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Toward a Comprehensive Understanding of Nurses' Compassion Fatigue: A Meta-Integrative Qualitative Synthesis

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ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION

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Review Stage at time of this submission - Preliminary searches.

Conflicts of interest - None declared.

INPLASY registration number: INPLASY202480083

Amendments - This protocol was registered with the International Platform of Registered Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis Protocols (INPLASY) on 17 August 2024 and was last updated on 17 August 2024.

INTRODUCTION

Review question / Objective This study aims to reveal the causes, manifestations, and coping strategies of compassion fatigue among nurses through a meta-integration analysis of their real experiences.

Rationale With the advancement of medical technology and the increasing demand for high-quality healthcare services, the scope of work and responsibilities of nurses have significantly expanded, leading to immense emotional pressure and a heightened risk of professional burnout.

Condition being studied With the advancement of medical technology and the increasing demand for high-quality healthcare services, the scope of work and responsibilities of nurses have significantly expanded, leading to immense emotional pressure and a heightened risk of professional burnout.

METHODS

Search strategy To comprehensively understand the current status, causes, and coping strategies related to compassion fatigue among nurses, this study conducted a systematic search of multiple electronic databases, including PubMed, Web of Science, Cochrane Library, CNKI, Wanfang, and VIP, covering the period from the inception of each database until August 2024. The search strategy utilized keywords closely related to the research topic, including "nurse," "compassion fatigue," "stress," "cause," "coping strategy," and "qualitative research." During the search process, we meticulously documented the specific search strategies and keyword usage for each database. We also applied strict literature screening and inclusion criteria to ensure that the studies included were of high quality and relevance.

Participant or population Population (P): The study subjects are clinical nurses, who are required

to have a certain level of communication skills and voluntarily participate in the study. These nurses should be able to effectively express their inner feelings and have a clear understanding of the study content.

Intervention Interest of Phenomena (I): This study focuses on the experiences of clinical nurses with compassion fatigue, specifically including their inner feelings and real experiences when facing patients' suffering. These experiences may involve emotional exhaustion, psychological burdens from work pressure, and the gradual weakening of compassion.

Comparator Context (C): The study context is set in situations where nurses face compassion fatigue, meaning they experience physical and emotional trauma from prolonged exposure to patients' suffering, leading to a gradual decline in their capacity for compassion. This context not only affects the nurses' psychological well-being but may also impact their professional performance and the quality of care provided.

Study designs to be included The type of literature included in this study is qualitative research. Qualitative studies use in-depth interviews, focus group discussions, and other methods to explore the real experiences of nurses in their work, especially those related to compassion fatigue.

Eligibility criteria Non-nursing staff, non-qualitative research methods paper.

Information sources To comprehensively understand the current status, causes, and coping strategies related to compassion fatigue among nurses, this study conducted a systematic search of multiple electronic databases, including PubMed, Web of Science, Cochrane Library, CNKI, Wanfang, and VIP, covering the period from the inception of each database until August 2024.

Main outcome(s) Causes of compassion fatigue, manifestations, intervention strategies.

Quality assessment / Risk of bias analysis Two researchers independently conducted a quality assessment of the articles using the Joanna Briggs Institute (JBI) Qualitative Appraisal Instrument. This appraisal tool consists of a checklist with 10 items, each contributing to a total score of 20 points. Each item is evaluated based on the responses "yes," "no," or "unclear" (with corresponding scores of Yes = 2, No = 0, and Unclear = 1). The checklist is designed to assess various aspects of

qualitative research quality, including methodological rigor, transparency, and relevance. If discrepancies or uncertainties arose during the assessment, a third researcher was consulted to discuss and resolve potential issues. This ensured that the quality appraisal was conducted comprehensively and that all assessments were consistent with the established criteria. The methodology follows the three-step thematic synthesis framework by Thomas and Harden. XX and XX first performed line-by-line coding with "free codes" to clarify each line's meaning. XX then verified these codes for accuracy. In the second step, XX and XX categorized and grouped the codes into descriptive themes, labeled as "challenges" or "coping experiences." XX and XX further developed analytical themes through review and synthesis of the descriptive themes, leading to a final discussion among all authors on themes such as the causes, manifestations, and coping strategies of compassion fatigue.

The Confidence in the Evidence from Reviews of Qualitative Research (CERQual) approach assessed the confidence in the findings. CERQual evaluates methodological limitations, consistency, data adequacy, and relevance using the JBI qualitative assessment tool. Two reviewers analyzed the findings based on these components and discussed them with a third reviewer.

Strategy of data synthesis The methodology follows the three-step thematic synthesis framework by Thomas and Harden. XX and XX first performed line-by-line coding with "free codes" to clarify each line's meaning. XX then verified these codes for accuracy. In the second step, XX and XX categorized and grouped the codes into descriptive themes, labeled as "challenges" or "coping experiences." XX and XX further developed analytical themes through review and synthesis of the descriptive themes, leading to a final discussion among all authors on themes such as the causes, manifestations, and coping strategies of compassion fatigue.

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Subgroup analysis None.

Sensitivity analysis None.

Country(ies) involved China, Anhui University of Chinese Medicine.

Keywords Compassion Fatigue, Nurses, Meta-Integration, Qualitative Research Lived Experiences.

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