

Nursing in Covid-19 Era

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A new Globally, healthcare systems have faced the worst pandemic of the modern culture. Covid-19 pandemic challenged these systems and their health workers, unprecedentedly. Healthcare systems were under pressure, stretching to their limits and increasing health employees' stress and anxiety levels. Healthcare employees' -on the front line of Covid-19 - physical and mental well-being have been influenced^[1].

Governments have made major efforts to support the medical and nursing staff in all healthcare systems, through the reduction of work, providing protective equipment for the employees and providing mental health protection.^[2]

This pandemic has challenged the Nursing care in every healthcare system, having impact on their professional and personal relations. The increased mortality rates, the loss of colleagues and the new work demand have enhanced work-related stress and anxiety levels, being a mental burden for nurses. Specifically, nurses working in Emergency Departments and Critical Care Units were more vulnerable in this challenging period. Nurses in these departments have to cope with demanding tasks, the short of supplies and equipment in some cases. By all means, nurses in all departments dealt with Covid-19 and difficult situations during the hospitalization of patients^[3].

The effect of nursing staff's experience, who responds to Covid-19, has not only short-term impacts, but also long-term ones, showing that the support, education and training is of major importance in this era. All around the world, nurses have expressed their feelings for this unknown virus. An Italian Nurse felt that this period was compared to a world war; doing their best for their patients. Nurses have stayed committed to their oath, trying their best and putting themselves into danger to save human

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lives. They are staying away from their families, being unable to hug their children or their spouses. These situations have burdened their mental health, especially if Covid-19 pandemic keeps holding, nurses would need support for these extreme circumstances^[4]. Nurses stand by their patients and they are next to patients' battles against many diseases being fought and rejoice at the greatest wins. They are witnesses to suffering and great pain, as well as the grief of those who stay behind. Across the world, colleagues dealt with death, such as in Italy and the United States of America, feeling mentally exhausted and distressed. Nursing staff has increased workload and new tasks, being on the front line.

In a recent study of Tu et al., 2020, in Wuhan, nurses have coped with sleep problems, depression and increased stress levels, during pandemic. Depression symptoms have correlated with anxiety symptoms, which have related with poor sleep quality^[5].

Nowadays, nursing staff has to deal with new protocols and guidelines, except their excessive workload. The healthcare services have changed dramatically, incorporating "a new normal". For example, the nature of nursing care has turned from face to face care into virtual services, in many areas. This has as an impact on the change of Nursing Science and Education. Specifically, nursing educators have to assure that students could cope with the conditions in the hospitals, under the pressure of the pandemic.

The year 2020 has been declared as the year of nurses and midwives by the World Health Organization, showing that nurses are the backbone of the healthcare systems. This is an apparent truth than ever before. In this difficult period, nursing profession's challenges are without precedent. Nurses' role is to support and advocate the patients, thanking them for their efforts in this emergency.

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