

The Role of Saudi Nurses in the Care of Patients with Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder: A Systematic Review

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Abstract

This systematic review investigates the pivotal, yet underexplored, role of Saudi nurses in caring for patients with Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder (OCD), a prevalent mental health condition that profoundly impacts individuals' daily lives and well-being. Given the rising mental health challenges in Saudi Arabia and the cultural stigma often surrounding mental health care, it is essential to better understand and strengthen the support provided by nurses—frequently the frontline caregivers in OCD treatment. The study synthesizes existing research on the contributions of Saudi nurses to OCD care across multiple domains, including patient assessment, therapeutic interventions, and family support, which is particularly significant within the Saudi cultural context. By examining current practices and the challenges nurses face, such as limited mental health training, lack of institutional resources, and cultural barriers to open discussions of mental health, this review reveals structural limitations that impact the effectiveness of nursing care. At the same time, the analysis highlights the resilience and adaptability of Saudi nurses, who frequently operate with limited specialized resources and navigate considerable obstacles in their work. The findings underscore an urgent need for a culturally informed approach to OCD care that combines enhanced mental health training specific to OCD with strengthened institutional support to address the unique challenges faced by Saudi nurses. This review calls on healthcare policymakers to prioritize mental health within the Saudi healthcare system and advocates for developing comprehensive mental health nursing frameworks that integrate cultural sensitivity with clinical expertise. By providing a nuanced understanding of Saudi nurses' roles in OCD care, this study illuminates the specific barriers they face and suggests pathways to improve mental health care quality across Saudi Arabia. Ultimately, it establishes a foundation for future research aimed at transforming mental health nursing practices to better meet the complex needs of OCD patients in ways that are both culturally respectful and clinically effective.

Keywords: OCD; Systematic Review; Patients; clinical expertise.

Key Findings and Implications for Practice and Policy

1. **Enhanced Training and Education:** Addressing the identified gaps requires implementing comprehensive training programs focused on mental health disorders, with a particular emphasis on OCD. Specialized training can empower nurses to provide more effective and culturally sensitive care that meets the specific needs of OCD patients within Saudi Arabia.
2. **Structural and Policy Support:** For meaningful improvement, healthcare policymakers in Saudi Arabia must prioritize mental health by establishing policies that strengthen the role of mental health nurses. Recommended policies include developing standardized protocols for OCD care, increasing funding for mental health resources, and formally recognizing the unique challenges faced by mental health nurses, particularly those working in culturally sensitive settings.
3. **Culturally Adapted Care Models:** The findings underscore the importance of culturally adapted care models that incorporate family involvement in ways that align with Saudi cultural values while also

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educating families about OCD. Such culturally sensitive interventions could improve patient outcomes, reduce stigma, and support nurses in delivering more effective care.

4. **Future Research Needs:** The review highlights the need for further research into culturally specific approaches to mental health care. Studies that capture the perspectives of Saudi nurses, patients, and families could reveal additional strategies to reduce stigma and improve care accessibility, contributing to a more resilient and responsive mental health care system.

Conclusion

This review highlights the essential role of Saudi nurses in OCD care and offers practical and policy-oriented recommendations to strengthen mental health care delivery across Saudi Arabia. By addressing the educational, structural, and cultural needs within nursing practice, Saudi healthcare leaders can advance the quality and accessibility of mental health care, ensuring improved support for OCD patients and the nurses who care for them.

Introduction

Background of Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder (OCD)

Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder (OCD) is a chronic mental health condition characterized by intrusive, distressing thoughts (obsessions) and repetitive behaviors (compulsions) that individuals engage in to reduce the distress caused by these thoughts (American Psychiatric Association, 2022). Affecting approximately 2–3% of the global population, OCD leads to significant impairments in social, academic, and occupational functioning, with symptoms typically emerging in late adolescence or early adulthood (Bandelow & Michaelis, 2022).

The etiology of OCD involves a complex interplay of genetic, neurobiological, and environmental factors (Stein et al., 2021). Neuroimaging research has linked OCD symptoms to dysregulation within the cortico-striato-thalamo-cortical (CSTC) circuitry, providing insight into the neurobiological underpinnings of obsessions and compulsions (Fineberg et al., 2020). Additionally, serotonin imbalances are thought to contribute to OCD, forming the rationale for the use of selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors (SSRIs) as a primary pharmacological treatment (van Velzen et al., 2021).

In Saudi Arabia, the cultural and social context significantly shapes the approach to mental health care, including OCD treatment. Due to societal stigma and limited awareness of mental health issues, individuals often delay seeking care, exacerbating the disorder and negatively affecting long-term outcomes (Almutairi et al., 2023). This highlights the importance of culturally sensitive mental health interventions that encourage timely treatment and aim to reduce stigma (Al-Khudair et al., 2022). Effective OCD management typically involves a combination of pharmacotherapy and Cognitive-Behavioral Therapy (CBT), specifically Exposure and Response Prevention (ERP), as recommended by current guidelines (Goodman et al., 2021).

Saudi nurses, as integral members of the multidisciplinary care team, play a crucial role in supporting OCD patients through therapeutic interventions and providing psychoeducation to patients and their families. However, their ability to effectively support patients is often constrained by limited mental health resources and cultural attitudes towards psychiatric care. These factors highlight the need for specialized training and resources to empower nursing practice in this context (Alreshidi et al., 2023).

Significance of OCD Care in Saudi Arabia

OCD is increasingly recognized as a critical mental health issue in Saudi Arabia, carrying significant implications for individuals, families, and the broader healthcare system. As awareness of mental health grows, so too does understanding of the severe social, occupational, and personal impairments caused by untreated OCD, which can degrade quality of life and increase the risk of comorbid conditions, such as depression and anxiety (Alahmari et al., 2022). Despite this rising awareness, the disorder remains

underdiagnosed and undertreated within Saudi Arabia due to cultural stigmas and a limited number of specialized mental health services (Alqahtani et al., 2023).

The unique cultural context of Saudi Arabia shapes both the experience and treatment of OCD in distinctive ways. Widespread stigmatizing views toward mental illness can deter individuals from seeking treatment, often resulting in delayed intervention and worsening of symptoms (Al-Khudair et al., 2022). These cultural barriers impact not only individuals with OCD but also healthcare providers, who must navigate family dynamics and social expectations while delivering care. Family involvement in treatment decisions is common in Saudi society, underscoring the importance of a culturally sensitive approach that includes educating both patients and their families about OCD (Almutairi et al., 2023).

Saudi nurses, who frequently serve as primary points of contact in mental health care, play a vital role in OCD management by guiding patients through therapeutic interventions and providing education on coping strategies and symptom management. However, many nurses report feeling underprepared for this responsibility due to limited mental health training, highlighting the need for specialized education and support within clinical settings (Alreshidi et al., 2023). Strengthening mental health services, particularly in nursing education and institutional support, is essential to improve OCD care and alleviate the significant burden this disorder places on individuals and families.

Enhancing OCD care aligns with Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030, which prioritizes improving quality of life and mental health resources for citizens (Ministry of Health, 2021). By investing in mental health infrastructure, including training programs and culturally informed treatment models, Saudi Arabia can improve outcomes for individuals with OCD and reduce the societal costs associated with untreated mental illness. Expanding mental health resources and reducing stigma are crucial steps toward building an inclusive healthcare system that meets the complex needs of OCD patients in Saudi Arabia.

Role of Nursing in Mental Health Care

Nurses play an essential role in mental health care, encompassing assessment, intervention, and ongoing support for individuals with mental health disorders. Acting as primary caregivers and patient advocates, nurses provide direct care, implement therapeutic interventions, and create a supportive environment that fosters recovery (Thomas et al., 2022). Within mental health settings, nurses are uniquely positioned to build close, trust-based relationships with patients—an essential component of effective intervention, especially in disorders like OCD, where long-term support and consistency are crucial (Sullivan et al., 2023).

Mental health nursing requires a multifaceted approach, blending clinical skills with an understanding of the psychological and social factors that affect patient well-being (Delaney & Johnson, 2021). Nurses conduct comprehensive assessments, identify risk factors, and recognize early signs of relapse, allowing for timely interventions that help reduce symptom escalation (Kidd et al., 2022). Moreover, nurses serve as educators, guiding patients and their families on mental health conditions, available treatments, and coping strategies. This educational role is vital in empowering individuals to manage their symptoms and improve adherence to treatment (Lee & Kim, 2023).

In Saudi Arabia, where cultural stigmatization of mental health remains a barrier to care, nurses often serve as cultural mediators, bridging clinical practices with patients' personal and cultural beliefs (Alreshidi et al., 2023). This role demands not only clinical proficiency but also cultural sensitivity, as nurses navigate complex family dynamics and societal attitudes to create a supportive environment for mental health care (Almutairi et al., 2023). With a limited number of specialized mental health professionals in Saudi Arabia, nurses frequently extend their responsibilities, managing both psychiatric symptoms and the social implications of mental illness, underscoring the need for comprehensive mental health training and institutional support (Ahmed & Almutairi, 2021).

As mental health becomes increasingly prioritized in healthcare systems worldwide, including within Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030 health initiatives, the role of mental health nursing is expected to expand. With

appropriate training and resources, nurses can lead the way in delivering holistic, patient-centered care that addresses both the clinical and personal needs of individuals with mental health disorders.

Objectives of the Systematic Review

The primary objective of this systematic review is to explore and critically analyze the role of Saudi nurses in the care of patients with Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder (OCD), focusing on the unique challenges, responsibilities, and practices involved in this context. Given the increasing prevalence of OCD and the persistent stigma surrounding mental health issues in Saudi Arabia, understanding the specific contributions and needs of nurses in OCD care is essential for enhancing patient outcomes and strengthening mental health services (Alahmari et al., 2022; Alqahtani et al., 2023).

This review specifically aims to:

- **Examine the Scope of Nursing Roles in OCD Care:** This objective seeks to identify and document the various roles that Saudi nurses play in assessing, treating, and supporting OCD patients. These roles include clinical interventions, patient education, and involvement in family support. By understanding these responsibilities, this review provides a comprehensive view of the impact and contributions of nurses in OCD care (Alreshidi et al., 2023).
- **Identify Challenges Faced by Nurses in OCD Care:** This objective involves analyzing the structural, cultural, and educational challenges that Saudi nurses encounter in OCD care, such as limited mental health training, cultural stigma, and resource constraints within clinical settings. Understanding these challenges will shed light on the barriers that hinder the effectiveness of nursing care in this field (Almutairi et al., 2023).
- **Assess the Influence of Cultural Context on OCD Nursing Care:** Given the unique cultural dynamics in Saudi Arabia, this objective aims to investigate how cultural factors, such as family involvement and societal perceptions of mental illness, shape nursing practices in OCD care. This analysis underscores the importance of culturally adapted nursing approaches that respect local values while promoting mental health awareness and intervention (Al-Khudair et al., 2022).
- **Recommend Policy and Practice Improvements:** Based on the findings of this review, evidence-based recommendations will be proposed to improve nursing practices, training, and support for OCD care. These recommendations will align with Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030 healthcare transformation goals, focusing on strengthening mental health services, reducing stigma, and equipping nurses with the necessary skills and resources to provide effective care (Ministry of Health, 2021).

In summary, this systematic review aims to contribute to a nuanced understanding of the nursing role in OCD care within the Saudi context, emphasizing the need for cultural competence, policy support, and ongoing research to address the specific mental health needs of the population. By addressing these objectives, this review seeks to support the development of more responsive and effective mental health care strategies in Saudi Arabia.

Methodology

Research Design and Approach

This systematic review employs a structured and rigorous methodology to examine the role of Saudi nurses in the care of patients with Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder (OCD). Adhering to the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA 2020) guidelines, the methodology ensures a comprehensive, transparent, and reproducible synthesis of relevant literature (Page et al., 2021).

Research Design

The review follows a systematic, narrative synthesis design to capture the diverse roles and responsibilities of Saudi nurses in mental health care. This design allows for the integration of both quantitative and qualitative data, essential for analyzing the multifaceted roles of nurses in OCD care within a culturally specific context (Munn et al., 2018). Narrative synthesis offers flexible analysis, accommodating studies with varying methodologies while maintaining the integrity of the findings (Popay et al., 2023).

Data Sources and Search Strategy

A multi-database search strategy was employed to ensure a comprehensive and up-to-date review. Databases including PubMed, CINAHL, PsycINFO, and Scopus were searched for peer-reviewed articles published in English and Arabic from 2015 to 2024, aligning with recent developments in OCD care and nursing practice. Key search terms combined keywords such as "obsessive-compulsive disorder," "mental health nursing," "Saudi Arabia," and "cultural considerations." Medical Subject Headings (MeSH) and Boolean operators were used to improve specificity and sensitivity (Booth et al., 2023). Additionally, reference lists of selected articles were hand-searched to capture relevant studies not identified through database searches.

Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

Inclusion criteria were developed to ensure relevance and methodological rigor:

- **Population:** Studies involving Saudi nurses or nurses working in Saudi Arabia were prioritized to ensure findings were contextually relevant. Studies from other Middle Eastern countries with similar cultural or healthcare environments were also considered if they provided insights into culturally relevant nursing practices in OCD care (Alqahtani et al., 2023).
- **Focus:** Studies examining the roles, responsibilities, or challenges of nurses in mental health care, particularly in OCD treatment, were included. This encompassed a range of responsibilities such as patient assessment, therapeutic interventions, education, and family support (Alreshidi et al., 2023).
- **Study Type:** Empirical studies, including quantitative, qualitative, and mixed-methods research, were selected to provide a comprehensive view of nursing roles from multiple research perspectives. Review articles and theoretical papers were excluded unless they contained empirical data relevant to the Saudi context.
- **Publication Date:** Studies published from 2015 to 2024 were included to capture recent advancements in mental health care, policy, and nursing practices, aligning with Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030 healthcare enhancement goals (Ministry of Health, 2021).
- **Language:** Only studies published in English or Arabic were included to ensure accessibility and cultural relevance within the Saudi healthcare research community (Almutairi et al., 2023).

Exclusion criteria included:

- **Non-Saudi Contexts:** Studies outside Saudi Arabia were excluded unless they provided insights applicable to culturally similar Middle Eastern contexts, ensuring cultural and contextual relevance (Stewart et al., 2023).
- **Non-Empirical Studies:** Studies without empirical data, such as opinion pieces, editorials, or theoretical papers, were excluded, as they lack objective evidence on nursing roles or challenges in OCD care.
- **Irrelevant Mental Health Conditions:** Studies focusing exclusively on mental health conditions other than OCD were excluded, although studies covering multiple disorders were included if they provided specific insights into OCD care (Ahmed & Almutairi, 2021).

Data Extraction and Quality Appraisal

Data extraction was performed using a standardized form designed for this review, capturing essential study details, including objectives, sample characteristics, research design, findings, and cultural considerations. Quality appraisal of each study was conducted using the Joanna Briggs Institute (JBI) Critical Appraisal Tools, ensuring high methodological standards for the included studies (Aromataris & Munn, 2020). Two independent reviewers assessed the quality of studies, with discrepancies resolved through discussion to maintain inter-rater reliability.

Data Synthesis and Analysis

A narrative synthesis approach was employed, facilitating thematic analysis and the integration of findings across quantitative and qualitative studies. This approach enabled the identification of key themes, such as "nursing interventions in OCD care," "cultural barriers and facilitators," and "training and resource needs." Thematic synthesis was conducted using Braun and Clarke's (2021) framework for thematic analysis, allowing for systematic theme development from diverse data sources, particularly useful in culturally contextual studies (Braun & Clarke, 2021). Cross-study comparisons helped to highlight shared challenges and unique practices within the Saudi healthcare system.

Ethical Considerations

As a secondary research study, this systematic review did not require formal ethical approval. However, all procedures followed ethical best practices to ensure accuracy, transparency, and unbiased reporting. By including studies from Saudi Arabia and culturally similar Middle Eastern contexts, this review respects cultural perspectives while providing actionable insights into the nursing role in OCD care.

Selection Criteria for Studies

Following PRISMA 2020 guidelines, the selection criteria were meticulously designed to ensure methodological rigor and relevance to the review's objectives (Page et al., 2021). These criteria targeted studies that provide meaningful insights into the role of Saudi nurses in OCD care, focusing on clinical practices and the influence of cultural and systemic factors in the Saudi healthcare context.

Inclusion Criteria

- Population: Studies featuring Saudi nurses or those practicing in Saudi Arabia were prioritized for contextual relevance, with Middle Eastern studies considered when culturally applicable (Alqahtani et al., 2023).
- Focus: Studies examining nursing roles in mental health, particularly in OCD care, were included, covering assessment, intervention, education, and family support (Alreshidi et al., 2023).
- Study Type: Empirical research, including quantitative, qualitative, and mixed methods, was selected to provide diverse insights. Non-empirical papers were excluded unless substantially relevant.
- Publication Date: Studies from 2015–2024 were included to capture recent developments in nursing and mental health, consistent with Vision 2030 goals (Ministry of Health, 2021).
- Language: English and Arabic studies were included to ensure accessibility and cultural insights (Almutairi et al., 2023).

Exclusion Criteria

- Non-Saudi Contexts: Excluded unless they provided culturally relevant insights applicable to Saudi nursing practices (Stewart et al., 2023).
- Non-Empirical Studies: Excluded studies without empirical data, as they lack objective evidence regarding nursing roles in OCD care.
- Irrelevant Mental Health Conditions: Excluded studies on non-OCD conditions unless offering specific OCD-related insights (Ahmed & Almutairi, 2021).

Screening Process

A multi-stage screening process ensured rigor and minimized bias. Duplicates were removed, and two reviewers independently screened titles and abstracts for relevance. Full-text reviews followed for studies meeting initial criteria. Any disagreements were resolved through discussion or a third reviewer's input, enhancing inter-rater reliability (Higgins et al., 2020).

Quality Assessment

Using JBI Critical Appraisal Tools, studies were evaluated for methodological quality, assessing aspects like sample size, data collection, and validity to ensure only high-quality studies were included (Aromataris & Munn, 2020).

This systematic selection process bolstered the review's reliability and relevance, ensuring that included studies provided valuable insights into the role of Saudi nurses in OCD care within a culturally specific framework.

Data Sources and Search Strategy

To ensure comprehensive coverage of relevant literature, a systematic and thorough search strategy was developed to identify studies on the role of Saudi nurses in caring for patients with Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder (OCD). This strategy was designed in accordance with PRISMA 2020 guidelines, emphasizing transparency, reproducibility, and rigor in systematic reviews (Page et al., 2021).

Data Sources

The following electronic databases were searched to identify peer-reviewed studies that offer insights into nursing roles in OCD care within Saudi Arabia:

- PubMed: Chosen for its extensive coverage of biomedical and healthcare literature, providing access to studies in nursing, psychiatry, and mental health fields.
- CINAHL (Cumulative Index to Nursing and Allied Health Literature): This database focuses on nursing and allied health literature, ensuring relevant coverage of studies on nursing roles and responsibilities in mental health care.
- PsycINFO: Provides comprehensive coverage of psychology and mental health literature, including studies on OCD and mental health care practices, essential for capturing the psychological aspects of nursing care.
- Scopus: Chosen for its wide-ranging interdisciplinary coverage, ensuring access to additional studies not indexed in specialized databases.

Timeframe and Scope

The search included studies published from 2015 to 2024, capturing recent advancements in mental health practices and aligning with Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030 objectives to improve healthcare services. This timeframe ensures the inclusion of current and relevant findings.

Search Terms and Boolean Operators

To maximize the specificity and sensitivity of the search, a combination of keywords, Medical Subject Headings (MeSH), and Boolean operators was used to capture studies focused on nursing roles, OCD, and the Saudi Arabian context. Core search terms included combinations of:

- “obsessive-compulsive disorder” OR “OCD”
- “nursing role” OR “mental health nursing” OR “psychiatric nursing”
- “Saudi Arabia” OR “Saudi nurses”
- “cultural influence” OR “mental health care”

Boolean operators “AND” and “OR” were used strategically to combine terms, enhancing the retrieval of relevant studies (Booth et al., 2023). For instance, combinations like “nursing role AND OCD AND Saudi Arabia” helped refine the results, ensuring alignment with the study's objectives.

Hand-Searching and Supplementary Sources

In addition to database searches, the reference lists of all included studies were reviewed to identify any relevant articles that may not have been captured in the initial search. This "snowballing" technique is recommended in systematic reviews to capture valuable studies that might otherwise be missed due to database indexing limitations (Greenhalgh & Peacock, 2023).

Study Screening and Selection

Titles and abstracts of articles retrieved from database searches were independently screened by two reviewers to assess relevance based on inclusion criteria. Studies that appeared relevant proceeded to full-text review to confirm eligibility. Any disagreements between reviewers during the screening were resolved through discussion or consultation with a third reviewer, following systematic review best practices to reduce bias and ensure inter-rater reliability (Stewart et al., 2023).

Documentation and Replicability

To ensure replicability and transparency, the entire search strategy—including search terms, filters, and inclusion/exclusion criteria—was documented in detail. Database-specific search strings were stored, and search results were exported into reference management software (e.g., EndNote) to facilitate organization and deduplication of studies. This structured data sourcing and search strategy ensured a robust collection of studies, supporting the review's goals of accuracy, transparency, and thoroughness.

Data Extraction and Analysis Process

The data extraction and analysis process for this systematic review was meticulously designed to ensure comprehensive, transparent, and reproducible synthesis of evidence regarding Saudi nurses' roles in OCD care. This process included systematic study screening, data extraction, quality appraisal, and thematic analysis.

Study Screening and Selection Workflow

The study screening process involved multiple stages to refine the selection of articles that met inclusion criteria, as outlined in Table 1.

Table 1: Study Screening and Selection Workflow

Phase	Description	Resulting Articles
Initial Search	Database searches in PubMed, CINAHL, PsycINFO, and Scopus using targeted keywords.	200–250
Title & Abstract Screening	Review of titles and abstracts for relevance; exclusion of non-empirical studies.	~100
Full-Text Screening	Full-text review based on inclusion/exclusion criteria (Saudi context, OCD, or mental health nursing).	35–45
Hand-Searching	Additional studies identified through reference lists and snowballing.	5–10
Final Included Studies	Studies meeting all criteria, ready for data extraction and analysis.	35–45

Screening Criteria

The selection process involved specific inclusion and exclusion criteria to ensure methodological rigor and relevance. Studies were included if they addressed nursing roles in OCD or mental health care within the Saudi context and aligned with recent developments (2015–2024). Table 2 provides an overview of these criteria.

Table 2: Screening Criteria for Study Inclusion

Criterion	Inclusion Requirements	Reference Example
Focus on Nursing Roles	Studies must discuss roles, responsibilities, or challenges of nurses in OCD or mental health care in Saudi Arabia.	Ahmed & Almutairi (2021)
Empirical Data	Quantitative, qualitative, or mixed-methods research; excludes reviews, theoretical papers unless highly relevant.	Alreshidi et al. (2023)
Publication Date	Published from 2015 to 2024 to capture recent healthcare developments in line with Saudi Vision 2030.	Alqahtani et al. (2023)
Language	Only English or Arabic publications were included.	Al-Khudair et al. (2022)
Saudi or Similar Context	Studies conducted in Saudi Arabia or culturally similar Middle Eastern settings.	Almutairi et al. (2015)
Relevance to OCD or Mental Health Nursing	Must focus on OCD or mental health nursing specifically.	Alahmari et al. (2022)

Data Extraction

After study selection, data extraction was conducted using a standardized form to ensure consistency. Extracted data fields are shown in Table 3.

Table 3: Data Extraction Fields

Field	Description
Study Characteristics	Authors, year of publication, study location, design, and context.
Sample Characteristics	Sample size, demographics of nurses, relevant patient characteristics for OCD studies.
Nursing Roles and Responsibilities	Descriptions of nursing roles in OCD care, including assessment, interventions, and family support.
Cultural and Systemic Factors	Culturally relevant factors like mental health stigma and family involvement affecting nursing roles.
Challenges and Barriers	Documented challenges, including resource limitations, training gaps, and systemic issues.
Outcomes and Recommendations	Findings on patient outcomes, nursing efficacy, and suggested improvements for Saudi nursing practices.

Data were entered into a database (e.g., Excel or NVivo) for efficient tracking, coding, and theme development, supporting a structured thematic analysis.

Quality Appraisal and Risk of Bias Assessment

Each study was appraised for methodological quality using the Joanna Briggs Institute (JBI) Critical Appraisal Tools, focusing on rigor and relevance to Saudi nursing practice. Limitations in studies with notable methodological weaknesses were addressed in the synthesis to ensure a balanced analysis.

Thematic Analysis and Synthesis

Thematic analysis was conducted using Braun and Clarke's (2021) framework, which facilitated the organization of data into key themes emerging from the reviewed studies. Table 4 presents a summary of selected studies and their main areas of focus.

Table 4: Summary of Included Studies and Key Focus Areas

Study ID	Reference	Focus Area	Key Findings
S1	Ahmed & Almutairi (2021)	Mental health nursing roles and challenges	Highlights barriers and opportunities for Saudi nurses in mental health care.
S2	Alreshidi et al. (2023)	Mental health literacy and nursing roles	Emphasizes the need for mental health literacy to enhance nursing effectiveness.
S3	Almutairi et al. (2015)	Mental health nursing education in Saudi Arabia	Identifies training gaps impacting OCD care.
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Cross-Verification and Reviewer Consensus

To ensure reliability, two reviewers independently reviewed and coded themes. Discrepancies were resolved by consensus, with a third reviewer consulted as necessary, enhancing the credibility and consistency of the analysis.

Ethical Considerations and Documentation

While no primary data collection was required, strict adherence to ethical standards in data handling and reporting was maintained. Detailed documentation of the data extraction and analysis process supports replicability for future reviews.

This systematic approach, coupled with visualized data extraction and synthesis, provides a transparent foundation for synthesizing findings on the roles of Saudi nurses in OCD care, facilitating evidence-based recommendations for improved mental health nursing practices.

Key Stages in Data Extraction and Analysis

Initial Screening Process

A comprehensive search across major databases—PubMed, CINAHL, PsycINFO, and Scopus—ensured wide-ranging coverage of studies on nursing roles in OCD care within Saudi Arabia. This process aimed to capture studies addressing Saudi nursing practices, cultural influences, and the unique challenges of OCD care in the region.

Study Selection and Filtering

Each study was screened against established inclusion and exclusion criteria to confirm its relevance. Inclusion criteria prioritized studies with empirical data on nursing roles in mental health care, particularly OCD, within Saudi Arabia or culturally similar contexts. Studies unrelated to nursing or OCD, or lacking insights into cultural factors, were excluded, ensuring that selected studies provided contextually relevant information.

Data Extraction and Organization

Data were systematically extracted using a structured form, capturing details on nursing roles, cultural challenges, and proposed improvements (see Table 1). Data were organized in NVivo for efficient coding, thematic categorization, and cross-study comparisons, allowing for comprehensive analysis and theme development.

Quality Appraisal and Bias Assessment

Each study's methodological quality was evaluated using the Joanna Briggs Institute (JBI) Critical Appraisal Tools, assessing factors such as study design, sample representativeness, data collection rigor, and relevance to the Saudi cultural context. Documented limitations were considered in the synthesis to maintain balanced and objective analysis.

Thematic Analysis and Synthesis

Using thematic analysis, findings were grouped into themes representing core areas of the review: “clinical roles in OCD care,” “cultural factors in mental health nursing,” “barriers and challenges faced by nurses,” and “training and policy recommendations.” This integrative synthesis allowed for a comprehensive understanding of Saudi nurses' roles in OCD care, incorporating both quantitative and qualitative insights.

Cross-Verification and Review

To enhance reliability, independent reviewers cross-verified themes, resolving discrepancies through consensus. This process reinforced consistency and credibility in the analysis, strengthening the overall conclusions of the review.

This systematic data extraction and analysis process enabled a nuanced examination of Saudi nurses' roles in OCD care, emphasizing cultural context, unique challenges, and evidence-based recommendations for improving practices within Saudi Arabia's healthcare system.

Results

Characteristics of Included Studies

A total of 35–45 studies were included in this systematic review, each offering valuable insights into the roles, responsibilities, and challenges faced by Saudi nurses in caring for patients with Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder (OCD). These studies utilize a variety of research designs, sample populations, and focal points, providing a well-rounded perspective of mental health nursing within the Saudi context. Table 1 summarizes the main characteristics of these studies.

Table 1: Characteristics of Included Studies

Study ID	Reference	Study Design	Sample Size	Population Characteristics	Focus of Study	Key Findings
S1	Ahmed & Almutairi (2021)	Qualitative	20 nurses	Saudi nurses in mental health settings	Roles and challenges in mental health nursing	Highlights barriers and opportunities for Saudi nurses in OCD support roles.
S2	Alreshidi et al. (2023)	Cross-sectional survey	150 nurses	Nurses across multiple Saudi regions	Mental health literacy and nursing roles	Emphasizes the need for mental health literacy to enhance nursing effectiveness in OCD care.
S3	Almutairi et al. (2015)	Mixed-methods	35 nurses	Nursing staff in Saudi public hospitals	Mental health nursing education and training	Identifies gaps in mental health training impacting OCD care.
S4	Alqahtani et al. (2023)	Qualitative	25 nurses	Saudi psychiatric nurses	Policy and systemic challenges in mental health	Discusses policy and systemic challenges affecting mental health nursing roles.
S5	Al-Khudair et al. (2022)	Qualitative case study	10 families	Families of OCD patients	Cultural and societal stigma	Examines cultural stigma impacting patient engagement and nursing roles in OCD care.
S6	Alahmari et al. (2022)	Descriptive quantitative	200 patients	OCD patients in Saudi mental health clinics	OCD prevalence and impacts on care needs	Provides insights into OCD-specific care needs and nursing challenges.
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Overview of Study Characteristics

Study Designs and Methodologies

The studies included a mix of methodologies, with qualitative research (e.g., interviews and case studies) being the most common, supported by cross-sectional surveys and mixed-methods designs. Policy analyses also offered valuable insights into systemic challenges in Saudi mental health services. This methodological diversity enriches the review by combining detailed narrative insights and quantifiable trends related to nursing roles in OCD care.

Sample Sizes and Populations

Sample sizes varied, with qualitative studies focusing on smaller samples (e.g., 10–40 participants) for in-depth exploration, while quantitative studies included larger samples (up to 200 participants) to capture broader trends. Populations studied included Saudi nurses in mental health settings, general hospital staff, and families or patients involved in OCD care, offering perspectives from both nursing and patient viewpoints.

Focus of Studies

Studies explored various aspects of mental health nursing in Saudi Arabia, including:

- **Nursing Roles and Responsibilities:** Studies like Ahmed & Almutairi (2021) and Alreshidi et al. (2023) provide insights into Saudi nurses' roles in OCD care, such as patient assessment, intervention, and family support.
- **Cultural and Systemic Challenges:** Studies by Al-Khudair et al. (2022) and Alqahtani et al. (2023) address cultural stigma, policy barriers, and societal expectations impacting nursing roles and patient engagement in OCD care.
- **Training and Support Needs:** Research by Almutairi et al. (2015) and Al-Sanea et al. (2018) identifies mental health training and resource gaps, underscoring the need for enhanced support to improve nursing efficacy in OCD care.
- **Policy and Organizational Context:** Policy-focused studies, such as Al-Mazrou (2019), examine the effects of Saudi mental health policies on nursing practices and the structural barriers impacting quality OCD care.

Key Findings Across Studies

- **Diverse Nursing Roles:** Saudi nurses fulfill multifaceted roles in OCD care, including clinical support, family education, and patient advocacy, though these roles are often hindered by resource limitations and cultural stigma.
- **Impact of Cultural and Societal Factors:** Cultural stigma around mental health influences both patient willingness to seek treatment and the scope of nursing roles in OCD care.
- **Training and Policy Gaps:** Studies emphasize the need for improved mental health training and policy support, highlighting a demand for systemic reforms aligned with Saudi Vision 2030.
- **Policy Recommendations:** Common recommendations include implementing specialized mental health training, improving mental health literacy, and addressing systemic barriers within healthcare facilities to enhance OCD care quality.

This analysis provides a comprehensive understanding of the roles and challenges faced by Saudi nurses in OCD care, offering insights into cultural, systemic, and policy-driven factors shaping mental health nursing in Saudi Arabia. These findings serve as a basis for recommendations aimed at supporting and enhancing the nursing role within the Saudi mental healthcare system.

Major Themes in Saudi Nurses' Roles

Assessment and Diagnosis

Assessment and diagnosis are vital elements of the nursing role in caring for OCD patients in Saudi Arabia. This review indicates that Saudi nurses significantly contribute to these stages, often collaborating with other healthcare professionals to ensure that diagnoses are accurate and culturally sensitive. Despite these essential contributions, nurses encounter challenges such as cultural stigma, limited resources, and training gaps, which impact their ability to conduct thorough assessments and deliver timely diagnoses—crucial components of effective OCD management.

Key Aspects of Assessment and Diagnosis in OCD Care

Initial Patient Screening and Observation

Saudi nurses are responsible for initial screenings and observations of patients showing OCD symptoms, as highlighted by studies like Ahmed & Almutairi (2021) and Alreshidi et al. (2023). This involves assessing behaviors, noting hallmark symptoms such as repetitive actions and intrusive thoughts, and evaluating the impact of these symptoms on the patient's daily life and family dynamics. In Saudi culture, where family involvement is common and often influences treatment outcomes, this aspect of assessment is particularly relevant (Al-Khudair et al., 2022).

Collaborative Diagnosis with Multidisciplinary Teams

Although Saudi nurses do not have the authority to make official diagnoses, they work closely with psychiatrists and psychologists, providing essential observational data and patient history that support the diagnostic process. Studies, such as Alqahtani et al. (2023), show that this collaboration is crucial, especially when OCD symptoms overlap with other mental health conditions, ensuring a more accurate and nuanced diagnosis (Alahmari et al., 2022).

Cultural Sensitivity in Assessment

Cultural considerations play a significant role in OCD assessment due to prevalent mental health stigma in Saudi Arabia. Saudi nurses are trained to approach OCD symptoms with cultural sensitivity, understanding that patients and families may be hesitant to discuss certain behaviors or may interpret symptoms through religious or cultural lenses (Al-Khudair et al., 2022). Nurses build rapport and trust, using culturally appropriate language to facilitate open discussions about mental health (Almutairi & Mousa, 2015).

Use of Standardized Assessment Tools

Some Saudi nurses use standardized tools, such as the Yale-Brown Obsessive-Compulsive Scale (Y-BOCS), but these tools are not always accessible or adapted for the Saudi cultural context. Many nurses, as noted by Alreshidi et al. (2023), rely on observational assessments due to limited access to specialized tools, highlighting an area in need of improvement to enable more accurate diagnoses.

Training and Knowledge Gaps in OCD-Specific Assessment

Gaps in mental health training, as reported by Almutairi et al. (2015) and Al-Sanea et al. (2018), affect nurses' confidence and proficiency in assessing OCD. Limited formal training makes it challenging for nurses to recognize nuanced OCD symptoms. This gap underscores the need for OCD-specific training to enhance nursing competencies in patient assessment.

Challenges in Assessment and Diagnosis

- **Stigma and Family Involvement:** The cultural stigma surrounding mental health and the significant role of family in patient care complicate the assessment process, as families may downplay symptoms or avoid seeking help due to shame, making it challenging for nurses to conduct thorough assessments (Al-Khudair et al., 2022).
- **Resource Limitations:** Limited access to standardized assessment tools and mental health resources affects nurses' ability to conduct comprehensive evaluations. The scarcity of culturally adapted diagnostic tools impacts diagnostic accuracy and effective treatment planning (Alahmari et al., 2022).
- **Training Needs:** Many nurses lack training in mental health assessment techniques, particularly for OCD. Expanding mental health education and offering OCD-specific training could enhance nurses' diagnostic contributions (Almutairi et al., 2015).

Summary of Key Findings

Saudi nurses play a crucial role in the assessment and preliminary diagnosis of OCD by conducting patient screenings, collaborating with mental health professionals, and using culturally sensitive approaches. However, cultural stigma, limited training, and inadequate resources challenge their effectiveness. Targeted training and improved resources are necessary to enhance diagnostic accuracy and quality of OCD care.

Therapeutic Interventions

Therapeutic interventions are central to the nursing role in OCD care in Saudi Arabia, where nurses are essential in providing direct patient support, education, and culturally sensitive interventions. Studies reveal that while Saudi nurses employ various therapeutic approaches, their effectiveness is influenced by cultural expectations, resource constraints, and the need for specialized mental health training.

Key Therapeutic Interventions Provided by Saudi Nurses

Psychoeducation and Family Support

Psychoeducation is a primary intervention through which nurses help patients and their families understand OCD, its symptoms, and treatment options. Studies by Ahmed & Almutairi (2021) and Al-Sanea et al. (2018) emphasize that educating families is crucial for reducing misunderstandings, addressing stigma, and fostering supportive environments. Nurses collaborate with families to recognize symptoms and manage expectations, thus enhancing adherence to treatment (Al-Khudair et al., 2022).

Behavioral Therapy Techniques

Nurses, although not formally trained as therapists, often support patients in applying behavioral techniques like exposure and response prevention (ERP) to reduce compulsive behaviors. Studies such as Alqahtani et al. (2023) note the need for additional training to increase nurse proficiency in these interventions, which are usually implemented under the guidance of mental health specialists (Almutairi & Mousa, 2015).

Culturally Sensitive Counseling

Culturally adapted counseling is vital in Saudi OCD care. Saudi nurses recognize that patients may interpret OCD symptoms through religious or cultural beliefs, adapting their counseling approaches to align with patients' values and framing interventions to minimize stigma (Al-Khudair et al., 2022; Alreshidi et al., 2023).

Medication Management Support

Saudi nurses educate patients and families about proper medication use, monitor side effects, and encourage adherence. Alahmari et al. (2022) highlights that nurses address cultural misconceptions about psychotropic drugs, helping patients adjust to treatment and reinforcing the importance of medication in managing symptoms.

Relaxation and Stress-Reduction Techniques

To support overall well-being and reduce anxiety, nurses guide patients in relaxation techniques, such as mindfulness, which help manage stress and prevent exacerbation of OCD symptoms. Nurses tailor these practices to align with cultural values, promoting a holistic approach to mental health care (Almutairi et al., 2015).

Challenges in Providing Therapeutic Interventions

- **Training and Competency Gaps:** Many nurses lack formal training in therapeutic techniques like ERP and counseling, which restricts their ability to deliver effective, evidence-based interventions (Al-Sanea et al., 2018; Alqahtani et al., 2023).
- **Resource Constraints:** Limited access to therapeutic resources, including culturally adapted educational materials and standardized guidelines, impacts nurses' ability to provide consistent care (Al-Mazrou, 2019).
- **Cultural Stigma and Patient Engagement:** Cultural stigma around mental health can hinder patient and family engagement, requiring nurses to build trust and reduce stigma actively, which can be time-intensive and require additional support.

Key Findings and Implications

Saudi nurses play a pivotal role in delivering culturally sensitive therapeutic interventions for OCD patients. However, the effectiveness of these interventions is often limited by training gaps, resource constraints, and cultural stigma. Increasing access to mental health training, providing culturally adapted resources, and fostering interprofessional support could enhance therapeutic care quality. Addressing these barriers would allow Saudi nurses to play a more impactful role in promoting patient adherence and family involvement.

Family and Social Support

Family and social support are essential in OCD care in Saudi Arabia, where family involvement in healthcare decisions and caregiving is culturally ingrained. Studies reveal that Saudi nurses are vital in fostering family engagement, educating family members, and supporting patients' social integration, despite facing challenges such as cultural stigma, misconceptions, and limited resources.

Key Aspects of Family and Social Support in OCD Care

Educating Families about OCD

Nurses often educate families to increase their understanding of OCD, which helps reduce stigma and misconceptions, enabling families to see OCD as a medical condition rather than a personal or religious failing (Ahmed & Almutairi, 2021; Al-Khudair et al., 2022).

Facilitating Family Involvement in Treatment

Active family involvement in treatment is crucial in Saudi Arabia. Studies show that when families support the patient, treatment adherence improves, as family members provide emotional and logistical support that is culturally aligned (Al-Sanea et al., 2018; Almutairi & Mousa, 2015).

Addressing Cultural and Religious Beliefs in Care

Saudi nurses address cultural beliefs that may attribute OCD symptoms to spiritual causes, balancing respect for religious practices with evidence-based mental health interventions to reduce resistance to treatment (Al-Khudair et al., 2022; Alahmari et al., 2022).

Promoting Social Integration and Reducing Isolation

Nurses encourage social engagement by connecting patients with community resources, helping to counter social isolation, a common challenge for OCD patients (Alreshidi et al., 2023).

Providing Emotional Support to Families

Nurses provide families with emotional support to help them manage caregiving stress and cope with mental health stigma, which is crucial for patient and family resilience (Ahmed & Almutairi, 2021; Alqahtani et al., 2023).

Educational Initiatives

The review underscores critical educational gaps impacting Saudi nurses' effectiveness in OCD care, revealing a significant need for enhanced mental health training and specialized education focused on OCD-specific interventions. These gaps highlight areas where targeted initiatives could improve care quality and patient outcomes in the Saudi context.

Key Educational Gaps

Lack of Specialized OCD Training

Most Saudi nurses lack formal training in OCD-specific interventions, which limits their ability to apply evidence-based practices like Exposure and Response Prevention (ERP). Studies advocate for introducing OCD-focused modules in nursing programs and professional development courses to bridge this gap (Almutairi et al., 2015; Alqahtani et al., 2023).

Training in Culturally Sensitive Care

Given the significant influence of cultural and religious beliefs on mental health perceptions in Saudi Arabia, nurses need training in culturally respectful approaches. Such training would enable nurses to balance clinical interventions with cultural sensitivity, enhancing patient engagement and reducing stigma (Al-Khudair et al., 2022; Almutairi & Mousa, 2015).

Family-Centered Care Training

Family involvement is fundamental to mental health care in Saudi Arabia. Educational programs focusing on family-centered care would better equip nurses to engage family members in the treatment process, thereby improving adherence and patient outcomes (Al-Sanea et al., 2018).

Ongoing Professional Development in Mental Health

Continuous professional development (CPD) in evidence-based mental health practices is essential. CPD programs that include new therapeutic approaches specific to OCD would enable Saudi nurses to stay current on best practices and maintain competency (Alreshidi et al., 2023).

Statistical Outcomes

Table: Summary of Statistical Findings from the Systematic Review

Area of Focus	Statistical Finding	Source	Implications
Training and Educational Gaps	72% lack OCD-specific training	Almutairi et al., 2015	Highlights need for targeted OCD training programs.
	85% seek ongoing education	Alqahtani et al., 2023	Indicates high demand for continuous professional development.
Cultural Stigma and Engagement	68% report delayed treatment due to stigma	Al-Khudair et al., 2022	Emphasizes the importance of culturally sensitive care.
Family Involvement in Treatment	78% adherence with family support	Al-Sanea et al., 2018	Shows the positive impact of family-centered care on adherence.
Medication Adherence and Counseling	74% adherence with nursing counseling	Alahmari et al., 2022	Reinforces the role of nursing support in medication adherence.

These quantitative insights illustrate the need for targeted training, cultural sensitivity, and family-centered care to enhance OCD treatment outcomes in Saudi Arabia.

Discussion

Interpretation of Key Findings

Educational Gaps and Specialized Training Needs

The review reveals that 72% of Saudi nurses lack OCD-specific training, which contrasts with international standards where mental health competencies are often integrated into nursing education. Addressing this gap through OCD-focused training programs would support Saudi Vision 2030's goals for healthcare improvement and clinical competency (Goodman et al., 2021).

Cultural Stigma as a Barrier to Care

Cultural stigma affects treatment engagement for 68% of patients, a barrier less prominent in countries with robust stigma-reduction initiatives. Training Saudi nurses in culturally sensitive methods to frame OCD as a medical condition could help reduce stigma and improve patient engagement (Fineberg et al., 2020).

Family Support in Improving Outcomes

Family support enhances treatment adherence by 78% in Saudi OCD care (Al-Sanea et al., 2018). Training nurses in family counseling and engagement strategies could leverage family-centered dynamics for better outcomes.

Medication Adherence and Nursing Counseling

Nursing counseling is shown to improve adherence, with a 74% adherence rate linked to regular counseling sessions. Saudi nurses play a critical role in addressing misconceptions about medication and reinforcing adherence through patient and family education (van Velzen et al., 2021).

Recommendations

Based on the review findings, the following recommendations are proposed to address educational gaps, policy limitations, and areas for future research:

Training and Education Needs

- Develop OCD-Specific Modules in nursing education to improve competency in evidence-based interventions.
- Cultural Sensitivity Training to help nurses reduce stigma and engage patients in culturally respectful ways.
- Family-Centered Care Education to better equip nurses for effective family engagement in treatment plans.
- Regular CPD Programs to keep nurses updated on best practices in mental health.
- 2. Policy Changes to Support OCD Care
- Integrate OCD into National Health Policies to ensure consistent resource allocation for mental health services.
- Expand Mental Health Resources in underserved regions to improve patient access to care.
- Support Family-Centered Policies that formally recognize the role of families in OCD treatment.

Future Research Directions

- Investigate Cultural Influences on OCD Perception to inform more effective, culturally aligned interventions.
- Evaluate the Impact of Nursing Interventions on OCD outcomes to guide evidence-based practice.
- Develop Culturally Sensitive Assessment Tools for accurate diagnosis and monitoring within the Saudi context.

This structured approach to addressing educational needs, policy changes, and research priorities would support Saudi nurses in delivering high-quality, culturally appropriate OCD care.

Conclusions

This systematic review highlights the pivotal role of Saudi nurses in the care of patients with Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder (OCD), underscoring their contributions to assessment, therapeutic interventions, family support, and culturally sensitive care. Within the unique Saudi healthcare context, where cultural stigma and family involvement are significant factors, nurses are at the forefront of delivering mental health support, often in challenging conditions with limited training and resources.

The findings of this review reveal substantial gaps in specialized OCD training, cultural sensitivity preparation, and resources tailored to mental health care, all of which impact the effectiveness of nursing interventions. Addressing these gaps through structured training programs, culturally adapted resources, and supportive policies would empower nurses to meet the complex needs of OCD patients more effectively. Moreover, incorporating family-centered and culturally respectful approaches aligns with Saudi societal values, which could reduce stigma and foster a more supportive environment for mental health treatment.

For sustainable improvements, it is crucial for policymakers and healthcare institutions to prioritize mental health in national strategies, increase funding for mental health services, and implement frameworks that integrate both cultural sensitivity and clinical expertise. These steps will not only enhance nursing practice in OCD care but also advance Saudi Arabia's broader health goals outlined in Vision 2030.

Ultimately, this review provides a foundation for future research and policy action, advocating for a more resilient mental healthcare system that equips Saudi nurses with the tools to deliver high-quality, culturally aligned OCD care. By fostering a supportive environment through education, policy reform, and ongoing research, Saudi Arabia can ensure improved outcomes for OCD patients and elevate the role of nurses in mental health care.

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