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Assessment of nurses professional self-care behaviors in Al Najaf City Hospitals

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Abstract

In the health care system, self-care is a major concept, the core of professional work, and a global language. It is also described as "making decisions about activities that balance the consequences of emotional and physical pressures, like exercising and eating a healthy diet. One strategy to improve compassion satisfaction and lessen burnout and compassion fatigue in the healthcare industry may be to encourage self-care. Authors and service providers have created many recommendations for self-care techniques.

Study Design: The objective of the current investigation are accomplished by using a descriptive (cross-sectional) study design. The study was began from 18/10/2022 – 11/5/2023.

Study Sample: The current study utilized a convenience (non-probability) study sample of 212 nurses.

Study Setting: The research is carried out in Al-Najaf City/Al-Najaf Al-Ashraf Health Directorate / Al-Sader Teaching H, Al-Hakeem H, Al-Zahraa Teaching H, Al-Najaf Teaching H, and Al-Forat Teaching H.

Results: Study results presented that the overall assessment of the Nurses' Behavior toward self-care is moderate.

Conclusion: Despite the strong focus on self-care in the last years for healthcare providers, essentially for nurses as the biggest group, it has been ignored in recent studies. This study has indicated clearly that the overall mean of the nurses' behavior towards professional self-care is moderate.

Keywords: Professional, self-care, behavior, health care system, professional work

Introduction

In the health care system, self-care is a major concept, the core of professional work, and a global language ^[1]. Self-care can simply be defined as an individual taking care of him or herself ^[2], has also been defined as "choosing behaviors that balance the effects of emotional and physical stressors: Exercising, eating nutritious foods, getting enough sleep, practicing yoga, meditation, mindfulness, relaxation techniques, abstaining from substance abuse, and pursuing creative outlets" ^[3].

With the quick alteration of the health care providing system, attention to self-care is increasing within medical and nursing areas. Norcross & VandenBos (2018) said that "self-care is not a narcissistic luxury to be fulfilled as time permits; it is a human requisite, a clinical necessity, and an ethical imperative" ^[4]. Self-care is also one method for reducing, controlling, and managing stress among healthcare professionals. As a result, self-care helps both healthcare workers and patients. Healthcare providers must comprehend the concept of self-care for their benefit as well as for the benefit of their patients ^[1].

We cannot help others or avert damage unless we first take care of ourselves. Health-care providers self-care is an essential precondition for taking care of the patient. In other words, self-care is an ethical requirement, a moral obligation, and not just a personal matter, indulgence, or choice, but a professional responsibility ^[4].

Self-care promotion may be one way to enhance compassion satisfaction and lowering burnout as well as compassion fatigue in HCPs, and several authors have contributed to proposing strategies for self-care. Adapting work environments rather than accepting them as they are, building up a pleasant and supportive social network, seeking personal and professional equilibrium, getting adequate sleep, and eating healthy, are examples of suggestions for self-care that the authors have developed.

As well as, taking a comprehensive approach to handling job stress and participating in self-care practices that meeting emotional, physical, social, spiritual, cognitive, and occupational needs. Finally, one of the authors set many successful methods for self-care used by nurses who work in hospices, such as problem-solving with a plan and asking for support. Due to the stress caused by their work, it is recommended that HCPs build and maintain efficient self-care strategies that handle many elements of their professional and personal life, as stated above [5].

Concerning Workplace or Professional Self-Care, occupational stress is not confined to any one certain professional group but is especially common among the assisting professions and nurses. Nurses working in acute care hospitals and similar environments are frequently exposed to high workload stressors, organizational change, unrealistic patient expectations, patient trauma, and patient distress. Such stressors can take a high emotional and professional impact among healthcare professional and nurses and can lead to the acute condition known as compassion fatigue [6].

Importance of the study

Fulfillment a healthy occupation-life equilibrium is critical to professional self-care. This involves setting boundaries between work and personal life, prioritizing self-care activities outside of work, and finding a balance that allows you to take care of both your professional and personal responsibilities. This includes advocating for a positive work culture that promotes occupation-life equilibrium, acknowledges and honors accomplishments while also providing chances for growth and development [7]. So, the goal of professional self-care is to control or avoid occupational pressures and stresses, lower the risk of burnout and other work environment hazards, and improve work productivity and satisfaction [8].

So, the current study aims to assess the nurses' professional self-care behaviors in Al Najaf city hospitals.

Methodology

Study Design: The objective of the current investigation are accomplished by using a descriptive (cross-sectional) study design. The study was started from 18/10/2022 – 11/5/2023.

Administrative Agreements: Before conducting the study, the researcher obtains permission from the Fundamentals of Nursing Branch in the Faculty of Nursing / University of Kufa. Moreover, permission is attained from Al-Najaf Al-Ashraf Health Directorate/ Al-Sader Teaching H, Al-Hakeem H, Al-Zahraa Teaching H, Al-Najaf Teaching H, and Al-Forat Teaching H (Appendix-B), in order to conduct interviews with each study sample. After obtaining permission to participate in the study, the consent made it simple to arrive at the institutions and interview the nurses to gather the essential data.

Study Setting: The research is carried out in Al-Najaf City/Al-Najaf Al-Ashraf Health Directorate / Al-Sader Teaching Hospital, Al-Hakeem H, Al-Zahraa Teaching Hospital, Al-Najaf Teaching Hospital, and Al-Forat Teaching Hospital.

Sample of the Study: The current study utilized a convenience (non-probability) study sample of 212 nurses.

Instrument of the Study: A questionnaire was utilized for assessing the nurses' professional self-care behaviors in Al Najaf city hospitals. The eventual study instrument included two parts, which were as follows.

Part I: Characteristics of Demographic Data

This part is dealing with the gathering of essential demographic data, which include (age, gender, number of service years, weight, and level of education, chronic diseases, marital status, and smoking).

Part II: Questionnaire of Professional self-care behaviors

This part of the assessment tool consists of (10) items, to assess the nurses' professional self-care behaviors in Al Najaf city hospitals. This items include taking a break during the workday (e.g. Lunch), making time to chat with my co-workers, set aside quiet time to get things done, identifying projects or tasks that are exciting and rewarding, setting limits with your clients and colleagues, balancing the caseload so that no one day or part of a day is "too much", arranging the work space so it is comfortable and comforting, getting regular supervision or consultation, negotiate needs (Such As: Benefits or a Wage Increase), and participate in continuing education and vocational training.

Scoring

Each item requisite was rated on 4 point Likert scale ranging from 1-5 as follows

5 = Frequently

4 = Occasionally

3 = Rarely

2 = Never

1 = It never occurred to me

Method of Collection Data

Data were gathered through the use of the English version of the developed assessment tool and the use of an individual interview with each sample of the study through the application of the structured interview technique, where each of the study samples was interviewed in a similar manner and the same place and with the same assessment tool for all subjects included in the study sample.

Statistical analysis

Data of the current study are analyzed by using the application of the "Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS)" Version (19).

The following statistical tests are used to assess and analyze the data of the present study.

- Frequency
- Percentage
- Standard deviation
- Mean of score
- ANOVA

Study Results and Findings

Table 1: Summary of the statistical distribution for nurses according to their demographic characteristics

Demographic characteristics	Rating and interval	Freq.	%
Age	<= 30	170	80.2
	31 - 40	24	11.3
	41+	18	8.5
Gender	Male	85	40.1
	Female	127	59.9
Number of service years	<= 5	135	63.7
	6 - 11	48	22.6
	12+	29	13.7
Weight (kg)	<= 63	81	38.2
	64 - 82	94	44.3
	83+	37	17.5
Level of Education	Nursing high school	52	24.5
	Diploma in Nursing	76	35.8
	BSc in Nursing	78	36.8
	MSc or PhD in Nursing	6	2.8
Marital Status	Single	92	43.4
	Married	112	52.8
	Divorce	4	1.9
	Widower	4	1.9

Table (1) represents the statistical summary of the study sample demographic data. The findings of the presented study showed that (80.2%) of the nurses participating in the study are less than 30 years old, (59.9%) female, (63.7%) with service years less than 5 years, (44.3%) with body weight range between 64-82 kg. In addition, the level of education for most of study sample range between Diploma in Nursing (35.8%) and BSc in Nursing (36.8%). Also, the results revealed that (52.8%) of nurses included in the study are married.

Table (2) demonstrate that the overall mean of the nurses' behavior towards the workplace or professional self-care is

moderate at mean score equal to (3.37).

Table 2: Overall Assessment of nurses' behavior toward workplace or professional self-care

Levels	Freq.	%	MS.	Asses.
It never occurred to me	5	2.4	3.37	Moderate
Never	27	12.7		
Rarely	67	31.6		
Occasionally	82	38.7		
Frequently	31	14.6		

Freq: Frequency; MS: Mean of Scores; Poor: MS = 1-2.33; Moderate: MS = 2.34-3.66; Good: MS 3.67-5.

Table 3: The relationship between the nurses' professional self-care behaviors and their demographic characteristics

Demographic Characteristics	Rating and interval	MS	SD.	F	P-value
Age	<= 30	3.43	0.80	2.34	0.10
	31 - 40	3.09	0.68		
	41+	3.22	0.61		
Gender	Male	3.38	0.75	0.00	0.94
	Female	3.37	0.80		
Number of service years	<= 5	3.42	0.76	3.11	0.05*
	6 - 11	3.44	0.78		
	12+	3.04	0.80		
Weight	<= 63	3.41	0.75	0.41	0.67
	64-82	3.37	0.77		
	83+	3.27	0.86		
Level of Education	Nursing high school	3.34	0.84	0.11	0.96
	Diploma in Nursing	3.41	0.77		
	BSc in Nursing	3.35	0.77		
	MSc or PhD in Nursing	3.33	0.34		
Marital Status	Single	3.29	0.78	1.72	0.16
	Married	3.43	0.77		
	Divorce	2.93	0.96		
	Widower	3.95	0.52		

* Significant at p-value less than or equal to 0.05

Table (3) explains that the relationship between overall scores of nurses' professional self-care behaviors and the number of service years is a significant relationship with a p-value equal to (0.05), While there is no significant relationship with all other nurses' demographic data at p-value > (0.05).

Discussion of the study results

Self-care practice as a nurse is not a new notion, but it is often ignored by nurses throughout a hectic day working in a fast-paced climate. Blum (2014) addresses the significance of self-care, reminding us that we must compensate with personal, physical, mental, social, and psychological care either before or after work. If we disregard this critical

counsel, we may become patients in need of specific care [9]. The results of the current study presented that the overall mean of the nurses' behavior towards the professional self-care is moderate and showed that the less number of service years are significant relationship with nurses professional self-care behavior. Our results may be interpreted it the fewer years of service will have a passion for the job, vital energy and activity without getting bored. And it may be that after new appointment whoever studied it, applies it, this finding is validated by Kravits *et al.*, (2010) who have reported that ≤ 5 years consist of 29% of their study sample [10].

Conclusion

Despite the strong focus on self-care in the last years for healthcare providers, essentially for nurses as the biggest group, it has been ignored in recent studies. This study has indicated clearly that the overall mean of the nurses' behavior towards professional self-care is moderate.

Conflict of Interest

Not available

Financial Support

Not available

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