

Impact of Occupational Stress on Nurses' Job Performance According to Nurses Perception

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Abstract

Nursing is a risky profession. Nurses face a lot of stressors. The purpose of this paper is to review the previous researches discussed the impact of nurse's job stress on nurses' performance. This paper is used the electronic searches: Google scholar, EBSCO and CINAHL. This paper discussed the level of stress and different types of stressors among nurses in different settings. And, the type of relations between job stress, clinical performance, job satisfaction, quality of life, physical and mental health of nurses were discussed.

Keywords: nurses, job stress, occupational stress, job performance, and work stress.

Introduction

Nursing is very sensitive and demanding occupation, and nurses are exposed to the different situations that influence their physical and mental health⁽¹⁾. Nurses are exposed to the life-threatening injuries and diseases due to their risky profession. Nurses have a compressed program, complex hierarchy of power, having human health responsibility, exposed to people who are dying, face emergency situations, and deal with complex equipment's⁽¹⁾. Occupational stress in nursing is very common, that affects physical, mental, and social equilibrium. These factors lead to the high level of stress among nurses, which lead to negative consequences such as: delay or absence on work, depression, fatigue, low job performance, that lead to low quality of care⁽¹⁾.

Job stress is defined as "an individual's response to external stimuli in the environment"⁽²⁾. Also, occupational stress was defined as "harmful physical and emotional responses that occur when the requirements of a job do not match the resources, capabilities and needs of the worker"⁽³⁾. Job stress leads to the negative effect on individual physiology, psychology, and behaviors (such as, job performance). Stress is divided into two dimensions: challenge stress, that nurses can overcome it, and use it to develop their career, like: job load, and time urgency, and hindrance stress, that nurses can't overcome it, and negatively affect their career development, like: work insecurity, and role conflict⁽²⁾.

Occupational stress has a financial burden on health care systems, World Health Organization (WHO) estimated the cost of work stress and its related problems about \$ 150 billion annually⁽⁴⁾. Besides that, low job performance and reduced quality of nursing services, affect patient safety⁽³⁾. According to the American Institute of Stress Work, stress is responsible about 80% of work injuries and 40% of workplace turnover⁽⁵⁾. Job or work stress is responsible about 70% of absenteeism,

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and waste about 10% of country gross domestic product. It is estimated that 93% of nurses are under stress factors in their work⁽⁶⁾.

Job performance was defined as “the actions and behaviors of individuals in roles and responsibilities of their work that contribute to organizational goals”⁽³⁾. Developing job performance of nurses leads to organizational success⁽⁷⁾. Occupational stress may be caused by poor management, poor working conditions, and lack of support from supervisors and colleagues, hospitals administrations can be enhanced nurse’s performance by developing strategies to improve work environment that reflect not only on performance of nurses, but also on the quality of nursing services provided⁽⁴⁾.

This review paper aimed to search the impact of occupational stress on the job performance of the nurses.

Method

Search methods: The electronic searching was conducted in a different database: Google scholar, EBSCO, and CINAHL. Key search terms used: nurses, job stress, occupational stress, job performance, and work stress.

The studies that focused on the topic of occupational stress, were published in English between 2015 and 2020 were included in the review. While, studies published before 2015 were excluded.

Search Outcomes: The result of searching literature yields 30 studies for review, 16 studies excluded when reading the title, and 4 studies excluded when reading the abstracts, and 10 studies were included in the review.

Discussion

There are two types of stress which are strongly correlated. The challenge stress is positively associated with job performance and public service motivations (PSM). While, hindrance stress is negatively associated with job performance and public service motivation^(2,8).

A study was conducted to compare if there is a difference between job performance, occupational stress, and the general health between nurses in psychiatric departments and nurses in emergency departments in Milad, Erfanian, Iranian in Tehran, Iran.

The data revealed that job stress, job performance, and general health among nurses in both departments are vary. Psychiatric department nurses job performance, stress, and general health are greater than emergency department nurses, that means psychiatric nurses are more affected⁽¹⁾. Another study was conducted to assess occupational stress, job performance, and job satisfaction in three teaching hospitals. According to study, there is significant inverse relationship between occupational stress and job performance, and job satisfaction. Nurses have moderate level of stress and job satisfaction, and high level of job performance. There is no relation between job satisfaction and job performance. Besides that, male nurses, single nurses, and high educational level have more job satisfaction⁽³⁾.

The effect of occupational stress among nurses is becoming more crucial in pediatric department and neonatal intensive care units. A study assessed the relationship between occupational stress among nurses working in pediatric wards and neonatal intensive care units and job performance. The results showed that all nurses have high level of stress. Lack of aid and resources, work atmosphere in pediatric wards and NICU’s consider high job stressors among nurses, whereas hospital characteristics consider low job stressor. Results also showed no relationship between occupational stressors and nurses job performance in pediatric ward and NICU’s in Khartoum hospitals. Managerial support and behaviors affect job performance⁽⁴⁾.

The relation between job stress and head nurses job performance was also assessed. A study was performed in four hospitals related to MOH in Egypt. The results revealed that most of head nurses (60%) have a high job stress level in terms of: work environment stressors, lack of organizational support, work and education stressors, staff nurse’s stressors, material stressors, work satisfaction, and achievement stressors. Also study showed that the high percentage of head nurses (83.3%) had low job performance, and there was no significant correlation between level of stress of head nurses and their job performance⁽⁷⁾.

In accordance with the aforementioned studies a study examined also the impact of work – related stress on registered nurses’ performance in Katutura State Hospital in Windhoek, Namibia. The researchers

found that about 95% of nurses exposed to the high level of stress. And, they found that work load, staff shortage, lack of participation in decision making, and bad relations with colleagues, lack of training on stress management, absence of leisure time to reduce stress, lack of managerial support, and bad working conditions are the most common stressors⁽⁹⁻¹¹⁾.

In Jordan, a study aimed to assess the relation between job stress that resulting from (family factors, economic factors, peer competition, job difficulty and organizational climate) and nursing performance in King Abdullah Hospital in Irbid, Jordan. The results showed that the organizational climate is the major stressor. Family factors not consider a stressor according to the nurses and affect their job performance, but performance affected by other four stressors as the follow: organizational climate, then economic factors, job difficulty and finally peer competition⁽¹²⁻¹⁷⁾.

The nursing students perceived stress in clinical training was examined. A Jordanian study aimed to assess the relation between nursing students perceived stress in clinical training and their clinical performance, and relation between stress related factors and clinical performance. The researchers conclude that students perceived stress in clinical training is negatively correlated with their clinical performance, and also the stress related to the lack of knowledge and skills, and that related to patient's care are negatively correlated with clinical performance. The study also revealed that the major sources of stress among students are: student's assignments, patient care, teacher and nursing staff, and lack of knowledge and skills, respectively. The mean perceived stress is (45.9%), and mean of student's clinical performance is (73.4%)⁽¹⁸⁾.

In Greece, a study examined the relation between nurse's work stress, caring behaviors of patients, and nurse's health-related quality of life. According to the study, the most common stressors for nurses were: limited knowledge in dealing with death and dying, unable to aid patients and families' emotional needs, conflict with supervisor, and uncertainty with therapeutic effect of management. Also, there is a negative correlation between work stress and all dimensions of caring behaviors inventory. There are certain stress factors that are independent predictor for each CBI dimensions,

such as: conflict with co-worker is independent predictor for affirmation of human presence, and associated with mental health. Discrimination stressor is predictors for quality of life (physical health)⁽⁵⁾.

Conclusion

Nursing is one of the riskiest profession, nurses exposed to the different stressors in their work area, those stressors related to different causes, such as: work environment, co-worker relations, conflict with supervisor, work load, painful situations, lack of knowledge and skills among nurses, lack of support. There is a negative relationship between nursing occupational stress and their job performance, job satisfaction, physical and mental health, quality of life, and positive relationship between job stress and nurses' burnout.

Conflict of Interest: No conflict of interest.

Ethical Clearance: Taken from Princess Salma Faculty of Nursing, AL al-Bayt University ethical committee.

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