

The Experience of the Registered Nurse (RN) during the COVID19 Pandemic: A Global Meta-Synthesis in the Year of the Nurse

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Introduction

Since late December of 2019 the world has watched what was then an unidentified viral pneumonia spread across the globe.

The death toll has topped 2.9 million globally and continues to climb. Controversy over methods of containment and infection reduction have smothered the media since the beginning and continue now as the world faces what may be a fourth wave of infections (JHU, 2021).

Nurses, as the largest healthcare profession on the globe, have been on the frontline of patient care throughout the pandemic, and have been called out by many as a vulnerable population due to their exposure (ANA, 2020).

Nurses have expressed fear, uncertainty, stress and hardship throughout the pandemic. It is essential to study their experience in order to best determine how to meet their needs. The results of this meta-ethnography will establish the greater truth of the experience of the nurse and will ultimately guide resources and training for Registered Nurses as we continue to provide frontline care during the COVID19 pandemic.

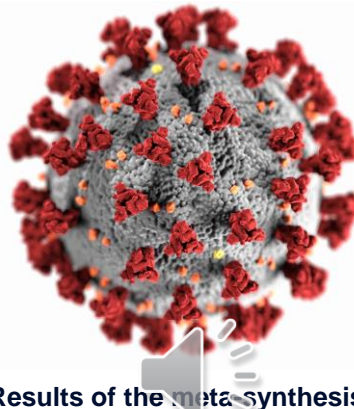
Method

The meta-synthesis was conducted using the principles of Sandelowski & Barro, along with the specific method of Noblit & Hare.

Noblit and Hare's (1988) seven step approach for synthesizing the findings of qualitative studies was utilized in this meta-ethnography on the experience of the nurse during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Procedure

1. The phenomenon was chosen: the experience of the RN during the COVID19 pandemic.
2. 13 pertinent qualitative studies were identified spanning 6 countries: China, Iran, Turkey, Spain, Brazil, and the United States.
3. The 13 studies were read in full multiple times.
4. Codes, including metaphors, were determined by the researcher and identified and sorted in the studies using Atlas TI.
5. Each study's metaphors were synthesized into the metaphors of the others.
6. The translations were synthesized and a unique new whole was determined.
7. The synthesis was expressed in a final product of four overarching themes of the experience of the nurse during the COVID19 pandemic.



The Results of the meta-synthesis were expressed in four overarching themes:

Theme 1: Fear & Moral Conflict: Unprepared & scared for safety

Theme 2: Duty: A sense of calling & obligation

Theme 3: Mental & Physical Side Effects: Exhaustion

Theme 4: Growth: A renewed sense of professional identify & calling

Conclusion

When the WHO declared 2020 the Year of the Nurse, COVID-19 was not yet on the radar. Nurses provided frontline care from its beginnings in China, across all nations, and in all settings. These 13 studies identified the common experience of the nurse, revealing the reciprocal nature of this work.

The world witnessed professional nurses working in the most difficult of places and, in this, **the profession of nursing showed the world that 2020 was truly the Year of the Nurse.**

Significance: Nurse Leaders must work in collaboration with other professions and respond:

- Provide education regarding care of the patient with COVID19
- Advocate for allocation of proper PPE
- Advocate for equal and fair work distribution
- Affirm nurses for their work during the pandemic and every day by publically thanking and recognizing them for their excellence.
- Create realistic patient care assignments and schedules, including appropriate breaks Provide mental health services for nursing staff, including counseling, employee assistance programs and chaplaincy.
- Bring frontline COVID19 nursing staff to our universities to teach those in training what they have learned. .

Acknowledgements

Thank you for the team of professors who coached me through this work. I more grateful for each of you every day as I continue on the PhD journey.

Dr. E. Carol Polifroni, Dr. Cheryl Beck, & Dr. Wendy Henderson

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