



STRESS AS A DETERMINANT: EXPLORING PREDICTORS OF POST-COVID-19 PANDEMIC PROFESSIONAL QUALITY OF LIFE AMONG NURSES

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ABSTRACT

The Covid-19 Pandemic, spanning from 2020 to 2022, ushered in unprecedented challenges for the healthcare system, impacting nurses who played a pivotal role in the global and Indonesian responses. Nurses faced emotional exhaustion, diminished job satisfaction, and suboptimal working conditions, compounded by increased responsibilities and monotony in delivering healthcare services. Objective: This study aimed to identify predictive factors influencing the post-pandemic quality of life among nurses in Padang City hospitals. Utilizing purposive sampling, 88 nurses participated, providing data through a demographic questionnaire, Perceived Stress Scale, and Professional Quality of Life Scale (ProQoL-21). Nurses' quality of life (p-value = 0.000). Conversely, age, gender, tenure, experience in caring for Covid-19 patients, and career level exhibited no significant correlations. The findings underscore the importance of addressing stress as a determinant of nurses' well-being. Care managers at Padang City Hospital can leverage these insights to enhance nurses' quality of life, ultimately optimizing healthcare delivery to the community. This study offers valuable guidance for healthcare management, emphasizing the need to prioritize stress management interventions to bolster the overall effectiveness of nursing care.

Keywords: covid-19; nurses; quality of life; stress

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INTRODUCTION

The temporal span of the Covid-19 pandemic from 2020 to 2022 has presented a formidable challenge to global healthcare entities, including health service institutions and practitioners (WHO, 2020). In the context of non-natural disasters in Indonesia, by December 2021, the recorded incidence encompassed 1.3 million cases. Notably, the zenith of case proliferation transpired in July 2021, where 163 thousand tests were conducted, yielding a diagnosis of Covid-19 in 50 thousand patients with a remarkable positivity rate of 30% (Worlddata, 2022). The exigencies of these circumstances mandate an adaptive response from health service facilities to effectively contend with the challenges posed (González-gil et al., 2021). Notably, Emergency Department and Covid-19 Inpatient Rooms constitute domains susceptible to heightened risks of Covid-19 transmission. This susceptibility is attributed to the coexistence of undiagnosed Covid-19 patients, coupled with a dearth of comprehensive knowledge and information pertaining to disease transmission dynamics. Further compounding the challenge are constraints in resources and facilities available for infection control. Additionally, healthcare professionals contend with elevated workloads, an exigent circumstance amplified during the Covid-19 pandemic (Lockett, Nelson, & Hales, 2021).

Formulating policies about recovery constitutes an integral facet of the responsibilities nurses assume within the ambit of disaster preparedness (Khairina, Nelwati, Maisa, & Rahman, 2023). Noteworthy repercussions experienced by nurses in the course of their duties amid the Covid-19 pandemic encompass fatigue, heightened workloads, stress, burnout, and compassion satisfaction. The depiction of Professional Quality of Life can be delineated by various constituent elements, including compassion satisfaction, burnout, and secondary trauma (Farber, Nursing, & Payton, 2023). Despite these multifaceted impacts, nurses are compelled to uphold professional values, ensuring optimal standards are implemented in delivering services to the community (Jang & Cho, 2022).

Nursing professionals operating within critical domains, characterized by precarious work conditions, exhibit diminished levels of mental well-being, evidenced by elevated rates of depression, burnout, stress, and a decline in overall professional quality of life. Notably, nurses commonly grapple with both physical and emotional fatigue, as underscored by the findings of Cecere Study (Luciano Cecere, Salvatore de Novellis, Agostino Gravante, Giovanni Petrillo, Luigi Pisani, Irene Terrenato, Dhurata Ivziku, Roberto Latina, 2023). Concurrently, research conducted by Zaghini in 2023 posits that nurses engaged in high-pressure environments akin to critical cardiac care units manifest a discernibly lower quality of work life and financial remuneration (Francesco Zaghini, Valentina Biagioli, Jacopo Fiorini, Michela Piredda, Philip Moons, Alessandro Sili, 2023). Providing patient care entails inherent physical and emotional stress, arising from the provision of comfort and support to individuals and families undergoing traumatic experiences, illnesses, and acute crises. From an employer's standpoint, elevated professional quality of life among employees mitigates absenteeism while fostering heightened levels of loyalty and commitment to the organization.

Post-Covid-19 conditions have almost impacted almost 80% of nurses in the world (Martín-rodríguez, García-vivar, Escalada-hernández, & Soto-ruiz, 2022). In Padang City, the post-Covid-19 situation ended on March 2023. With the the change of status Covid-19 from Emerging Infectious Disease to Endemic Disease by the President of Indonesia and Health of Ministry in early 2023, this policy also changed the management of Covid-19 in Padang City. Therefore, this study aimed to identify predictive factors influencing the post-pandemic quality of life among nurses in Padang City hospitals.

METHOD

This study adopts a descriptive-analytical design employing a cross-sectional methodology. It seeks to ascertain the interrelation between independent variables (specifically, nursing work stress, secondary trauma, burnout, and job satisfaction) and dependent variables (namely, the quality of life of professional health workers) concurrently assessed. The study population comprised 103 nurses engaged in healthcare provision at RSUD dr. Rasidin and Andalas University Teaching Hospital were deployed explicitly in the emergency and isolation room settings and served actively during the Covid-19 pandemic. Inclusion criteria necessitated a minimum professional tenure of 6 months in treating Covid-19 patients. Eighty-eight nurses participated in this study based on a minimum sample size. The data acquisition tool employed in this study comprises a questionnaire encompassing demographic variables such as respondent initials, gender, age, education level, length of work, and time spent caring for the covid-19 patients. Additionally, it incorporates the Perceived Stress Scale and Professional Quality of Life (ProQoL-21) components. The Cronchbach Alpha test was used to assess the reliability of the PSS and ProQoL instrument with value 0.81. The Pearson

Correlate test measures the relationship between variables using a ratio measuring scale between the independent and dependent variables.

RESULTS

The findings of this investigation are delineated across two tables. Table 1 elucidates the descriptive outcomes of respondents' demographic data. Table 1 shows data on the characteristics of respondents in this study, namely that 85.2% of respondents were female, more than half of the respondents had a nurse education level (65.9%), and 44.3% had a career path as a clinical nurse. 2. More than half of the respondents had nursing experience. Covid-19 patients in 1 year.

Table 1.
Demographic Data (n= 88)

Variable	f	%
Gender		
Man	13	14.8
Woman	75	85.2
Ages		
20-30	41	46.6
31-45	34	38.7
45 and more	13	14.7
Level of Education		
Vocational Nurse	27	30.7
RN	58	65.9
MNS	2	2.3
Nurse Specialist	1	1.1
Time in caring the Covid-19 patients (in years)		
1 Yr	60	68.2
2 Yr	20	22.7
3 Yr	8	8.1
Career Ladder		
PK-1	38	43.2
PK-2	39	44.3
PK-3	9	10.2
PK-4	2	2.3

Table 2.
Pearson Correlation Test for Factors Predictor Related to the Professional Quality of Life of Nurses who have cared for Covid-19 Patients (n= 88)

Variable	Professional Quality of Life	
	r	P value
Age	- 0.137	0.203
Length of Work	-0.037	0.730

Level of Education	0.065	0.547
Time For Caring Covid-19 Patients	-0.101	0.350
Career Ladder	-0.014	0.898
Work Stress	0.440	0.000

Table 2, a discerning conclusion emerges, highlighting that the stress variable is the sole factor exhibiting a significant association with the quality of life among nurses engaged in the care of Covid-19 patients. This inference is substantiated by a p-value falling below 0.05, thereby supporting the acceptance of the research hypothesis. The computed r value of 0.440 signifies a moderate to robust correlation strength between the stress variable and the quality of life variable, marked by a positive correlation. The positive correlation implies that heightened stress levels correspond to an elevated professional quality of life for nurses in this context.

DISCUSSION

Based on the Pearson test results, data showed a relationship between the stress variable and quality of life with a p value of 0.000. The results of this study show that the stress variable has a direction and strength of 0.440 with quality of life. This is in line with Zhagini's research in 2023 that nurses working in critical care areas have higher stress levels than other areas (Francesco Zaghini, Valentina Biagioli, Jacopo Fiorini, Michela Piredda, Philip Moons, Alessandro Sili, 2023). This condition is similar to Cecere's research in 2023 which showed that stress factors could affect the quality of life of nurses by as much as 21% (Luciano Cecere, Salvatore de Novellis, Agostino Gravante, Giovanni Petrillo, Luigi Pisani, Irene Terrenato, Dhurata Ivziku, Roberto Latina, 2023).

Professional quality of life describes the level of satisfaction and effectiveness of nurses in carrying out their duties. One of the impacts of Covid-19 on nurses while on duty is that the uncertainty regarding clinical symptoms and the spread of the disease makes nurses anxious (Khairina, Maisa, Nelwati, & Rahman, 2023). Several things can trigger stress when caring for Covid-19 patients, apart from the virus itself, but also concerns about spreading Covid-19 when finished working are another stress trigger (Du, Zhang, Huang, & Wang, 2023). Remegio found that there was a significant difference between compensation satisfaction and burnout but not secondary traumatic stress (Remegio, Rivera, Griffin, & Fitzpatrick, 2021). The stress and anxiety conditions experienced by nurses also affect the quality of their sleep (Liu et al., 2022). This will, of course, impact the health and comfort level in the work environment. This research shows that work stress is one of the dominant factors in shaping nurses' professional quality of life after the pandemic. This work stress can cause burnout in nurses. This condition should be managed well by the organization so that it does not have an impact on services to the community (Ruiz-Fernandez et al., 2021). Social support is the key for nurses in order to minimize the burnout.

Leadership in the workplace environment and recuperation duration have been identified as fundamental elements contributing to attaining a favorable professional quality of life. Collaborative engagement among colleagues and avenues for reflective practices within the professional setting are underscored as noteworthy contributors to the overall well-being of professionals. Post-work shift reflection significantly enhances the well-being of midwives experiencing elevated levels of burnout and compassion satisfaction (Blixt, Johansson, Forsner, & Angelhoff, 2023). Nurse leaders have an important role in an organization. The vision and optimism of a nurse leader can influence the quality, safety, access, availability, and influence efficiency of creating a good care environment (Remegio et al., 2021). Moral conflicts arise when professionals encounter impediments in pursuing actions aligned with

their ethical judgments of what is deemed good and right. Such conflicts have the potential to adversely affect the capacity to deliver compassionate care, as evidenced by collaborative efforts among colleagues and conducive opportunities. Additionally, the study underscores the significance of collegial support, as emphasized in open responses, which has been demonstrated to mitigate moral stress experienced by nurses specializing in pediatric oncology (Valizadeh, Zamanzadeh, Namdar, Avazeh, & Babaei, 2023).

However, health workers can take several approaches to face the crisis, which the organization can manage. One of them is Zaghini's research, which suggests that regularly identifying staffing and nurses' workload by organizations can reduce the crisis nurses face (Zaghini, Fiorini, Livigni, Carrabs, & Sili, 2021). Tang (2024) has research that nurses in the Emergency Room (ER) who stated that organizational support was needed in shaping the professional quality of life of nurses (Tang, Wang, & Tang, 2024). Organizational support is also very strongly related to the emergence of burnout by nurses. Nurses' professional quality of life also correlates with the well-being they feel.

The study in China showed that during the Covid-19 pandemic, nurses had moderate to high levels of compassion satisfaction, low to moderate levels of burnout, and low to high levels of secondary traumatic stress. Based on Jiang's research in 2021, this condition can be overcome with efforts from organizations (hospitals) to optimize nurses' professional quality of life by optimizing interpersonal collaboration between nurses and doctors, and intraprofessional collaboration with colleagues (Jiang et al., 2021). The research by Tehranineshat in 2020 showed that one of the variables that influences the quality of professional life is the professional values of nurses. The study also states that applying professional values can resolve problems more quickly, resolve conflicts, and improve the quality of care services to patients. Therefore, the optimization of professional values can also be determined by the organization's ethical climate (Tehranineshat, Torabizadeh, & Bijani, 2020).

CONCLUSION

In addition, stress management protocols can be designed by the case manager so that when stress screening occurs among nurses, preventive protocols regarding increased stress can be controlled so that, even though the stress value increases due to work. Nurses can still have a good quality of life. Nurse leaders have a strategic role in developing the organization to make healthier ethic climate for nurses and other health workers.

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