

## Introduction

- Nurses are regularly exposed to potentially psychologically traumatic events, experience high rates of burnout, and may be at an elevated risk of death by suicide. Few studies have assessed for suicidal behaviors among nurses, and factors that may increase risk for suicidal behaviors are unknown (Stelnicki, 2020).
- Anxiety and depression are increased among nurses due to ill fit working conditions such as: low staffing, poor management, improper self-care, etc. (Hasan, et al., 2018).
- Stressors including lifestyle behaviors, workload, the COVID-19 pandemic, and mental health are affecting the increase of depression, anxiety, suicide ideation, and suicides in nurses (Ali et al., 2020; Sampson et al., 2019).



## Background & Significance

- Nursing suicide is a topic that has not been explored thoroughly and addressing it will allow for the topic to be a focus in prevention moving forward (Freire et al., 2020).
- In the United States, suicide is the 10th leading cause of death, and a need for awareness in increased job-related stress in nurses is extremely important to detect and prevent nursing suicides. (Patrician et al., 2020).
- COVID-19 is contributing to escalating stress levels in nurses due to an increase in workload and anxiety about the uncertainty of the pandemic (Ali et al., 2020).
- In the spring of 2020, US healthcare organizations began preparing to face the threat of the COVID-19 pandemic. Nurses were thrust into unfamiliar work environments and away from familiar coworkers. In some cases, nurses whose areas were closed were forced into unpaid time off, adding economic worries to their psychological distress (Glasofer & Townsend, 2020).
- About 69 billion dollars in medical and loss of jobs are caused by suicides and suicide attempts (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2018). More than 47,500 people died by suicide in 2019 (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2021).



(Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2021)

## Literature Review Methods

- Among some of the literature found, a variety of testing methods were used including, Patient Health Questionnaire-9, Generalized Anxiety Disorder 7-item Scale, stress and support scales (Xiaoming et al., 2020, p. 556), The Pittsburgh Sleep Quality Index, the Self-Rating Anxiety Scale, the General Self-Efficacy Scale (Freire et al., 2020), and Attitudes Toward Suicide Scale (Olibamoyo et al., 2020). These were all used to find, identify, and collect sociodemographic features, epidemic-related factors, suicidal and self-harm ideation, to detect the risk factors to psychological effects (Xiaoming et al., 2020, p. 556), to quantify depressive symptoms, anxiety symptoms, and overall stress (Freire et al., 2020).
- A literature review consisting of 17 papers. These 17 papers were reviewed for the following key terms: risk assessments, occurrence rates, and risk management of post-traumatic stress syndrome (PTSS) in Health Care Workers (HCW) during the current COVID-19 pandemic. The literature was reviewed to look for specific keywords. Some of them are but aren't limited to "post-traumatic stress disorder", "post-traumatic stress symptoms", "COVID-19", "SarsCoV-2", "healthcare worker", "occurrence", and "prevalence". The keywords were combined in order to conduct the literature search (d'Ettorre et al., 2021).
- Mixed-method retrospective analysis of 739 nurse versus 94,838 non-nurse suicides. Odds ratios (OR) were calculated to determine relative incidence. Latent Dirichlet Analysis and Latent Semantic Indexing topic modeling techniques were applied (Davidson, 2020).
- A cross-sectional survey about attitudes toward suicide was done among 226 doctors and nurses working at a tertiary institute hospital in Lagos, Nigeria, using the Attitudes Toward Suicide Scale (ATTS) (Olibamoyo et al., 2020).



(Davidson, 2017)

## Findings

- The percentages were 9.4% for high-level depression, 5.1% for anxiety, and 19.8% for somatic symptoms in hospital workers during the COVID-19 epidemic (Xiaoming et al, 2020, p. 557).
- Healthcare professionals presented 17.59% for depressive symptoms, 20.37% anxiety symptoms and 20.83% stress. Overall, the study shows that of the 216 participants, 15.74% had a risk of suicide in the last 30 days (Freire et al., 2020).
- COVID-19 led to an increase in career related stress for nurses with 71% worried about receiving more patients and taking care of the sick patients, and 82% afraid to get loved ones infected with COVID-19 (Ali et al., 2020).
- The study Professional Quality of Life Scale-5 (ProQOL-5) taken place in a trauma center in Arizona revealed that 43% of the participants were at risk for moderate to high level of compassion fatigue and 10% of the participants were in the highest risk level of compassion fatigue (Wijdenes et al., 2019).
- Considerable proportions of participants reported past-year and/or lifetime suicidal ideation (10.5%, 33%), plans (4.6%, 17%), and attempts (0.7%, 8%), considerably higher than general population estimates. Significant differences were identified across age years of service, marital status, region, and nursing type (e.g., registered psychiatric nurses, licensed practical nurses, registered nurses). Participants who screened positive for almost all measured mental disorders had significantly higher rates of suicidal behavior (Stelnicki, 2020).
- A total of 1,824 nurse and 152,495 non-nurse suicides were evaluated. Nurses were at greater risk of suicide than the general population. Female nurses who completed suicide did so most frequently by pharmacologic poisoning, whereby male nurses and the general public used firearms. Job problems were more likely in nurses, as well as mental health history and leaving a suicide note (Davidson, 2020).
- Frequency of suicide attempts of 7.5% was found among respondents. Attitudes toward suicidal behavior were slightly positive and the independent predictors of less positive attitudes were nursing profession and high self-rated irritation toward suicide (Olibamoyo et al., 2020).

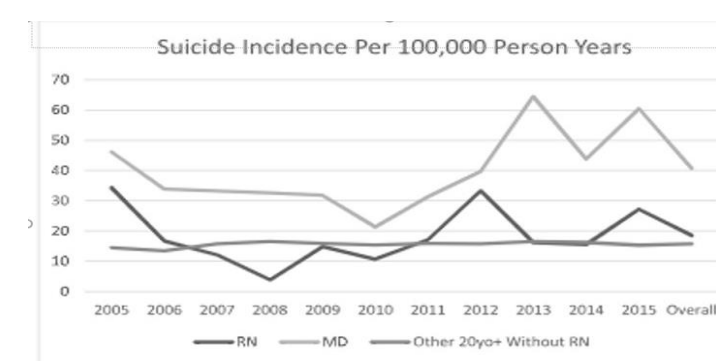


Figure 1. San Diego County incidence of suicide per 100 000 person-years.

(Davidson, 2018)

## Conclusions & Implications

- In several studies, the nursing suicide attempt rate has been found to be higher than that of the average person (Freire et al., 2020).
- Doctors and nurses reported slightly positive correlations in attitudes towards suicidal behavior with significant differences in type of profession and levels of self-rated irritation towards suicide, as well as level of education and training required. Therefore, a need for continuous training on suicidology should be required for all medical professions. (Olibamoyo et al., 2020).
- Nurses today are amid a stress storm. A nurse's ability to survive in these difficult times depends on healthcare organizations understanding that this is not business as usual, acknowledge that the crisis is ongoing, and plan for the inevitability of psychological harm to professional caregivers and provide meaningful support. This must go beyond TV ads of thanks, pizza in the breakroom, and coffee mugs by offering early and unlimited access to mental health care that is readily available and offered without reproach will be the key to survival for many nurses impacted by this tragedy (Glasofer & Townsend, 2020).
- New research needs to be developed, with more methodologies that contribute to increased focus on suicide risk among nursing professionals regarding the identification of risk factors and predictive characteristics in this population (Freire et al., 2020).
- There is a need to define healthcare policies devoted to preventive strategies. This pandemic has posed a great challenge for healthcare workers forced to measure themselves against a disease that was risky for their own health and that of their patients. (d'Ettorre et al., 2021). Nurses in the current pandemic should be able to adapt to this environment and must find ways to cope and strategize based on an individual. Focusing on supporting nurses during and after the pandemic is essential for the future of nursing and the safety of the public (Glasofer & Townsend, 2020).

## References

The collection of 14 articles collected from the ETSU Online Sherrod Library were used from the databases, MEDLINE, Ovid, ProQuest, and PubMed along with the CDC were utilized to conduct, search, and identify useful, peer-reviewed articles that were written within the last 5 years.



References

Scan the QR code with your phone camera and click view PDF to see the complete list of references.