

**Experiences of Nurses Working with COVID-19 Patients: A qualitative study: Quality**

**Improvement**

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## **Experiences of Nurses Working with COVID-19 Patients: A qualitative study: Quality Improvement**

*Quality improvement* is the foundation used to systematically improve and monitor outcomes of care processes (QSEN Institute, 2020). The *quality improvement* improves patient outcomes, professional development, and system performance (Backhouse & Ogunlayi, 2020). Knowledge related to *quality improvement* describes the strategies for learning about care outcomes in clinical practice and how nurses and healthcare professionals are part of the care outcomes that affect patients and families (QSEN Institute, 2020). Skills related to quality improvement seek information about care outcomes for specific populations (QSEN Institute, 2020). Flow charts, diagrams, and quality measures help understand variation and performance (QSEN Institute, 2020). Attitudes reflected on *quality improvement* help understand the importance of *quality improvement* and how it is an essential part of patient care (QSEN Institute, 2020). This study explored the psychological, social, and physiological impact that COVID-19 had on nurses. This study aims to inform, educate, and reduce the stigmatization of nurses who work in pandemic clinics.

### **Article Summary**

#### **Introduction**

As frontline healthcare professionals, nurses faced direct exposure to the COVID-19 virus. This study aimed to explore and understand nurses' experiences and challenges while working in pandemic clinics during the COVID-19 pandemic (Akkuş et al., 2022). This qualitative study conducted mobile application interviews through Whatsapp with 19 nurses who worked in pandemic clinics in Turkey (Akkuş et al., 2022). The study data was interpreted using thematic analysis according to specific themes by the researchers (Akkuş et al., 2022). The

article discusses the psychological, social, and physiological distress that the COVID-19 pandemic had on nurses.

### **Overview**

The study emphasizes the impact of COVID-19 on nurses psychologically, socially, and physiologically (Akkuş et al., 2022). Financial and moral support for nurses working during a pandemic needs improvement, as seen by the negative impact COVID-19 has on nurses' mental health. In order to reduce the stigmatization of nursing working in pandemic clinics, it is necessary to inform the public of the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on mental health (Akkuş et al., 2022). Improving working conditions would benefit the fight against the pandemic and better the mental health of healthcare professionals who work during the pandemic. This study relates to the QSEN competency of *Quality Improvement* by exploring the psychological distress associated with nurses who worked during the COVID-19 pandemic. With the collected data, researchers concluded that interventions to help boost nurses' psychological and physiological well-being are recommended (Akkuş et al., 2022).

### **Quality Improvement**

The article suggests that nurses working in pandemic clinics in Turkey have been affected psychologically, socially, and physiologically (Akkuş et al., 2022). Exhaustion, burnout, and stigmatization are the commonly experienced emotions during the pandemic (Akkuş et al., 2022). Interventions and easily accessible resources for mental health care are crucial. *Quality Improvement*, such as the interventions and the necessary resources for mental health care for nurses, can be implemented in hospital and home care settings. The pre-implementation stage would involve having the institution approve of the change in the hospital or home care setting. Necessary financials are crucial for this *quality improvement* change, and all staff must be aware

of the situation. The intra-implementation stage involves making sure that the implementation change that is in effect is functional and beneficial. A nurse manager can assist any staff who has questions regarding the implementation. The post-implementation stage can involve annual evaluations about the implementation change regarding the accessibility of mental health resources, improving financial resources, and how these changes affect nurse burnout and the stigmatization of working in pandemic situations. The suggested change will affect the financials of the hospital or business, as improvements in financials will provide psychological reinforcement for nurses during the COVID-19 pandemic (Akkuş et al., 2022). With the implementation of the suggested change, patient and nursing satisfaction will improve patient and nursing safety. Access to psychological reinforcement for nurses will improve the overall well-being of the nurse, therefore better nurse-patient interactions and improved patient care.

### **Application to Nursing**

#### **Practice**

The concern for a nurse's mental health is crucial. The best practice is learning coping behaviors, reflecting overall nursing care to patients. Altruistic behaviors have also been deemed beneficial for nurses and their mental health during the COVID-19 pandemic. Altruistic behaviors, such as working or volunteering in pandemic clinics and selflessly performing tasks not associated with a nurse's job description, have also proved beneficial for overall mental health (Akkuş et al., 2022). Nursing practices also include preventative measures. Preventative measures included nurses moving to different living locations due to exposure from people in their households (Akkuş et al., 2022). This preventative measure helped decrease the infection risk that nurses may put on patients due to exposure from outside sources (Akkuş et al., 2022).

#### **Education**

Guidelines for educating nursing staff about protection and coping behaviors are vital for the mental health of nurses working in pandemic clinics. The rapid spread of COVID-19 has made it essential for nurses to use PPE (Akkuş et al., 2022). Proper PPE use and guidelines are recommended and taught to nurses and professional medical workers during the pandemic. N95 masks, protective goggles, and face shields have become more prevalent during the COVID-19 pandemic (Akkuş et al., 2022). Education on coping behaviors improves nurses' overall mental health, nursing practice, and patient care.

### **Research**

Priorities for further study include conducting qualitative studies about the COVID-19 pandemic. These findings can help provide information for future pandemics and the guidance necessary to manage this situation (Akkuş et al., 2022). Aside from aiding in future pandemics, further research on nurses who work in pandemic clinics should be studied to provide essential psychological support for these nurses. Implementing reformative and feasible health policies to cope with anxiety, fear, and mental fatigue is deemed beneficial for the overall mental health of nurses working during the COVID-19 pandemic (Akkuş et al., 2022). Further research is also needed to reduce the burnout that nurses experience while working in pandemic clinics.

### **Conclusion**

The purpose of *quality improvement*, specifically the knowledge, skills, and attitude/behaviors, emphasizes the importance and improvement of patient outcomes (Backhouse & Ogunlayi, 2020). Strategies for learning, exploring the necessary information, and attitudes reflected on *quality improvement* are essential for patient care and help improve aid care-related outcomes (QSEN Institute, 2020). Nurses caring for COVID-19 patients have been psychologically, socially, and physiologically affected. Mental health was hugely impacted by

nurses worldwide during the COVID-19 pandemic. Stigmatization, exhaustion, and burnout were a few challenges that nurses also had to deal with while working in pandemic clinics (Akkuş et al., 2022). Improvements in financial and moral support would provide the necessary resources for nurses during the COVID-19 pandemic. Improving the working conditions for nurses would aid in the battle against future pandemics and overall mental health.

### References

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