Psychosocial Challenges of Nurses during COVID19 Pandemic in Ernakulam District, Kerala

Akhilmon KS

M. Phil Scholar, Gandhigram Rural Institute (Deemed to be University) Centre for Applied Research, Dindigul, Tamil Nadu, India

Abstract: *COVID- 19 is a disease first reported in Wuhan, China, as viral pneumonia on 31 December 2019. The disease has since spread worldwide, leading to an ongoing pandemic. This disease is caused by a new coronavirus called SARS-CoV-2 (severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus-2). Covid-19 is transmitted when people breathe in air contaminated by droplets and tiny airborne particles containing the virus. Airborne, surface, and fecal-oral transmission are the other three uncommon transmission types. Nurses play a vital role in health care and are often unsung heroes in emergency responses and health care systems. Nursing includes preventing deceases, promoting health, and the care of diseased, disabled, or dying persons. Nurses are at the forefront of the Covid- 19 battle; they risk their lives and their physical and mental health. This quantitative exploratory study thoroughly examined three significant challenges in nurses' lives during the pandemic: psychological, psychical, and social challenges. The study was conducted in twenty hospitals in Ernakulam district, Kerala. This study is descriptive and survey-based. Primary data was collected through a questionnaire. The Secondary data was collected from journals, books, magazines, internet, articles, etc. A questionnaire was sent to the nurses through Google Forms, and they filled those forms and sent them back. The study revealed that nurses faced psychosocial challenges during the Covid 19 pandemic. It is concluded that the social challenges, family challenges, and work challenges of nurses during the covid19 pandemic are highly correlated to each other.*

Keywords: Psychosocial challenges, Nurse, COVID19 Pandemic

1. Introduction

A nurse's initial assessment and subsequent care are critical to strong health outcomes, and in all countries in the world, nurses make up half of all health care professionals. Nursing includes preventing deceases, promoting health, and the care of diseased, disabled, or dying persons. Some of the vital nursing roles are research, participation in making good health policy, advocacy, promotion of a good environment, patient and health system management, and education. Psychosocial is related to the combination of psychological and social behavior; in other words, it is relating social conditions to mental health. Psycho-social is pertaining to the influence of social factors on an individual's mind or behavior and to the interrelation of behavioral and social connections or interrelation of social factors and individual thought and behavior.

What the earth witnessed in the form of the Covid- 19 pandemic was beyond anybody's darkest dreams. We also saw the unprecedented courage, service, and sacrifice of our healthcare workers, including doctors, nurses & frontline workers, during the pandemic times. Nursing professionals lack healthy and safe working conditions, in particular, due to a lack of sufficient personal protective equipment, effective infection prevention, and control mechanism at the workplace. They also lack mental health and psychosocial support services in their workplace. Health care workers also suffer from increased workloads, staff shortages, and insufficient time for rest. Dangerous or unsafe working conditions and inadequate wages and social security that include work-related diseases, disability or death, etc. have led to nurses leaving their jobs.

2. Research Methodology

Objectives
- Study the socio-demographic profile of the respondents
- To analyze the psychological problems faced by nurses during COVID- 19 pandemic.
- To analyze the social problems faced by nurses during COVID- 19 pandemic
- To identify the social and psychological problems faced by nurses

Type of Study: Descriptive research design

Sampling Design: Purposive random sampling

Sample Size: 120 Nurses from 20 different hospitals in the Ernakulam district

Research Instrument: Closed and open-ended structured questionnaire was circulated among the nurses.

Data Collection Method: Primary data, which was collected through a structured questionnaire, as well as secondary data.

Data Analysis Tool: SPSS

3. Data Analysis

- Out of the total respondents, 36.7% of the respondents are in the age group below 25 years. 31.7% of the respondents come under the 26-30 years age category. 14.2% of the respondents are under the 31-40 years age category. 17.5% of respondents are age group 41 and above.

- Out 83.3% of respondents are females, and 16.7% of respondents are male. Female nurses are high in numbers compared to male nurses number.
- The majority of respondents are married. 67.5% of respondents are married, and 29.2% are unmarried. 1.7% of respondents are widows, and 1.7% of respondents come under any other category.
- 25% of respondents are from joint families, and 65% are from nuclear families. Only 10% of the respondents are from extended families. The majority of respondents are from the nuclear family.
- 35% of respondents are living with their parents. 40.8% of nurses are living with a spouse. Only 1.7% of respondents are living with relatives. and 22.5% of nurses are living alone.
- 81.7% of respondents have their own house. 13.3% of respondents don't have their own house. 3.3% of respondents have their own house, but they are now staying in the rental home. The majority of nurses have their own houses.
- 45.8% of respondents are from rural area. 35.8% of nurses are from the semi-urban area and 17.5% of respondents are from urban places.
- 46.7% of respondents don't have a girl child. 24.2% of nurses have one girl child and 15.8% of respondents have two girl children. 3.3% of respondents have 3 girl children.
- 45% of nurses don't have a boy child. 34.2% of respondents have one boy child. 8.3% of respondents have two boy children and .8% of respondents have 3 boy children.
- 25.8% of respondents have children aged below 5 only. 5.8% of nurses have children aged below 10 only and 14.2% of respondents have children aged below 15 only. 19.2% of nurses have children aged above 15.
- Only 14.2% of respondents have four or more dependents. 79.2% of nurses have three respondents. The majority of respondents have three dependents.
- 35% of nurses' family income is below 20,000 rupees.27.5% of nurses have a family income between 21,000 and 30,000 and 15% of respondents have a family income between 31,000 to 40,000 rupees. 22.5% of nurses have above 40,000 rupees as their family income.
- 41.7% of nurses have no family savings. 30% of nurses have family savings of below 50,000 rupees. 8.3% of respondents have up to one lakh as family savings. 9.2% of respondents have below 5 lakh family saving and 10.8% of respondents have more than 5 lakh family savings.

4. Suggestions

Nursing professionals faced serious physical, psychological, socialchallenges during Covid19 pandemic time. The following are some of the suggestions to help the nursing professionals.

- Presently some hospitals provide counseling services for nurses who face personal or work life problems. Since it has the potential to positively affect the nurse's psychosocial life then it can be implemented in other hospitals also. Even other Indian states can copy this facility.
- Intervention by the government in terms of awareness generation programs among people about the covid19 pandemic. This program may help to eliminate negative social stigmas related to covid19 pandemic from society.
- In Kerala, the state government issued a notification for ensuring a minimum basic salary of 20k for nurses. But this study reveals that 35% of respondents get a salary below 20k. Government should monitor this type of issue and implement basic pay. Nurses deserve more respect and salary.
- Government can also do more for nurses like, assure quality personal protective equipment, other medical supplies, additional benefits for nurses who work more than 8 hours, etc.

5. Conclusion

Psycho-social is pertaining to the influence of social factors on an individual's mind or behavior, and to the interrelation of behavioral and social connections or interrelation of social factors and individual thought and behavior. There is a relationship between an individual's mental and emotional wellbeing and the environment he or she belongs to, psychosocial is related to that. In this study psychosocial is divided into three major categories; family, work, and social. The majority of the nurses faced some discrimination from society, family, and the workplace because of his/her work in covid19 isolation ward.

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