

Workplace Stress among Nurses in Intensive Care Units

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Abstract

Stress among nurses in intensive care units is considered as a leading cause of medical errors worldwide. It is due to several different reasons and factors, including physical-environmental factors, psychological-environmental factors, and new technology at several levels of medium, high and very high that needs a great effort in management between the nurses and managers.

Keywords: Stress; Nurses; Intensive Care Unit (ICU)

Introduction

Intensive care is a complex and difficult unit to high number of health care workers, especially nurses. Working in intensive care unit (ICU) increase fatigue and complex situations of the nurses working in it, which leads to an increased rate of medical errors, that recent has been estimated at approximately 85,000 occur in USA, all of which occur in intensive care rooms due to stress, which faces health workers, especially nurses. It must be clarified that stress means an unspecified response from the body to any changes, whether internal or external in nature, in particular stress is defined as a set of pressures facing people and reflected negatively on their lives and their families [1].

Most of the jobs have stress, while the nursing is a profession that deals with various health problems of patients and this causes great stress in doing their part in the work [2]. Other studies have interpreted the source of stress in nurses in intensive care units coming from the fact that health care is a difficult field with a high level of different responsibilities and a high risk on the emotional and physical sides. These levels of responsibilities may lead to anxiety, tension and increase stress [3].

There are many causes of stress among nursing in intensive care units, they were divided into three groups or fundamental factors; physical-environmental factors, psychological-environmental factors and new technology [4].

Physical-environmental factors are one of the first factors that affect the creation of stress among nursing in intensive care units where they include lighting, space, temperature and disruption. The second factors are psychological-environmental factors, which include verbal abuse and inappropriate client behaviors. The last one is new technology, which is a very important point that has recently emerged to create stress everywhere, including smart phones and computers. Additionally, low social support and lack of nurses' empowerment in the work place, considered one of the main causes of stress among nurses in intensive care units [5].

In Jordan, the anxiety levels of nurses range from moderate to high to very high with a set of indicators, including psychological and physiological indicators. Psychological indicators include depression, low self-esteem, fatigue, sleep disturbances and increased smoking while physiological indicators include increased incidence of coronary heart disease, certain types of cancer, migraine, stomach ulcers, hay fever, asthma and skin rash [6].

Many studies indicate that the process of managing stress in the work needs cooperation between the same employee such as the nurse in the health sector and between the organization in which he works represented by the manager and officials where it is an

integrated process between these parties [7-11]. Where the role of the nurses inside hospital or health care place by clarifying what the causes of stress are facing this will enhance his self-confidence and improve the level of medical care [12-16].

The role of health organizations in the management of stress among nurses in intensive care units by the manager through determine the level of anxiety among nurses determine the sources of it and try to reduce it [17]. By improving the environment, including lighting, congestion and ventilation, as well as reducing the working hours of nurses by increasing the number of staff, for example, or setting a break for the nurse during their shift [18].

Some other studies point to the policies and their role in reducing the level of stress among nurses in intensive care units, these policies reduce working hours at night shift, develop activity programs during the holidays and more importantly setting an hour of rest during working hours enables them to eat and reduce fatigue and stress [19-23].

Conclusion

Stress is one of the most serious problems that occur in the workplace, which means tension over the response to variables including external or internal source can be visible or invisible may affect services provided to patient very negatively.

The causes of stress are due to several factors, including physical-environmental factors, psychological-environmental factors, and new technology at several levels of medium, high and very high. To manage the level of stress among nurses in intensive care units must be the cooperation of both the nurse himself and the managers inside health care place and trying to find a source of stress and causes and work to reduce them.

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