



Self-Care in Nursing

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Introduction

Nursing profession is among the top five occupations with workplace injuries. These injuries can occur as a single event, or as the long-term effects of years of repetitive exposure to health risks that makes nurses susceptible to a wide range of health conditions. Nurses dedicate their lives to care for the suffering, but the occupational hazard at their workplace put them at risk.

Physical Strain

Nurses are enforced to stand for long hours at a time, as a result this causes physical strain and poses one of the biggest risks to nurses. Lifting and transferring patients is also risky and is the most common cause of musculoskeletal injuries.

Chronic Overtime

A nurse provides vital care to patients. The hospitals cannot afford to leave departments understaffed if an employee suddenly calls off. Hospital administrators generally ask nurses to voluntarily work hours in addition to their scheduled hours even though overtime is not mandatory. Working just one shift in a highly-skilled, hands-on nursing position requires substantial energy. A recent study showed that 63.6% of the respondents feel that their job is physically straining and 81.8% experience psychological strain. About 46% of the registered nurses are able to take a coffee break regularly, but fortunately 72.9% can have a lunch break daily [1]. Nurses need rest and refresh themselves between shifts, but working overtime severely hinders this process.

Working Night Shifts

Nurses don't always follow the typical 9 to 5 schedule, and many are driving home from the night-shift when the rest of the world is just leaving for work in the morning. Moreover, such heavy schedule at the hospital is followed by regular daily household chores.

Experiencing Workplace Violence

Violence in the workplace is one of the major concerns in nursing profession, especially those working in Emergency or Psychology Departments. In a 2014 survey, three out of four nurses reported experiencing violence at job [2].

Exposure to Hazardous Chemicals

Hazardous chemicals associated with all sorts of acute and chronic health problems are still being used widely in health care sector. These are present in many forms, from cleaning products, disinfectants, sterilants, and formaldehyde, to dangerous gasses like Freon or waste anesthetic gases. Exposed nurses may suffer acute asthma attacks or other side-effects. Pregnant nurses face additional risk to their unborn babies from exposure to these chemicals. It is unlikely that health care facilities will ever be able to remove all hazardous chemicals, but attempts should be made to use safer alternatives wherever possible.

Work Place Stress

Protecting patients' rights; autonomy and informed consent to treatment; staffing patterns; advanced care

planning; surrogate decision-making [3]; greater patient acuity; unpredictable and challenging workspaces; violence; increased paperwork; reduced managerial support [4]; and role-based factors such as lack of power, role ambiguity, and role conflict are necessary. Threats to career development and achievement, including threat of redundancy, being undervalued and unclear promotion prospects were also reported as stressful [5]. Ulrich et al. [3] found that younger nurses and those with less experience were more prone to experience job related stress.

Registered nurses job description includes preparing meals, washing dishes and updating social media pages, in their nursing-related duty schedule. Having to update the social media accounts is seen as a strain, because it creates competition between wards [1]. Jimenez, Navia-Osorio & Diaz [6] also reported on types of nursing student stress. They identified stressors primarily related to clinical practice that often result in psychological symptoms.

The stress keeps cortisol and adrenalin hormones to remain too long in the blood stream, resulting in hyperglycemia, hyperinsulinemia, arteriosclerosis, hypertension, and a decrease in the function of the immune system. In addition, stress can cause premature aging and can cause chronic fatigued or depression [7,8].

Legal Aspects in Nursing

Many legal issues focus on nurses' professional negligence, employment, discrimination and licensing. Nurses fail to assess and monitor, follow standards of care, use equipment in a responsible manner, or to communicate and document efficiently. They act as a patient advocate and follow the chain of command. Reising [9] suggests that the following actions can help minimize a nurse's risk of being sued for malpractice:

- Know and follow nurse practice according to act and policies following procedures.
- Stay up to date in the field of practice.
- Assess patients in accordance with policy and their physicians' orders and, more frequently, if indicated by own nursing judgment.
- Promptly report abnormal assessments, including laboratory data, and document reported and any follow-up.
- Follow up on assessments or care delegated to others.
- Communicate openly and factually with patients and their families and other health care providers.

- Document all nursing care factually and thoroughly and ensure that the documentation reflects the nursing process; never to chart ahead of time.
- Promptly report and file appropriate incident reports for deviations in care.

Future Thoughts

The following types of activity cater support in Selfcare Practices which is beneficial for nurses in action.

Feng shui: Feng Shui is an environmental science, conceptualized to create harmony and balance through the of use energy in the most positive way [10,11].

Music/art/pet therapy: Therapies centered on music, art, or pets are helpful for the patients [12-15].

Massage: A method of relaxation, often using oils to stimulate and manipulate large muscle groups in various parts of the body is suggested [16].

Tai Chi (one form of martial arts): A martial art with the "requisite capacity for sustained concentration, precision, mechanical exactness, and slow execution of movements" is also beneficial [17].

Reiki/healing touch: Reiki practice is an ancient form of Japanese healing, administered through a gentle laying on of hands, or in absentia based on the assumption that the Reiki practitioner maintains a meditative presence and allows the Reiki energy to flow to where the patient needs it, in a nondirected and nondiagnostic manner [18].

Labyrinth walk: "The labyrinth is a real path for meditation and a metaphorical pathway for changing directions as we release and let go of the past, receive gifts that education brings, and return as transformed individuals practicing nursing" [19].

Mantra: An "ancient practice of silently repeating a mantram or mantra—a word or phrase with spiritual meaning... is an innovative form of stress management that is portable, immediate, inexpensive, invisible, and nontoxic" [20].

Drum circle: A drum circle is a gathering of people sitting in a circle, all drumming or playing percussion instrument while building community [21].

Hypnotherapy: A therapeutic procedure in which a health professional makes suggestions to help a person

experience post-hypnotic alterations in perception, sensation, emotion, thought, and/or behavior [22].

Traditional yoga: Yoga unites individual consciousness with the supreme consciousness leading to self-realization; a holistic way of life leading to a state of complete physical, social, mental, and spiritual well-being and harmony with nature [23].

Tea and/or herbal/aroma therapy: Aromatic herbs and flowers were planted primarily to provide a spiritual sanctuary. Persians were taught from an early age that it was the duty of each individual to conserve and honor nature as part of the divine creation, and these sacred gardens were looked upon as a means of recreating and experiencing heaven on the earth [24].

Mindfulness/guided/Chakra meditation: "Mindfulness-based Stress Reduction (MBSR) is based on the central concept of mindfulness, defined as being fully present to one's experience without judgment or resistance" [25].

Guided imagery: The use of relaxation and mental visualization to improve mood and/or physical well-being" [26] is often suitable. A range of techniques from simple visualization and direct imagery-based suggestion through metaphor and storytelling is followed [27].

Conclusion

Overall nurses are more dedicated to their service at work and home both. As a result, they forget to take care of themselves. Even as healthcare professionals they are unaware about present medico legal ethics and laws which can protect them from unexpected hazards. The Healthcare professionals at a large should concentrate more on self-care aspects and discuss about these issues among themselves to create more awareness.

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