

Time Management Strategies for Nurse Leaders: A Comprehensive Review

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Abstract

The COVID-19 pandemic has resulted in unprecedented challenges for healthcare systems worldwide, significantly impacting the well-being of nursing students and professionals. This review aims to explore the specific stressors faced by nursing students during the pandemic and the coping mechanisms they employed to navigate these challenges. A scoping review was conducted, analyzing literature from multiple databases, including CINAHL, MEDLINE, Google Scholar, and PubMed. The search focused on studies published during the pandemic that examined stressors and coping strategies among nursing students. The review identified four primary stressors: difficulties associated with distance learning, increased academic workload, challenges during clinical training, and fears related to COVID-19 infection. Additionally, various coping strategies were highlighted, including information-seeking, maintaining optimism, and engaging in transference activities to alleviate stress. The findings underscored that nursing students faced heightened anxiety levels due to the abrupt transition to online education and the pressures of clinical responsibilities. The COVID-19 pandemic has intensified stressors for nursing students, necessitating effective coping strategies to ensure their academic success and mental well-being. Understanding these stressors and coping mechanisms is essential for developing targeted interventions to support nursing students in crisis situations.

Keywords: COVID-19, Nursing Students, Stressors, Coping Strategies, Distance Learning.

Introduction

The COVID-19 pandemic is the most recent worldwide health catastrophe of the century, characterized by elevated morbidity and fatality rates. In December 2019, an entirely novel infectious respiratory illness emerged in Wuhan, China. The World Health Organization (WHO) designated the illness as “COVID-19” upon verifying its potential for a pandemic. As of 18 April 2020, the World Health Organization reported that the COVID-19 epidemic has impacted over 2,164,111 individuals, resulting in more than 146,198 confirmed fatalities across over 200 countries globally [1]. COVID-19 is among the most rapidly disseminating viral illnesses, which the WHO designated as a pandemic after confirming its elevated transmissibility. The illness transmitted from one to individual by infectious aerosol droplets expelled while

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coughing or sneezing. Moreover, individuals transmit the virus by physical contact, including greetings or touching contaminated objects. Countries have pursued vaccinations and treatment procedures for COVID-19 while using different global containment strategies to battle the illness. Containment methods have included the closing of public venues, educational institutions, the imposition of curfews, and further physical distancing protocols, including the cancellation of big gatherings [2].

The COVID-19 epidemic has compelled political leaders and colleges to implement stringent measures to protect the lives of people and students. With numerous universities halting in-person instruction and transitioning to online education, students' lives have undergone a profound transformation, rendering them susceptible to various stressors, including concerns regarding physical health, familial issues, and a sense of diminished control stemming from alterations in the educational landscape [3].

Stress is a condition when internal or external pressures, or both, are seen as burdensome or beyond the adaptability or coping capacities of a persons or community. Nursing students may experience significant stress during their educational degree. There are two primary causes of stress amongst nursing students: academic and clinical stresses. Academic pressures include substantial assignments, tests, and workloads. Additional causes of stress in the clinical setting for nursing learners involve insufficient skilled nursing abilities and a lack of acquaintance with patients' diagnoses, medical histories, or treatments [4].

The particular stresses associated with the effects of COVID-19 on nursing students are anxiety from potential infection and insufficient preventative protocols during practical training [1]. This era has been undeniably demanding for students; with the transition to online classrooms, nursing students have challenges, including issues in concentration, participation, assignment writing, test taking, and achieving academic deadlines [5].

Coping techniques are approaches that assist people in sustaining psychological adaptation during stressful situations [6]. Coping techniques are categorized as problem-focused or emotion-focused coping. The problem-solving technique is the predominant coping strategy used by nursing learners to manage stresses, whilst the prevention strategy is the least employed coping behavior among them [4]. Nursing students have significant resilience, which has used as a coping strategy throughout COVID-19. The learners used humor, which research correlates with reduced mild anxiety levels. Furthermore, other coping mechanisms, including mental detachment, have resulted in elevated anxiety levels [7,8]. This research aimed to identify the particular stresses and coping mechanisms used by nursing students at colleges throughout the COVID-19 epidemic. This scoping review sought to examine the pertinent information about pressures and coping mechanisms amongst nursing learners throughout the COVID-19 epidemic.

Search Methodology

Multiple internet databases, including as CINAHL, the MEDLINE database Google Scholar, as well as PubMed, were queried with predetermined keywords to identify relevant publications examining stresses and coping mechanisms among nursing learners throughout the COVID-19 epidemic.

Stressors Faced by Nursing Students

Nine publications addressed research on stressors connected to COVID-19, from which four subtopics were identified. The first subtheme is "stress from distance learning," addressing the psychological effects associated with remote education. The subsequent subtheme is "stress from tasks and workload." The third subtheme is "stress arising from clinical training." The final subtheme is "fear of infection," including concerns related to feelings of isolation and apprehension around potential infection.

Stress Associated with Distance Learning

Eight papers established a connection between the COVID-19 epidemic and the stress experienced by nursing students, emphasizing numerous stresses, including remote learning [9-16]. During the COVID-19 epidemic, remote education is a considerable cause of anxiety for nursing learners. Cross-sectional research

was performed across 13 nursing schools in Nepal with 1,116 individuals. The research sought to evaluate the effects of E-learning on nursing students during the COVID-19 epidemic. The survey revealed that several students had difficulties due to technology concerns arising from the transition of higher education institutions to online classrooms. Over 63.2 percent of nursing pupils had electrical issues, while 63.6% encountered internet troubles, and just 64.4% had internet connectivity at their homes for their online sessions. Qualitative research conducted by [16] including 33 nursing learners in Croatia examined their perceptions on the COVID-19 epidemic and their educational experiences at that time. Distance learning created several issues for nursing students, including difficulty in concentration, unlike in a traditional lecture or in-person setting. The research indicated that nursing students struggled to retain information and cultivate the motivation necessary for online learning.

Prospective observational research conducted by [17] included 142 second-year nursing students in Murcia, Spain. The objective of the research was to evaluate the stress levels of nursing students before and during the COVID-19 shutdown and its impact on their online examinations. The research demonstrated that stress levels substantially rose amongst nursing learners after the lockout. The research indicated that learners who failed the virtual examination had elevated stress levels relative to those who succeeded.

Cross-sectional research by [18,19] revealed elevated stress levels and decreased focus. The research including 662 nursing learners in Turkey assessed their perspectives on the COVID-19 epidemic and their reported stress levels. The research demonstrated that nursing students had moderate stress levels, although these levels were elevated compared to those of students evaluated in the preceding year. Nursing students voiced apprehensions over their practical experiences and insufficient clinical skills due to the disruption of education and the transition to distance education during the global epidemic.

Separate cross-sectional descriptive research conducted by [10] included 184 nursing learners from universities in Nepal. The research evaluated the determinants linked to felt stress, anxiety, and sleeplessness among nursing students during the COVID-19 pandemic. The study revealed that 29.9% of nursing students feared delayed graduation, 36.4% experienced financial burdens from mobile data and charging devices for online classes, 17.4% encountered challenges accessing online platforms, 29.3% struggled with concentration, and 15.2% were apprehensive about failure due to difficulties comprehending online coursework. The results were validated in subsequent research by [11], which conducted a cross-sectional descriptive analysis including 244 nursing students in India. The authors evaluated the perceived stress levels of nursing learners throughout the COVID-19 lockdown. The research revealed that nursing learners had considerable stress due to insufficient resources and problems associated with distant learning.

Additionally, mixed-methods research done in Jordan including 335 nursing students investigated the stress degrees and reasons for stresses associated with distant learning encountered by nursing learners during the COVID-19 outbreak. It was apparent that nursing students from low-income families had elevated stress levels; 84.2% of participants faced financial strain due to internet connection costs. The Jordanian study identified numerous stressors associated with distance learning for nursing students, such as challenges in concentration due to distracting environments and insufficient private study spaces, limited resources, disorganized workloads, and an absence of methods for established online education.

Stress Induced by Assignments and Workload

Three studies indicated that throughout the COVID-19 epidemic, courses and responsibilities were a significant cause of stress for nursing students. The research done by [10] indicated that the worldwide pandemic has impacted university students in several ways. Among nursing students employed at a hospital, 44.4% endured prolonged duty hours, while 16.7% had heightened workloads due to a surge in COVID-19 patient cases. Research done by [7] indicated that the rise in COVID-19 cases necessitated the recruitment of nursing students to address worker shortages in communities and hospitals during the pandemic. Approximately 69% of nursing students hired by hospitals had elevated levels of anxiety. Descriptive research by [5], done in the United States amongst nursing pupils, indicated that learners also had difficulty in managing tasks. The survey revealed that eighty-four percent of nursing pupils experienced

anxiety and overload, with 62% unable to manage the academic burden, and 20% facing stress and challenges in completing assignments.

Stress Arising from Clinical Training

Additionally, three papers revealed that stress arising from practical experience significantly impacts nursing students globally throughout the COVID-19 outbreak. Further research by [19] identified that the primary pressures for nursing students throughout this pandemic are compliance with COVID-19 protocols stemming from insufficient preparation. The third research was performed in Nepal via [10]. The cross-sectional research indicated that the pandemic imposed additional pressures on nursing students employed in hospitals, who were concerned about the requirement of following COVID-19 measures. The epidemic induced worry and stress, as shown by another research [5]. The authors performed research in the United States including 50 nursing learners to investigate the anxiety and stress encountered by these students and to discover sources of assistance throughout their transition to distance learning. The research indicates that worry and stress were apparent among nursing students working in hospitals during the pandemic owing to insufficient PPE.

Stress Induced by COVID-19 Infection

Three publications addressed the topic of stress resulting from COVID-19 infection. The first research conducted in Croatia with 33 nursing students indicated that 19 of the participants experienced worry and apprehension over the potential infection of elderly family members by COVID-19. Simultaneously, 15 individuals expressed concern over the risk of contracting COVID-19 inside the therapeutic environment.

The second research referenced in [19] was done in Turkey including 662 nursing students. Sixty-eight percent expressed concern over potential COVID-19 infection, whereas 78.9% of students implement appropriate actions to safeguard themselves; 97% often wash their hands, 82.3% use masks, and 92.9% adhere to social distancing protocols. The third research conducted by [10] included 184 nursing learners from institutions in Nepal. The survey indicated that 21% of students expressed concern over their families contracting the COVID-19 virus, whilst 8.2% were apprehensive about their own potential infection. The study also identified the coping techniques used by nursing students throughout the epidemic.

Mechanisms for Coping

Six papers investigated different coping strategies used by nursing learners. The following section addresses the three most important subthemes. The first subtheme is the pursuit of information and consultations. Furthermore, cultivating a cheerful attitude has become one of the most often used coping mechanisms among nursing students. The following subtheme is maintaining optimism since the nursing students had a propensity for generalized favorable expectations about outcomes. The 3rd subtheme is achieving transference by actively redirecting one's focus away from unpleasant circumstances. Instances of reallocating focus included maintaining a nutritious diet, engaging in physical exercise, and ensuring enough sleep. The issue evaluates how distance from the problems posed by the virus, including anger and resentment, has helped or may assist nursing students globally in alleviating the adverse effects of COVID-19 on their personal lives and improving their academic experiences.

Acquiring knowledge and seeking assistance constitutes a viable coping mechanism for nursing learners throughout the COVID-19 epidemic. A cross-sectional investigation carried out by [7] involving 244 nursing students revealed that COVID-19 heightened anxieties among numerous nursing students, encompassing not only concerns regarding the virus itself but also disruptions to their regular lives, monetary challenges, prolonged separation from relatives and close friends, and the transition to online education through remote learning. The research indicated that adopting a positive attitude towards information-seeking and consultation was an effective coping technique linked to improved mental outcomes in nursing students.

The significance of maintaining optimism was shown in another research conducted in Saudi Arabia. A separate author [14] performed a cross-sectional study involving 124 individuals in Saudi Arabia, revealing that 79% of nursing students recognized optimism as an effective strategy for managing COVID-19-related stressors, including the fear of infection and patient fatalities due to the disease. Consequently, optimism has surfaced as an effective coping mechanism that encouraged nursing students to achieve stability and psychological adaptation throughout this time.

Four publications highlighted the significance of translocation as a coping mechanism for COVID-19 among nursing students. Another author [17] performed research in Spain and observed the impact of the COVID-19 outbreak on the demanding everyday lives of nursing students. The epidemic caused worry, anxiety, and tension among Spanish nursing learners. Consequently, transference activities, such as engaging in regular exercise and conversing with others, significantly alleviated anxiety amongst nursing students. Authors [13] concurred with [17] on displacement practices amongst nursing learners following exploratory cross-sectional research performed in Egypt as well as Saudi Arabia. The authors observed that obtaining social support from teammates was among the most successful relief methods for nursing pupils throughout the COVID-19 outbreak.

The third research was a cross-sectional analysis by [15], using 316 nursing learners in Turkey to assess their anxiety levels as well as coping techniques throughout the epidemic. The authors indicate that nursing students had moderate levels of anxiety due to COVID-19. The survey revealed that 48.1% of students used food as a coping mechanism, whereas 77.8% engaged in internet usage; this suggests inadequate coping methods linked to difficult circumstances during the epidemic.

The fourth paper by [20] emphasized the significance of transference after further research conducted in Australia and India. The comparative analysis evaluated levels of anxiety as well as coping mechanisms among nursing students. The cross-sectional investigation revealed that these nursing students certainly endure increased anxiety. Consequently, one coping strategy used by Indian nursing pupils to alleviate stress is engaging in exercise and conversing with others.

Discussion

The scoping review examined pertinent literature about the pressures and coping mechanisms of nursing learners throughout the COVID-19 epidemic. The review was based on information from thirteen studies. The incorporation of the thirteen studies as well as additional critical analysis of the material revealed significant stresses affecting nursing learners including the many coping techniques used to address the disruptions caused by the pandemic on their learning process.

The nursing students identified distant learning as a cause of stress. The novel technology-driven method of providing nursing education presents technical difficulties, internet connectivity challenges, and inadequate administration of online courses. Nursing students have difficulties due to their preference for traditional learning over online distant education choices [21-23]. Distance learning may not improve pupil-centered instruction, surveillance, and teacher evaluations compared to traditional classroom settings during a lockdown.

Assignments and workload become significant pressures for nursing students due to the more organized learning approach established by COVID-19. The virtual learning setting necessitates that instructors provide tasks to maintain skill growth, similar to traditional classroom settings. The high-pressure learning environment may not provide effective skills, since pupils want practical demonstrations or simulations. The completion of pre-licensure nursing students is hindered by their dependence on an excessive workload to fulfill non-direct care hours while also maximizing virtual clinical experiences with their supervisors.

The research indicated that clinical training had induced worry and stress in nursing pupils throughout the pandemic. Pre-licensure learners are among healthcare professionals who sometimes lack access to PPE, hence facing the danger of virus transmission. As stated in [24], students may be inadequately prepared via mentoring or preceptorship to navigate the demanding proactive care setting with the daily rise in COVID-

19 positive rates. The anxieties, worry, and stress stem from the virus and the kids' failure to achieve an appropriate learning trajectory [25]. The nursing students have insufficient acquaintance with confidence, interaction, and recovery strategies.

The pressures of clinical training highlight the effects of COVID-19 infections in the absence of adequate clinical skills, treatment strategies, and comprehensive response capabilities. The assessment highlighted the need for social distance, mask-wearing, hand hygiene, and other essential safeguards against the infection. The students encounter micro-aggressions and possess restricted opportunities to make decisions about their physical and psychological well-being, similar to those in active care settings or virtual learning environments [26]. Nursing institutions or colleges exacerbate the issue by permitting nursing pupils to engage in high-risk health settings without adequate skills.

Anxiety and stress from educational or high-risk settings have compelled nursing students to seek coping techniques. The evaluation confirms the extensive use of knowledge and debate to cultivate the appropriate mindset throughout the COVID-19 epidemic. The material is essential for surmounting limitations, dispelling doubts, and imparting new strategies to address COVID-19 mental health concerns among students [27]. Consultation with supervisors in educational or high-risk settings should resolve uncertainties about COVID-19 and the fulfillment of the nursing program in preparation for registration.

Optimism serves as the essential coping mechanism for nursing students aspiring to successfully navigate their courses via virtual learning. The evaluation validates the strategy as a psychological adjustment to the novel learning framework established by the epidemic. Optimism underscores the aspirations for improved outcomes in the learning setting as nursing moves to professional practice [28]. The results confirm ongoing endeavors by nursing learners to embrace activities that enhance their well-being while anticipating a return to the conventional learning method.

Transference serves as a helpful coping technique for nursing learners who have optimistic expectations for their educational journey in nursing. Nursing students navigate the online classroom, engage in clinical training within high-risk settings, and manage workloads including exercises or social interactions. Social support is essential because to the significant life disruptions and optimistic outlooks for finishing nursing programs within the COVID-19 epidemic [29]. The restructured educational setting offers nursing students demanding options and significantly impacts nursing practice.

Nursing education need to include alternative, effective, and engaging methodologies, including video simulation techniques. Nursing students may alleviate concerns, worry, or tension by engaging with interactive modalities rather than focusing only on theoretical assignments that do not develop their practical nursing abilities. Conversely, continuous therapy and peer assistance are crucial within communities, as institutions and colleges strive for enhanced participation of pre-licensure nursing students. The tactics will enhance the strategies for coping of transmission, information-seeking, and optimism since nursing students expect a seamless transition to clinical practice throughout the COVID-19 epidemic.

Nonetheless, the scoping review exhibited many weaknesses. The review highlighted existing studies on stresses and coping methods among nursing students during COVID-19, contrasting with research that facilitates the exploration of novel discoveries. The strategy also failed to articulate the possibility of bias, which diminished the dependability of the results. The findings pertain to the relatively recent subject of COVID-19, which is always developing, rendering the overall dependability debatable.

COVID-19 revealed the world's inadequate readiness for a pandemic of this kind. This research revealed that nursing students had stresses in their academic pursuits throughout the epidemic. Nursing students encounter several pressures, including those arising from online learning, assignments and workloads, clinical training, and COVID-19 infection. Nursing learners have established coping techniques to adapt to COVID-19-related stresses, including information-seeking, consultation, maintaining optimism, and transference.

Conclusion

This comprehensive review highlights the multifaceted challenges faced by nursing students during the COVID-19 pandemic. The abrupt transition to distance learning presented significant stressors, including technological difficulties, decreased access to necessary resources, and the psychological effects of isolation. Furthermore, the increased academic workload, coupled with the pressures of clinical training in a pandemic context, contributed to heightened anxiety and feelings of inadequacy among students.

Coping strategies emerged as critical in mitigating these stressors. Nursing students employed various approaches, such as seeking information and support from peers and faculty, maintaining an optimistic outlook, and engaging in physical activities to distract from stressors. These strategies not only aided in their immediate adaptation to the evolving educational landscape but also fostered resilience, allowing them to navigate the complexities of their training amidst a global health crisis.

The findings of this review underscore the necessity for educational institutions to implement robust support systems that address the specific needs of nursing students. This includes enhancing access to technology, providing mental health resources, and facilitating peer support networks. Additionally, incorporating flexible learning strategies and maintaining a focus on practical skills development will be essential in ensuring that nursing students are adequately prepared for future challenges.

In conclusion, the COVID-19 pandemic has underscored the vulnerabilities and resilience of nursing students. By recognizing and addressing the unique stressors they face, educators and healthcare leaders can better support these future professionals, ultimately enhancing their educational experiences and mental health outcomes during and beyond the pandemic.

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الملخص

الخلفية: تسببت جائحة COVID-19 في تحديات غير مسبوقه لأنظمة الرعاية الصحية في جميع أنحاء العالم، مما أثر بشكل كبير على رفاهية طلاب التمريض والمهنيين. تهدف هذه المراجعة إلى استكشاف الضغوط المحددة التي واجهها طلاب التمريض خلال الجائحة وآليات التكيف التي استخدموها للتعامل مع هذه التحديات.

المنهجية: تم إجراء مراجعة استكشافية من خلال تحليل الأدبيات المتاحة في عدة قواعد بيانات، بما في ذلك CINAHL و MEDLINE و Google Scholar و PubMed. ركز البحث على الدراسات المنشورة خلال الجائحة والتي تناولت الضغوط واستراتيجيات التكيف لدى طلاب التمريض.

النتائج: حددت المراجعة أربعة ضغوط رئيسية: الصعوبات المرتبطة بالتعلم عن بُعد، زيادة العبء الأكاديمي، التحديات أثناء التدريب السريري، والمخاوف المتعلقة بعدوى COVID-19. كما تم تسليط الضوء على استراتيجيات تكيف مختلفة، بما في ذلك البحث عن المعلومات، الحفاظ على التفاؤل، والانخراط في أنشطة تحويلية لتخفيف التوتر. أكدت النتائج أن طلاب التمريض واجهوا مستويات عالية من القلق بسبب الانتقال المفاجئ إلى التعليم عبر الإنترنت وضغوط المسؤولين السريرية.

الاستنتاج: زادت جائحة COVID-19 من الضغوط التي يواجهها طلاب التمريض، مما يستلزم تبني استراتيجيات تكيف فعالة لضمان نجاحهم الأكاديمي وصحتهم النفسية. يعد فهم هذه الضغوط وآليات التكيف أمرًا ضروريًا لتطوير تدخلات مستهدفة لدعم طلاب التمريض في أوقات الأزمات.

الكلمات المفتاحية: COVID-19، طلاب التمريض، الضغوطات، استراتيجيات التكيف، التعلم عن بُعد.