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KEYWORDS: Covid -19, Pandemic, Burnout, post effect of Covid- 19, Nursing faculty, Nursing professionals

**IMPACT OF COVID -19 ON INSTITUTIONALLY ATTACHED NURSING PROFESSIONALS OF NEPAL
SUBJECT: PUBLIC HEALTH**



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**Abstract**

Aim: The specific aim of the study was to assess the impact of COVID-19 pandemic on nursing faculty experiences. **Background:** Academic nursing experiences were disrupted due to the COVID-19 pandemic. There is concern that the resulting stress threatens nursing faculty emotional well-being and reason to burnout. **Method:** A descriptive, quantitative study was conducted; exploring faculty academic and clinical roles during the COVID-19 pandemic by using structured, self designed, open-ended questionnaire to 401 institutionally attached nursing health professionals. The questionnaire includes various domains including Safety and Health, Challenges for teaching, clinical practise, supervision perception of institutional support provided; faculty burnout, satisfaction, and well-being. **Results:** Overall satisfaction with the working environment in the institutions with respect to total teaching experience showed a significant statistical. Participants perceived support from academic institutions and increased need to provide emotional support to students. **Conclusion:** Nursing faculty are essential to the profession. Nursing faculty require proactive and sustained institutional and personal support to provide exceptional ongoing education, build resilience, and support students.

Introduction / Need for the Study

Corona virus disease (COVID-19) is an infectious disease caused by the SARS-CoV-2 virus. The corona virus pandemic has caused major disruption of systems worldwide, including education and health services. The duration and scale of the impact is yet to be established. Globally, as of 15 March 2022, there have been 458,479,635 confirmed cases of COVID-19, including 6,047,653 deaths, reported to WHO.¹

The spread of COVID-19 has sent shockwaves across the globe. The public health crisis, unprecedented in our lifetimes, has caused severe human suffering and loss of life. The exponential rise in infected patients and the dramatic consequences of serious cases of the disease have overwhelmed hospitals and health professionals and put significant strain on the health sector.

The COVID-19 pandemic has also had a severe impact on higher education as universities closed their premises and countries shut their borders in response to lockdown measures. Although higher

education institutions were quick to replace face-to-face lectures with online learning, these closures affected learning and examinations.

Nursing professors have an important and significant role in both the academic and clinical settings. Faculty are expected to uphold the values of their academic and clinical institutions, act as change agents, stay up to date on the latest teaching strategies and technologies, demonstrate leadership and management skills, and participate in advocacy strategies to help students and organizations grow. In the case of the present epidemic, all academic institutions are putting even greater pressure on already overburdened professors. For individuals inexperienced with the complexities of virtual learning, this endeavour has proved difficult, adding both workload and stress at an already stressful time.²

Burnout has been widely studied in clinical nursing practice but has received little attention in nursing faculty (Thomas et al., 2019; Yedidia et al., 2014).^{3,4} Regardless of setting, burnout is characterized by feelings of emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and a low sense of personal accomplishment resulting from conditions in the workplace (Dolan et al., 2015).⁵ Emotional exhaustion, perceived heavy faculty workload, maintenance of advanced practice certifications, and dissatisfaction with teaching support have been found to be predictors of intent to leave in nursing faculty (Yedidia et al., 2014). Yedidia et al. (2014) reported that emotional exhaustion was more prevalent in nursing faculty than in nurses in clinical nursing practice (39 percent vs. 34 percent of samples, respectively).⁴

Though the availability of literature regarding impact of Covid -19 is abundant, only few studies have been conducted to assess the challenges faced by the nursing academicians during Covid-19. Hence, the present study is conducted to assess Impact of Covid-19 on institutionally attached Nursing Professionals of Nepal.

Aim:

To assess Impact of Covid -19 on institutionally attached Nursing Professionals of Nepal.

Objectives:

To assess Impact of Covid -19 on institutionally attached Nursing Professionals of Nepal by using self designed, pre tested questionnaire.

To suggest any recommendations based on the findings of the study.

Methodology

The quantitative, descriptive cross sectional study was conducted during mid 2021 to assess various challenges' faced by the nursing health professionals those who are attached to academic institutions.

Prior to start of the study ethical approval was taken from Formal approval will be obtained from concerned authorities i.e. NHRC (Nepal Health Research Council), NNC (Nepal Nursing Council) and Cyberjaya University College of Medical Sciences (CUCMS) Research Ethics Committee. Also permission was sought from all heads of nursing colleges to recruit their faculty in this study.

The research instrument was a structured, self designed, open-ended questionnaire which was pre-tested among a group of nursing health professionals who are attached to academic institutions in a pilot study under similar conditions. The questionnaire included 20 items questions which were categorized into 4 domains. Domain 1 included questions related to the information regarding socio-demographic characteristics of study population, nature of job, salary, total teaching and clinical experience. Domain 2 included questions related to assesses knowledge, practise and training related to Safety and Health during Covid-19. Domain 4 included questions related to Challenges faced by academicians for classroom teaching. Domain 5 included questions related to Challenges for clinical practise, supervision during Covid -19. Domain 6 included questions related to various activities conducted by institutions / organizations in response to academic challenges during Covid-19. Domain 7 included questions related to various effects on academicians during covid -19 in terms of teaching strategy, continue education and training, professional growth and development, salary on time & proper evaluation of work. Based on this entire domain, overall satisfaction level was assessed.

Data collection:

Data was collected by using Google form Questionnaire was sent to different 401 nursing faculty member all over the Nepal regarding academic challenges faced by faculty member during Covid-19. Participants were anonymous with no identifying data collection related to themselves or their workplace. Prior to study, Questionnaire was pre-tested and validated for construct, content & criterion validity and also assessed for reliability and ease of use. Only completely filled questionnaires were considered for analysis.

Data analysis:

Data analysis was conducted using SPSS 20. Descriptive statistics including frequency and percentage were conducted to describe the sample. Chi square test was used to check the difference in satisfaction level of working environment based on their experience & monthly salary.

Result

The present cross sectional study was conducted to assess the impact of Covid -19 on institutionally attached Nursing Professionals of Nepal by using self designed, pre tested questionnaire

Table No. 1: Socio-demographic characteristics of study population (N= 401)

| Socio-demographic characteristics | n (%) | |
|-----------------------------------|------------------------------|------------|
| Age | Below 35 | 281 (70.1) |
| | 35 and above | 120 (29.9) |
| Marital Status | Married | 305 (76.1) |
| | Unmarried/Separated/Divorced | 96 (23.9) |
| Monthly salary | Less than 25000 | 120 (29.9) |
| | 25000-49999 | 174 (43.4) |
| | 50000 and above | 107 (26.7) |

| | | |
|------------------------------|------------------------------|------------|
| Level of education | BSc /Post-Basic Nursing | 229 (57.1) |
| | Master/ Mphil/PhD in nursing | 172 (42.9) |
| Nature of job | Permanent | 109 (27.2) |
| | Contract | 292 (72.8) |
| Total teaching experience | 1- 5 Years | 215 (53.6) |
| | 6- 10 Years | 115 (28.7) |
| | More than 10 Years | 71 (17.7) |
| Clinical experience | Yes | 347 (86.5) |
| | No | 54 (13.5) |
| Years of clinical experience | 1- 5 Years | 271 (77.7) |
| | 6- 10 Years | 51 (14.6) |
| | More than 10 Years | 27 (7.7) |

Table 1 showed that the (70.1%) of the respondents were age below 35. The majority (76.1%) was married and most of them belong to the nuclear families (54.4%). It shows that, most of the respondent earns Rs.25000 – 49999(43.4%) as a monthly salary. Maximum had bachelor-level education (57.1%) and remaining had higher education level. Maximum respondent work as contract basis. Majority had 1-5 years of teaching experiences(53.6%) and 86.5% had clinical experience in which maximum 77.7% had only 1-5 years of clinical experiences only 7.7 % had more than 10 years of clinical experiences.

Table No. 2 : Socio-demographic characteristics o fstudy population (N= 401)

| Domain / Area | Components | Frequency (%) | Adjusted R ² | sig |
|---|--|---------------|-------------------------|-------|
| Safety and health component | Faculty members informed about safety and health | 206 (30.4) | 0.140 | 0.00 |
| | Is there a safety and health committee | 181 (26.7) | | |
| | Faculty members are trained to respond to campus safety and health threats | 146 (21.5) | | |
| | Faculty members been trained on how best to work during the Covid-19 pandemic threat. | 145 (21.4) | | |
| Challenges to classroom teaching-learning due to Covid-19 | No practical's | 211 | 0.005 | 0.276 |
| | lack of two-way communication | 170 (15) | | |
| | No proper assessment and evaluation | 160 (14.2) | | |
| | Time limitation for lectures | 161 (14.2) | | |
| | Lack of internet services | 134 (11.9) | | |
| | Work overload | 124 (11) | | |
| | Class doesn't go fast | 88 (7.8) | | |
| | Unusual & unfamiliar method of teaching-learning | 82 (7.3) | | |
| Challenges to clinical practice supervision during covid-19 | High risk to work in hospital due to lack of personal protective equipment(PPE) | 280 (26.2) | 0.027 | 0.08 |
| | Very difficult to give case scenarios to first-year students who have not to expose to clinical work | 250 (26.2) | | |
| | Hospital posting is not allowed | 216 (26.2) | | |

| | | | | |
|--|--|------------|-------|-------|
| | Little clinical work is done | 221 (26.2) | | |
| | Not able to afford PPE as PPE are expensive | 111 (26.2) | | |
| Various activities carried out by organizations to respond to academic challenges during Covid-19 pandemic | Training on using Zoom/Teams/Google | 237 (18) | 0.038 | 0.003 |
| | The university gave a clear decision reg. exam | 228 (17.3) | | |
| | Good support from the organization | 202 (15.4) | | |
| | Proper information and communication through management | 191 (14.5) | | |
| | Covid-19 insurance for faculty | 159 (12.1) | | |
| | Proper facilities for nursing faculty as compared to other departments | 140 (10.6) | | |
| | Training on covid-19 pandemic | 85 (6.5) | | |
| | Provides PPE | 73 (5.6) | | |
| Impact on nursing faculty in various aspects due to covid-19 | Develop a new concept on teaching strategy | 316 (40.8) | 0.077 | 0.000 |
| | High chance of continue education & training | 138 (17.8) | | |
| | Increase professional growth and development | 119 (15.4) | | |
| | Salary on time due to covid-19 | 103 (13.3) | | |
| | Proper evaluation of work | 98 (12.7) | | |

Table No. 3 : Socio-demographic characteristics of study population (N = 401)

| | | Frequency (%) | Chi Square value = | sig |
|---|------------------|---------------|--------------------|-------|
| Overall satisfaction level with safety & Health | Very Unsatisfied | 26 (6.5) | 234.923 | 0.000 |
| | Unsatisfied | 106 (26.4) | | |
| | Neutral | 177 (44.1) | | |
| | Satisfied | 88 (22) | | |
| | Very Satisfied | 4 (1) | | |

Safety and health component

Maximum no. of faculties were informed about safety and health (30.4%), only (26.7%) organization have safety and health committee and they are trained to response to it (21.5%) but only 21.4% faculty were trained about covid-19 pandemic.

Challenges to classroom teaching-learning due to Covid-19 pandemic There are certain challenges to classroom teaching due to covid-19, highest no of faculties agree with no practical's (18.7%),lack of two way communication (15.0%), no proper assessment and evaluation and as well as time limitation for lectures (14.2%),lack of internet services (11.9%), work overload(11.0%), only few respondent had agree with class doesn't go fast (7.8%) and Unusual and unfamiliar method of teaching-learning (7.3%).

Challenges to clinical practice supervision during covid-19 pandemic Challenges to clinical practice, supervision during covid-19 pandemic is due to High risk to work in hospital because of lack of personal protective equipment(PPE) (26.2%) and expensive PPE (10.4%). Other challenges like Very difficult to give case scenarios to first-year students who have not to expose to clinical work (23.4%),Hospital posting is not allowed (20.2%) and little clinical work is done (19.8%).

Activities have been taken most effectively by organizations to respond to academic challenges during Covid-19 pandemic

Activities have been taken most effectively by organizations to respond to academic challenges during Covid-19 pandemic are training on using zoom/Google/teams (18.0%), university gave clear decision regarding exam (17.3%),good support from organization (15.4%),proper information and communication through management (14.5%), Covid-19 insurance for faculty (12.1%),proper facilities for nursing faculty as compared to other departments (10.6%), training on Covid-19 pandemic (6.5%), provides PPE (5.6%).

Impact on nursing faculty in various aspects due to covid-19 pandemic There are many Effect of covid-19 pandemic in academic like maximum respondents develop a new concept on teaching strategy (40.8%) but there is only 13.3% got salary on time and 12.7% respondents work had been evaluate properly. Other effect like, there was a high chance of continue education and training (17.8%) and increase professional growth and development (15.4%).

Overall satisfaction level with safety & health

Overall respondents were unsatisfied (32.9%), neutral (44.1%),satisfied (23.0%) with safety and health in organization.

Table 4. Overall satisfaction level with the working environment in the institutions with respect to total teaching experience and monthly salary

| | | Very Unsatisfied | Unsatisfied | Neutral | Satisfied | Very Unsatisfied | Total | |
|------------------------------|-----------------|------------------|-------------|---------|-----------|------------------|-------|--|
| Based on teaching experience | 1-5 Years | 13 | 51 | 103 | 46 | 2 | 215 | Chi Square value = 31.720 (P = 0.001*) |
| | 6-10 Years | 3 | 20 | 56 | 36 | 0 | 115 | |
| | More than 10Yr | 4 | 10 | 18 | 38 | 1 | 71 | |
| | Total | 20 | 81 | 177 | 120 | 3 | 401 | |
| Based on Monthly Salary | Less than 25000 | 6 | 27 | 61 | 24 | 2 | 120 | Chi Square value = 17.310 (P = 0.027*) |
| | 25000-49999 | 9 | 36 | 79 | 50 | 0 | 174 | |
| | 50000 & above | 5 | 18 | 37 | 46 | 1 | 107 | |
| | Total | 20 | 81 | 117 | 120 | 3 | 401 | |

Table 5. Overall rating of the working environment in the institutions with respect to total teaching experience and monthly salary

| | | Very poor | Need to improve | Good working environment | Excellent working environment | Total | |
|--|-----------------|-----------|-----------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------|-------|--|
| Total score based on teaching experience | 1-5 Years | 68 | 65 | 55 | 27 | 215 | Chi Square value = 53.110 (P = 0.001*) |
| | 6-10 Years | 24 | 22 | 35 | 34 | 115 | |
| | More than 10 Yr | 10 | 10 | 14 | 37 | 71 | |
| | Total | 102 | 97 | 104 | 98 | 401 | |

| | | | | | | | |
|-------------------------------------|-----------------|-----|----|-----|----|-----|--|
| Total score based on Monthly Salary | Less than 25000 | 40 | 38 | 30 | 12 | 120 | Chi Square value = 36.772 (P = 0.001*) |
| | 25000 - 49999 | 42 | 37 | 54 | 41 | 174 | |
| | 50000 & above | 20 | 22 | 20 | 45 | 107 | |
| | Total | 102 | 97 | 104 | 98 | 401 | |

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Overall satisfaction with the working environment in the institutions with respect to total teaching experience showed a significant statistical Chi Square value = 31.720 (P = 0.001*) with study subjects having experience more than 10 years showing higher level of satisfaction where as those having less than 10 years were mostly neutral.

Overall satisfaction with the working environment in the institutions with respect to monthly salary showed a significant statistical Chi Square value = 17.310 (P = 0.027*) with study subjects having Monthly salary of 25000 - 49999 showing higher level of satisfaction where as those having above 50000 were of the opinion where they rated the working environment to be very poor or need of improvement. On the contrary, those with salary above 50000 rated the working environment as good (20) and excellent (42).

Discussion

Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, a known threat to nursing education was the faculty shortage, with faculty workload and an inability to meet role expectations as one factor contributing to the shortage (Yedidia et al., 2014).⁴ Younger faculty members reported higher burnout levels (Thomas et al., 2019) and more emotional exhaustion, which have been associated with intent to leave (Yedidia et al., 2014).⁴ This may be exacerbated by the economic environment, including furloughs and cutbacks seen across college campuses as the COVID-19 pandemic continues (Bauman, 2020)⁶

While the long-term impact of the crisis is uncertain, the pandemic may affect public spending on education as funds are diverted into the health sector and the economy. The impact of the crisis on education Public financing of education in OECD countries 11% of public expenditure was devoted to education before the pandemic. However, the current crisis may affect education budgets more quickly as public revenues decline sharply and governments review the prioritisation of education in national budgets.

Conclusion

Nursing faculty were part of the essential workforce during the initial wave of the COVID-19 pandemic. Nursing faculty require proactive and sustained institutional and personal support to provide exceptional ongoing education, build resilience, and support students.

The COVID-19 pandemic response is ongoing, Further research related to the continued effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on nursing faculty and students is warranted.

Recommendations

In view of covid -19 pandemic, implementing learning recovery programs, protecting education budgets, organisational support and preparing for future shocks are best tools to overcome such situation.

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