



NURSES' SELF-MANAGEMENT EXPERIENCES IN MANAGING COVID-19 PATIENTS: A SCIENTIFIC PERSPECTIVE

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ABSTRACT

The Covid-19 pandemic has placed unprecedented demands on healthcare systems worldwide, with nurses bearing a significant portion of the burden. This paper explores the self-management experiences of nurses working directly with Covid-19 patients. This study aims to examine and understand the self-management experience of nurses, explore its impact on their performance and well-being, and provide insights to enhance future nursing practices and healthcare policies. Through a review of existing literature and qualitative analysis, the study identifies key strategies used by nurses to maintain their physical and mental well-being amidst the challenges of the pandemic. The findings highlight the importance of time management, stress management, self-care, and social support systems in enabling nurses to sustain their roles effectively during the crisis.

Keywords: covid-19; nurses; self management

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INTRODUCTION

The Covid-19 pandemic has drastically altered the landscape of healthcare delivery, particularly for nurses, who are on the front lines of patient care. The intense workload, risk of infection, and emotional toll have underscored the necessity of self-management as a critical skill for nurses. This study seeks to analyze the self-management strategies employed by nurses and their effectiveness in mitigating the challenges associated with caring for Covid-19 patients. In December 2019, a cluster of pneumonia of unknown origin was identified in Wuhan City, Hubei Province, China (Spiteri et al., 2020). On 12 January 2020, the Chinese authorities published a novel coronavirus sequence, designated severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2). It is thought that the virus originated from a zoonotic transmission, or more likely, from animals at the Huanan Seafood Wholesale Market in Wuhan, from where it was transmitted to humans (European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control, 2020). Subsequently, the virus has disseminated rapidly across the globe, including in Indonesia.

The first case of two Indonesian citizens confirmed to be infected with Corona Virus Disease 2019 (Covid-19) was found in Depok (Nuraini, 2020). Both patients had a history of contact with Japanese citizens who had previously been declared infected with Covid-19. Therefore, the patients were immediately admitted to the isolation room of RSPI Dr. Sulianti Saroso, Jakarta. Since the first case was found, the virus has spread rapidly throughout Indonesia. According to data from Tim Komunikasi Komite Penanganan Corona Virus Disease 2019 (Covid-19) dan Pemulihan Ekonomi Nasional (2020), 743,198 people were confirmed positive for Covid-19, 22,133 people died, and 611,097 people recovered as of December 31, 2020. According to Tim Penyakit Infeksi Emerging (2024), 3,519,522 people were confirmed

positive for Covid-19, 121,956 people were declared dead, and 3,503,237 people were declared cured as of December 31, 2021. While as per December 31, 2022, as many as 2,457,095 people were confirmed positive for Covid-19, as many as 16,518 people were declared dead, and as many as 2,424,998 people were declared cured. As for December 31, 2023, as many as 101,676 people were confirmed positive for Covid-19, as many as 1,359 people were declared dead, and as many as 102,963 people were declared cured.

Nursing is a profession that plays a significant role in enhancing the quality of services provided. It is a vital component of healthcare facilities due to the relatively larger number of nurses compared to other health workers (Friandani, 2021). Nurses assume the role of care providers due to their continuous involvement in patient care, which often extends beyond traditional working hours. During the Covid-19 pandemic, nurses are directly involved in patient care so nurses face many challenges. All nurses have sacrificed personal and family interests to provide care for Covid-19 and Non-Covid-19 patients. Not a few nurses experience fatigue both physically and mentally. Many pressures are experienced, such as the use of complete Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), including masks, goggles, hazmat, hair cap gloves, aprons, and safety shoes for 3-4 hours. According to the results of research conducted by the Master of Occupational Medicine Study Program, Faculty of Medicine University of Indonesia in (Indryan & Suhana, 2022), 83% of nurses in Indonesia have experienced moderate and severe levels of psychological burnout. This is because some nurses work with double jobs or double the usual daily workload, especially those in charge of the Emergency Department (ED). The nurses in double job conditions can work from 07.00-20.00 WIB, which means the nurses work 2 shifts or 13 hours. According to , the shift pattern of nurses working for 12 hours without a break will adversely affect the health of nurses because they bear excessive workload, experience fatigue, experience stress and psychological disorders. Research on nurses' self-management experiences in caring for Covid-19 patients shows the importance of good organization in supporting nurses to face challenges during the pandemic. This study aims to explore the challenges nurses face, including how time management, stress management, self-care, and social support can affect job satisfaction, stress reduction, and effectiveness in providing care. This research aims to improvement of a better system to support nurses in crisis situations such as the Covid-19 pandemic.

METHOD

This study utilized a qualitative approach, analyzing interviews and surveys conducted with nurses who have been directly involved in the care of Covid-19 patients. The number of samples in this study amounted to 18 people. Data was collected from multiple sources, including peer-reviewed articles, hospital reports, and firsthand accounts from nurses. Thematic analysis was used to identify common self-management strategies and their outcomes. The requisite data was gathered through the use of in-depth interviews, conducted with each respondent individually, in order to ensure the safety and comfort of the participants. All conversations were recorded and subsequently transcribed. From the transcripts, coding was performed, with similarly coded segments grouped together into categories, which were then processed into themes. The data analysis was conducted with the assistance of the NVivo application.

RESULTS

The analysis revealed four primary self-management strategies employed by nurses during the pandemic:

1. **Time Management and Prioritization:** Nurses reported the need to carefully manage their time, balancing the demands of patient care with personal needs. Effective time management allowed them to maintain productivity and reduce the risk of burnout.
2. **Stress Management Techniques:** Nurses utilized various stress management techniques, such as mindfulness practices, deep breathing exercises, and peer support groups. These methods were essential in maintaining mental clarity and emotional stability.
3. **Self-care Practices:** Regular physical exercise, adequate sleep, and nutritional awareness were identified as key self-care practices. Nurses emphasized the importance of recognizing early signs of fatigue and taking proactive measures to address them.
4. **Social Support Networks:** The presence of strong support systems, including family, friends, and professional colleagues, played a critical role in helping nurses cope with the challenges of the pandemic. Peer support, in particular, was noted as a vital resource for emotional resilience.

DISCUSSION

The findings of this study align with existing literature on the importance of self-management in nursing. The ability to effectively manage time, stress, and self-care, supported by robust social networks, has proven to be essential in sustaining nurses' performance during the Covid-19 pandemic. The results of research conducted by Miljeteig et al. (2021), revealed that as many as 67% of 1606 respondents experienced a priority setting dilemma during the first two weeks of Covid-19. Managing time and balancing patient care, control procedures, and infection needs is very important because time constraints can cause additional pressure which results in reduced nurse effectiveness. Therefore, training is needed to balance the task of caring for patients and nurses' personal needs. Research conducted by Kang et al. (2022) identified that educational needs and analyzing the priority of educational content are important. If time management is well managed and prioritization supports nurses' readiness, it will create efficiency and adequate preparation, better quality of care, and management of workload is not exhausting.

During the Covid-19 pandemic, nurses are at high risk of experiencing stress due to high workload, facing death, risk of infection, and a decrease in job satisfaction (Kurniawan et al., 2021). This is in line with research conducted by Sockalingam et al. (2020) revealed that 84.5% of 426 nurses felt increased stress at work, 75.2% felt fear of infecting others, and 59.7% of nurses accepted work-related risks during the pandemic. The results of research conducted by Zhang et al. (2020), revealed that the triggers of a nurse's stress are due to homesickness, longer working hours, and depersonalization. According to Matarese in (Brouwer et al., 2021), self-care is a process that involves the maintenance of mental, physical, social, and spiritual aspects by individuals, with the aim of improving personal well-being. Self-care is not a selfish act, but smart because a nurse's self-care will avoid frustration, and chronic fatigue which will also have an impact on patients (Hossain & Clatty, 2020). Nurses face difficulties maintaining a balance in self-care especially when experiencing stress (Williams et al., 2022). Recognizing early signs of fatigue such as excessive stress, lack of concentration, and decreased energy will encourage nurses to be able to practice self-care such as physical exercise, adequate sleep, and nutritional awareness. Thus, self-care is not only seen as an individual responsibility, but also as an important factor in maintaining professional performance and quality of care in the workplace.

Social support can be provided by family members, co-workers, and organizational members. Social support helps in fighting the stress of carrying out work and work-related problems. According to Kılınç & Sis Çelik (2021), nurses should determine nurses' social support

resources, especially during epidemic periods to increase nurses' psychological resilience. The results of this study revealed that peer support is essential for emotional resilience. This is also in line with research conducted by Sahay & Wei (2022), that nurses prefer support from peers because they rely on each other, provide explicit support, share emotions, calm each other when the family avoids for fear of infection. Positive support from peers is also very important to overcome stress because it can express work-related problems and solve problems together in the workplace (Morgan, 2020). However, the study also highlights the need for institutional support, including access to mental health resources and adequate staffing, to further enhance nurses' self-management capacities.

CONCLUSION

Self-management is a critical competency for nurses, particularly in the context of the Covid-19 pandemic. The strategies identified in this study—time management, stress management, self-care, and social support—have been instrumental in enabling nurses to fulfill their roles effectively despite the numerous challenges. As the pandemic continues to evolve, it is imperative that healthcare institutions prioritize the development and support of self-management skills among nursing staff to ensure the sustainability of high-quality patient care.

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