



Preventing Burnout and Reducing Stress by Utilizing an Evidence-based Protocol

For Newly Graduated Nurse Practitioners

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BACKGROUND

- Nurse burnout is currently considered a significant problem in healthcare systems, raising concerns about sustaining the future nursing workforce. Burnout is proven to negatively affect the overall well-being of nurses as well as their ability to deliver quality care.
- Nurse burnout has also been acknowledged to adversely impact patient outcomes and organizational productivity because of its strong relation with increased job dissatisfaction, reduced work efficacy, and increased turnover among nurses (Aryankhesal et al., 2019; De Oliveira et al., 2019; De Hert, 2020). These impacts eventually lead to poor patient and health outcomes as well as reduced organizational productivity (Javadi-Pashaki et al., 2019).
- Hence, the need to implement an evidence-based protocol that can help alleviate nurse burnout, improve nurses' well-being, and enhance nurses' job satisfaction and retention intentions.
- This DNP project particularly explored the use of Mindfulness-based Stress Reduction (MBSR) techniques such as yoga and mindfulness meditation practices to help newly graduated psychiatric mental health nurse practitioners (PMHNPs) cope with occupational stress and avoid the risk of burnout.

PURPOSE AND PRACTICE-CENTERED QUESTION

Purpose Statement

This quality improvement (QI) project intended to address burnout experienced by newly graduated PMHNPs with less than one year of practice experience by employing an MBSR protocol that supports mental well-being and alleviates workplace stressors.

PICOT Question

The practice-focused question that this DNP project aimed to answer was, among the newly graduated mental health nurse practitioners (P), does the implementation of mindfulness-based stress reduction and authentic leadership (I), compared to no stress management program (C), reduce burnout and turnover rates (O) in four weeks (T)?

METHODS

Literature Review

This DNP project applied an evidence-based strategy to select and review professional and scholarly sources obtained from various medical and nursing databases, including ProQuest, Cumulated Index to Nursing and Allied Health Literature (CINHAL), PubMed, PsychINFO, and the Cochrane Library.

Thirteen scholarly sources, including three National Guidelines were identified in the literature that supported the implementation of evidence-based practices for burnout prevention and stress management among new graduate nurses and allied health practitioners.

Themes obtained from the literature demonstrated that MBSR techniques such as yoga and mindfulness-meditation practices can help alleviate nurse burnout.

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical foundation of this project is based on Jeff Hiatt's awareness, desire, knowledge, ability, and reinforcement (ADKAR) model of change management.

This model guided the implementation of this QI project by providing a change-driven approach that is based on a bottom-up style for managing change among staff members (Karambelkar & Bhattacharya, 2017).

Interventions

Three key MBSR techniques were implemented as part of the MBSR program, including a 5-10 minute "Breath Awareness Practice" in the morning, a 20-30 minutes "Love Kindness Meditation" during shift intervals and a 15-minute Mindful Yoga during lunch breaks.

Eleven newly graduated PMHNPs who worked at the project site within the past seven months participated in the MBSR program. The participants were educated on the MBSR protocol, which they later implemented over a four-week timeframe.

The project site was a private practice organization that offers Mental Health consultations for other 12 acute care inpatient psychiatric facilities.

Data Collection: The DNP project utilized pre-post survey questionnaires to collect pre-intervention and post-intervention data that helped to ascertain whether the MBSR interventions were effective in reducing burnout levels, increasing retention of nurses, and reducing turnover rates among the new graduate NPs at the project site.

The questionnaires contained a demographic section for collecting demographic data, a shorter version of the Burnout Assessment Tool (BAT), and six qualitative questions for assessing the nurse practitioners' Intent to Stay (ITS).

Data Analysis: SPSS software was used to analyze the collected data.

Descriptive statistics and the Wilcoxon signed rank test were applied to analyze the pre-intervention and post-intervention data.

The Wilcoxon signed rank test was used to compare the participants' burnout levels before and after the MBSR interventions, demonstrating whether the interventions effectively reduced the incidences of nurse burnout.

Descriptive statistics were utilized to summarize the participants' demographic data as well as to address and compare the qualitative Yes/No responses about the participants' intention to stay.

RESULTS

Analysis results of the Wilcoxon Signed Rank test revealed a statistically significant reduction in burnout levels following the MBSR interventions program, $z = -2.692$, $n = 11$, $p < .001$, with a large effect size ($r = 0.60$). The median score on the burnout levels decreased from pre-intervention ($Md = 2.67$) to post-intervention ($Md = 2.25$).

Moreover, the overall results of the retention intentions data indicated a significant improvement in the participants' intent to stay.

Hence, the MBSR interventions effectively reduced nurse burnout incidences, reduced turnover rates of new graduate NPs at the project site, and increased the retention of nurses in the nursing profession.

CONCLUSIONS

Previous research on the impacts of burnout has provided ample evidence of its various adverse effects, ranging from job dissatisfaction and concern to patient discontent with lower quality of nursing care, and considerable risk of negative patient outcomes in diverse clinical settings. The impacts are also linked to reduced organizational productivity (Aryankhesal et al., 2019; De Oliveira et al., 2019; De Hert, 2020; Ghannam et al., 2020).

This project provides effective evidence-based interventions for preventing burnout and alleviating stress among nurses and allied medical practitioners.

The long-term goal of this DNP project is to systematize the application of these MBSR techniques within the organization to help reduce the overall level of burnout among nurses and allied health practitioners.

Reducing burnout would eventually improve the organization's productivity through increased retention as well as safety and quality outcomes.

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