Post-traumatic Stress Disorder in Nursing Populations: Implications for Practice

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Abstract

Post-traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) is a psychiatric condition measurable through stress responses resulting from exposure to a traumatic event and affects 5.2 million adults in the United States. The aim of this project was to arm nursing professionals and organizational leadership with knowledge regarding the prevalence of post-traumatic stress disorder among nursing professionals within their institution. Eighty-four participants (19% completion rate) completed a questionnaire consisting of demographic, trauma exposure and response questions modeled from the *Clinician-Administered PTSD Scale for DSM-5* (*CAPS-5*) and the *PTSD Checklist for DSM-5* (*PCL-5*). Using a Likert Scale each survey was manually scored for lifetime trauma and prior six-month trauma exposures, PTSD symptoms and impairment. Results included 2% of participants were scored as having subclinical signs of PTSD, 38% met *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual-V*, criterion for a diagnosis of PTSD, with 26% of the participants reporting severe symptomology. Based on these findings, it can be concluded that nursing professionals are at increased risk for the development of PTSD and the long-term sequelae affecting personal and professional functionality. It is hoped this project will increase awareness of PTSD in nursing professionals leading to the development of interventions and policies focused on prevention by reducing the impact of work-related exposures and resilience building.