

Stress Levels and Burnout Syndrome in High Acuity Nursing:

Literature Review

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High acuity clients are clients who require more intense and focused care. High acuity clients are clients with aggressive illnesses, intense trauma, or severe mental health diseases. High acuity clients suffer from higher mortality rates in comparison to the general hospital population. This analysis discusses the risk of increased stress and prevalence of burnout syndrome and the eventual outcomes for nurses that provide care to high acuity clients based on their levels of stress and risk for burnout syndrome.

Nurses that provide care to high acuity clients are more likely to suffer from higher stress levels and are at risk for high levels of burnout syndrome. Burnout syndrome is the stress associated with the workplace and leads to increased exhaustion and decreased feeling of accomplishment when finishing tasks within the person's area of work. One's inability to have control over specific areas of their work (schedule, workload, patient outcomes), intense work environment, and increased pressure to perform well and work-life imbalance can cause burnout syndrome in nurses (Scott, 2020). When a nurse lacks control over important aspects of his/her career, they are subject to more conflicts in the workplace. Nurses can feel as though their workload is too much, or that they disagree with the schedule given to them, and the amount of work they have is outside of what the nurse can handle. Specifically, for nurses and other care providers, this can lead the provider to believe that they are not able to give sufficient care to all of their clients due to the overwhelming amount of work they have, leading to higher amounts of stress at work. Higher amounts of stress at work can develop into higher amounts of stress outside of work due to poor stress management, accompanied by one's inability to separate their work from the rest of their life (*Know the signs of job burnout* 2018). High levels of stress will

lead to increased burnout in care providers due to their inability to control the outcomes of their high acuity patients, who tend to suffer from high mortality rates because of their conditions. Burnout can lead to high turnover rates within healthcare, which is what happens when care providers give up their jobs in high acuity divisions of a hospital for other jobs.

Risk of Burnout Syndrome in Mental Health Nurses

Risk of Burnout Syndrome in Mental Health Nurses is an article that evaluates the risk that mental health nurses have in developing burnout syndrome due to the care that they are providing and the type of workplace environment of which they work. This research evaluates 31 mental health nurses from Brazil. Questionnaires are the primary source of information, including sociodemographic information and organizational factors, which predict the likelihood of the nurses experiencing burnout. Sociodemographic information is the age, race, income, and education of the nurses (Azevedo et al., 2019). Nurses that tend to work more hours while getting paid less are more likely to suffer from burnout syndrome than their counterparts who work less or receive more income for their work.

Key Points

This research looked at three areas of mentality that can lead to burnout, including emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and personal achievement. The research finds that around 61% of the subjects suffered from low emotional exhaustion, while around 39% suffered from medium to high personal exhaustion. For depersonalization, around 65% experienced low depersonalization, while 35% experienced medium to high depersonalization. 52% experienced

low to medium personal achievement, while 48% experienced high personal achievement. This experiment also found that young, single, and childless females were more likely to experience burnout syndrome or were at higher risk of developing burnout syndrome than their coworkers (Azevedo et al., 2019). The evidence shows that while most of the sample group is not currently experiencing burnout, around 48% of them are at risk for developing burnout syndrome.

Assumptions

This article assumes that burnout is a prevalent issue within high acuity care, like mental health, where clients suffer from more extreme chronic conditions that are not easily treatable. The article also questions how the nurse's workplace treats employees, asking questions like "Do the activities I perform require more time than I have on a workday?" and "Do the institutions where I work recognize and reward employees for accurate diagnostics and care and procedures?" (Azevedo et al., 2019). These questions assume a potential risk for mistreatment of employees, or that the workplace does not recognize and reward employees for doing their jobs well. These questions, while they provide useful insight into what can potentially cause burnout syndrome, can raise suspicion about potential biases that the research may have had to go into the experiment.

Deficit/Conclusion

Of the 31 mental health nurses in the study, around 48% of them were at high risk for developing burnout syndrome. Those who are at risk for burnout syndrome tend to experience symptoms of irritability, little to no appetite or overeating, fatigue, and loss of sexual desire.

Those who received no reward or recognition for their excellent work and felt unappreciated by their employer were more likely to experience burnout syndrome than their coworkers who received regular recognition and reward and felt as though their superiors validated their efforts for the mental health institution in which they worked. For better, more precise results, a longitudinal study would be ideal in discovering the long-term effects of the specified work condition and how the test subjects handle those as time progresses (Azevedo et al., 2019).

References

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