

Sigma's 29th International Nursing Research Congress

Effects of Stress Management Intervention on Stress Levels of Nurses Practicing in Intensive Care Units

Shelley Schmollgruber, PhD

Department of Nursing Education, University of the Witwatersrand, Parktown, South Africa

Background: South African professional nurses, working in the intensive care unit (ICU) experience many physical and psycho-social hazards and risks (Klopper et al., 2012). Stress provoked by failure to meet work demands, leads to illness, injury and psychological suffering (Langley et al., 2015). It is therefore, necessary to address the aspects leading to stress and work burnout.

Setting: This study was conducted in the adult intensive care units of a university-affiliated, public sector and tertiary hospital in South Africa.

Purpose: The purpose of the study was to develop and pilot test a stress management intervention for nurses practicing in ICU.

Methods: A quasi-experimental non-equivalent control group design was selected for this study. It comprised of pre-testing, development and implementation of the intervention and post-testing. Both groups of nurses were recruited from the same hospital by means of convenience sampling, and completed the Expanded Nurses Stress Scale (ENSS) (French et al., 2000). The intervention group participated in the educational intervention on stress management. The control group received no intervention. Both groups completed the ENSS, four weeks after the completion of the intervention. The quantitative data was analysed by means of descriptive summary statistics.

Results: There was clear evidence of significant differences ($p=0.000$) emerging in all nine sub-scale scores concerning the level of stress when considering the pre-test and post-test score. This indicates the stress management intervention had an effect on the stress levels of nurses practicing in the ICU's at the selected study site. Evaluation of the stress management intervention also revealed that an overwhelming number of nurse participants experienced all activities as meaningful, with contributory worth.

Conclusion: The ICU nurses experienced the stress management intervention as meaningful and positive. Stress management interventions on a continuous basis can contribute or facilitate enhanced coping skills in a sustainable manner and therefore increase the quality of work life of ICU nurses and patient outcomes.

References

French, S., Lenton, R., Walters, V. & Eylers, J. 2000. An empirical evaluation of an expanded nursing stress scale. *Journal of Nursing Measurement*, 8(2):161-178.

Klopper, H. C., Coetzee, S. K., Pretorius, R. & Bester, P. 2012. Practice environment, Job satisfaction and burnout of critical care nurses in South Africa. *Journal of Nursing Management*, 20: 685-695.

Langley, G. C., Kisorio, L. & Schmollgruber, S. 2015. Moral distress experienced by intensive care nurses. *South African Journal of Critical Care*, 31(2): 36-41.

Title:

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Abstract Summary:

Effective stress management interventions can contribute to enhanced coping skills in a sustainable manner and increase the quality of work life of nurses and patient outcomes

Content Outline:

Nurses working in the intensive care units (ICUs) experience many physical and psychological hazards and risks. Stress provoked by failure to meet work demands, leads to illness, injury and psychological suffering. It is therefore necessary to address the aspects leading to stress and work burnout.

First Primary Presenting Author

Primary Presenting Author

Shelley Schmollgruber, PhD
University of the Witwatersrand
Department of Nursing Education
Associate Professor
Parktown
South Africa

Professional Experience: Shelley Schmollgruber is an accomplished lecturer, dedicated to teaching Intensive and Critical Care Nursing. Her research interests include nurse-led care and advancing evidence based practice. Shelley has presented at various national and international conferences and has also published in national and international journals.

Author Summary: Shelley Schmollgruber is an accomplished lecturer, dedicated to teaching Intensive and Critical Care Nursing in the Department of Nursing Education, University of the Witwatersrand in South Africa.