A DESCRIPTIVE STUDY TO ASSESS THE COPING STRATEGIES USED BY STAFF NURSES WORKING IN THE INTENSIVE CARE UNITS OF SELECTED HOSPITALS AT ERODE

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ABSTRACT

Nursing is a highly stressful job, so that the dissatisfaction caused by the stress can make nurses leave their jobs. Individuals’ reaction to stress is due to their coping strategies for stress. Descriptive study, with its sample being composed of 100 nurses working in the intensive care units of selected hospitals. Sampling was based on the simple random method. Data was collected using a two-part questionnaire: demographic characteristics, and Jallowice standard coping questionnaire. The results showed that in the case of problem-focused coping strategies, 43% of the participants were poor, 40.2% were moderate, and 16.8% were satisfactory in their application of the strategies. In the case of emotion-focused coping strategies, 33.6% of the participants were poor, 25.2% were moderate, and 41% were satisfactory in their application of the strategies. Nurses working in intensive care units employ problem-focused coping strategies at poor and moderate levels, while their application of emotion-focused coping strategies is satisfactory. In view of the inevitability of certain stressful factors in nursing and the necessity of reducing the mental and behavioral consequences of stress, it is essential that authorities at health organizations take measures to improve nurses’ professional life quality by teaching them effective coping techniques.

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INTRODUCTION
Nursing is an immensely stressful job. The nurses face with the personal, communicative, and organizational stress that adversely affects their health and job satisfaction. In clinical practice, nursing professionals are often faced with difficult and emotionally charged situations, such as the prolonged suffering and death of a patient, generating feelings of sadness, anxiety, frustration, helplessness and even guilt (Martins, Chaves, & Campos, 2014).
Effectiveness of coping behaviors depends on the situation in which they are used. Some coping behaviors may work well for some situations but not for others. In general a term, coping is a strategy that helps people to reduce stress and solve problems. In an investigation conducted by the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health in the USA, nurses were found to be one of the occupations that had a higher than expected incidence of stress related health disorders. It was found that job stress brought about hazardous impacts not only on nurse’s health but also their abilities to cope with job demands. This will seriously impair the provision of quality care and the efficacy of health service delivery

NEED FOR STUDY:
Since nurses are under considerable stress, their professional and social status should be taken into serious consideration; otherwise, nursing services may undergo total deterioration (Grusi Farshi, & Moslemi, 2005). There are certain inevitable stressful factors in nursing that can adversely affect nurses' minds and behaviors; it is important to find ways to deal with these factors before we can take measures to improve nurses' professional quality and teach them coping strategies (Lashonda, 2004). Nurses, when experiencing great stress, draw upon various coping strategies, and obviously, their manner of coping with stress influences the quality of their professional performance. Thus, it is essential to identify the various coping strategies nurses apply to reduce stress. This study aims to explore the coping strategies used by nurses working in intensive care units.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM
A descriptive study to assess the coping strategies used by the staff nurses working intensive care units of selected hospital at Erode -Tamilnadu.

OBJECTIVES
➢ To assess the coping strategies among staff nurses working in intensive care units of selected hospital.
➢ To find out the association between the coping strategies used by the intensive care unit staff nurses with their selected demographic variables

HYPOTHESIS
➢ H1: There is significant association between the coping strategies used by the intensive care unit staff nurses with their selected demographic variables.

MATERIALS AND METHODS
Descriptive study, and Non-experimental research design was adopted for this study which was conducted at selected hospitals of intensive care units at erode. The study population consisted of 100 staff nurses working in intensive care units of hospital at erode .The sampling method adopted for this study was non-probability purposive sampling technique and who meet the inclusive criteria and being willing to participate for this study. The exclusion criterion was unwillingness to cooperate further. Sampling was based on the simple random method.

Data Collection
The data collection tools consisted of a questionnaire designed to establish the participants' demographic characteristics, and ways of coping questionnaire was used to collect the data. This scale was used to measure participant’s coping strategies when dealing with stress. Respondents were asked to think of a specific stressful events that occurred in the past week, and respond to items with these events in mind. Responses are arranged in a 4-point Likert scale. Items on the Ways of coping questionnaire consists of 0 items a score ‘0’ is awarded to not used, a score of ‘1’ used sometimes , a score ‘2’ for used most of the time, and a score ‘3’ for used always, for each was given. The scale offers eight empirically derived subscales: Confronting coping, seeking social support, planful problem solving, self-controlling, distancing, positive Re-appraisal, Accepting responsibility and escape/avoidance. Confronting coping, seeking social support, planful problem solving, are related to problem- solving efforts and self-controlling, distancing, positive Re-appraisal, Accepting responsibility and escape/ avoidance are related to emotion focused efforts.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION
In this study 100 nurses were participated in the study: 72% (77 nurses) were female; their average age was 31.15; 78.5% were married; the majority of the participants (60%) were contractual employees; the average length of the participants' clinical experience was 4.68 years. An analysis of the data showed that regarding problem-focused coping strategies, 43% of the sample were poor, 40.2% were average, and 16.8% were...
satisfactory in their application of the strategies. Regarding emotion-focused coping strategies, 33.6% of the sample was poor, 25.2% were average, and 41.1% were satisfactory in their application of the strategies.

**CONCLUSIONS:** The results highlight the importance of considering coping strategies for predicting general health of intensive care unit nurses. Regarding the inevitability of some stressors in the nursing profession and the need to prevent stressful effects, recognizing the impacts of job-related stress and making use of effective coping strategies play a vital role in reducing nurse’s stress and help them to coping with stressful events at health care units.

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