %) 56				
Lack of cooperation amongst nurses causes stress	(100 %) 56				
Problematic patients cause stress	(33.9 %) 19		(23.2 %) 13	(17.9 %) 10	(25.0 %) 14
Lack of resources causes stress	(32.1 %) 18		(41.1 %) 23		
Aggressive and demanding family members cause stress	(35.7 %) 20	(64.3 %) 36			
The unexpected death of patients causes stress	(33.9 %) 19				(66.1 %) 37
Patient undergoing painful procedures causes stress	(12.5 %) 7			(42.9 %) 24	(44.6 %) 25
Inappropriate communication between nurses	(39.3 %) 22	(14.3 %) 8	(37.5 %) 21		(8.9 %) 5
The possibility of fear of cross infection from patients	(32.1 %) 18		(26.8 %) 15	(41.1 %) 23	(%)
Improper work environment causes stress	(100 %) 56				

Table (3) Mean SD and p-Value of Nurses Knowledge

Knowledge	Mean	SD	Chi square	P value
From 1-18	33.4107	6.98252	44.714	.000

Table (4) Correlation between Demographic Data and Knowledge

Knowledge	Mean	SD	P value
Age			
25-30 years	1.4643	.50324	.000
more than 30 years			
gender			
male	1.7321	.44685	
female			
Marital status			
single	1.6071	.81842	.002
married			
divorced			
years of experience			
1-5 years	1.6071	.49281	.000
more than 5 years			
Education qualification			
diploma	1.4643	.63143	.271
B.Sc			
post graduate			

6. DISCUSSION

There is no doubt that nursing profession is one of the most stressful occupations/. Most inherently it is stressful occupations, often characterized by high rates of staff turnover, absenteeism, and burnout. In this study, we stressed on the factors which cause stress among nurses working in Intensive Care Unit (ICU) in Omdurman Teaching Hospital and from Khartoum hospital which represent 60.7 %. We were able to identify that nurses suffer while Omdurman hospital 39.3% from stress due to various reasons based on the responses received from the questionnaire. From the results obtained in this study, the majority of respondents are female, their age between 20-30, single and with bsc and have more than 5 years' experience in ICU

In relation to knowledge of nurses regarding causes of stress the majority 35.7% of nurses responded that handling of equipment cause stress while 62.5 % of them strongly agree that lack of practice and inadequate skills cause stress, similarly to study done in Lahore in which their results found that 44.6% strongly agree for the same cause. (2) Surprisingly, all respondents 100% strongly agree regard work load and a shortage of staff cause stress This is similar to study in Lahore where they strongly agree that working hours of the ICU nurses and no rest are the prime reasons of stress.(2)

Similar results have been reported in Iran, 50% ICU nurses suffer from stress due to prolonged shifts and prolonged duties without breaks. (4)

In relation to a shortage of staff, all respondents strongly agree that shortage of staff can cause stress, this agrees with a study done in Nepal where their response was 82% strongly agree. (5) 100% nurses strongly agreed that lack of support causes them stressed. Lack of support often leads to decreased motivation due to the recognition of one's hard work and dedication to work from the management, this disagrees with study in (Navimumbai) which reported only 22% of nurses suffer from severe stress due to lack of support from supervisors and manager. (6) And in variance line with this also, a study done in Ethiopia showed that the Lack of support from supervisors and managers only 17.8% frequently stressful while 22.2% never stressful amongst the nurses.(7) when respondents asked if Unexpected death of patients 66.1 % strongly disagree while 33.9 % strongly agree which is at variance with study done in teaching hospital in the United Kingdom where a large of nurses explored experiences of grief and their coping mechanisms when a patient dies, the death of a patient was considered less traumatic if the nurse had anticipated the death and had provided good nursing care. (8) 36% of our respondents explored that aggressive and demanding family members cause stress same as results of a study in Ethiopia where their respondents frequently feel stress (26%).(7) Communication and cooperation between nurses is very important to maintain a professional workplace but our respondents feel that they stress because there is Inappropriate communication between their college(nurses) 39.3% and Conflicts with doctors during duty hour this agree with study done in Lahore it found that Major reasons of stress identified amongst nurses were inappropriate communication between nurses and doctors. (2) .57.6% possibility or fear of cross-infection and On another hand when asked the nurses in ICU about Improper work environment as a factor that causes stress 100% strongly agree, this match well with a study published international journal social science and management 52.2% strongly agree. (2) from the results appeared positive association with age, gender education and work experience data and p .000 while negative relation in a study done in Male gender was positively associated with increased stress $P < .001$. While they found Increasing age had a weak negative association with stress and did years of clinical ICU experience $P < .001$. (9)

7. CONCLUSION

The overall findings revealed that majority of the sample had severe stress with different stress factors and the highly significant association between these factors and the demographic variable which support our hypothesis.

8. RECOMMENDATION

Apply for effective relaxation program so as to provide good productivity in their work and more workshops on stress management to be carried out

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