

# Exploring the Experiences of Stress among Female General Nurses.

Nicholas Howe (1657939) Supervisor: Dr. Annette Jorgensen

## Abstract

The aim of this research was to explore the experiences of stress among female general nurses. A qualitative approach was deemed the most appropriate method in carrying out this research as it would give an insight into the concept of stress in the workplace. The study found large quantities of stress among the nursing community. The causes and affects of this stress was also addressed.



## Method

A qualitative approach was adopted by the researcher. It consisted of six semi-structured interviews. The data which was gathered from the interviews was evaluated by data led thematic analysis.

The six participants were all qualified female general nurses. They were all working in an urban hospital setting. The participants were between the ages of 20-25 years old, working no more than five years as a general nurse.

Each interview lasted no more than forty minutes. The interview schedule consisted of 12-15 questions, depending on answers received by the participants. All interviews were recorded with the consent of the participant.

The gathered data was transcribed verbatim, and duplicated into NVivo10, a software programme which assisted the researcher in identifying common trends and patterns within the data.

The emerging themes were then interpreted by the researcher. This resulted in clear, relevant findings which addressed the general research question: exploring the experiences of stress among female general nurses.

## Results

Themes which emerged from this study include:

Job Satisfaction, Debriefing, Workload and Stress.

The causes and affects which experiences of stress can have on one's wellbeing was addressed.

This study found that none of the participants attended a debriefing session on a regular basis as none was provided by their employer.

The study found that workload, time management and long working hours all contributed to stress.

## Discussion

The research aimed to target the participant's personal experiences and their thoughts on how stress affected their lives. It was clear that the participants welcomed this study as it gave them an opportunity to voice their views on this topic. The study focused on this small group in society as there was limited previous research carried out on this topic regarding female general nurses. Although, previous studies addressed the topic of stress among the medical professions, there was a lack of research on general nurses in Ireland.

The general nursing population had limited studies carried out on them in Ireland with the topic of stress not being addressed.

It would also be valuable to include a sample from the male nursing population to receive a demographic of results. This would ensure the reliability of the findings in this research project.

## References

- Arnold, J., Cooper, C. & Robertson, I. (1998). *Work Psychology – Understanding Human Behaviour in the workplace* (3rd edition) London: Pearson Education Ltd.
- Dickenson, G. E. (2007). *End of life and palliative care issues in medical and nursing schools*. *Death Studies*

## Introduction

This study looks at the experiences of stress among the nursing population as Dickenson (2007, p.741) writes "of all health professionals, nurses are in the most immediate position to provide care, comfort and counsel..."

As this is the case, stress is evident in a nursing profession. Stress can be defined as "A force that pushes a psychological or physical factor beyond its range of stability, producing a strain within the individual" (Arnold, Cooper & Robertson, 1991, p.424).

The study examines the causes and affects which stress may have on the nursing community. According to Tasto et al. (1978), nurses in shift work are more likely to suffer from confusion, depression and anxiety.