



RESEARCH ARTICLE

The Role of Management Policy Helps Nurses' Coping Mechanism in Dealing with Work Stress in COVID-19 Pandemic Services

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Many studies prove that health workers, especially nurses, experienced high work stress during the COVID-19 pandemic. Although nurses faced extremely high work pressure during the pandemic, many felt they did not get the adequate organizational support, both physical and psychological, necessary to cope with stress. This condition indicates the need for better policies and programs from hospital management to support the mental health of nurses and help them develop effective coping mechanisms in stressful situations. This study aims to analyze the coping mechanism of nurses and the role of management policies as a support system for nurses in dealing with work stress during COVID-19 services. This study uses a descriptive qualitative approach. The sample of this study consisted of 8 nurses determined purposively with the criterion of having experience in providing direct services to Covid-19 patients. In addition to the implementing nurse, we involved 3 nursing managers as respondents. The first step was to carry out the Focus Group Discussion with the implementing nurses. The second step is an interview with the nursing manager. Data analysis using the Nvivo 14 device. The most widely used coping mechanisms are Participating in briefings, updating knowledge, sharing experiences, encouraging each other, praying, listening to music, and joking. The support from management that is considered the most helpful is human resource arrangements, spiritual and psychic facilities, appreciation, health maintenance, completing facilities, service priorities, and supervision. The informant assesses management support to help nurses choose adaptive coping strategies to adapt to high work stress.

INTRODUCTION

The covid-19 pandemic has caused major problems in the health care system, causing high psychological pressure for health service professionals (Giusti et al., 2020). (Nadeem et al., 2021). (Çelmeçe & Menekay, 2020). Health workers receive work pressure for several reasons, including increased workloads, extended working hours, inadequate PPE, frequently changing regulations and new experiences that have never been faced (Panse et al., 2021). The psychological pressure is getting worse because health workers get stigmatized because of contact with infected patients. Stigma not only from the community but also from family members and friends in the same hospital (Cabarkapa et al., 2020a). (Khanal et al., 2020). Countries experiencing the COVID-19 epidemic have shown that healthcare workers experience high rates of COVID-19 infection, morbidity, and mortality, which adds to the psychological burden on health workers who spearhead services (Dramowski et al., 2020). Health workers, especially nurses, are one of the professions that experience high work pressure during the covid-19 pandemic. Nurses as one of the health workers on the front lines of service face many stressful situations at work during the pandemic. Nurses feel more stress than other health workers (Korkmaz et al., 2020).

Nurses feel that they do not receive organizational support including psychiatric help, and there are even nurses who are reported not to take advantage of psychological support (Ali et al., 2020). Psychological support needs to be thought about and implemented to improve mental health among

nurses during the pandemic (Zhang et al., 2020). Nurses need support in the form of policies from management so that they can choose a good coping mechanism in dealing with stress. They feel that they do not receive adequate support and often face stigma from friends in the hospital and the community (Panse et al., 2021). Although there is a lot of evidence related to strategies to prevent and reduce this condition, there is little evidence to identify which strategies are most effective for nurses. There is no consensus on how best to support staff (Quon et al., 2022) It is not yet known policies that support nurses in dealing with work stress. Lack of social support, in turn, leads to anxiety, post-traumatic (Cui et al., 2021). Good coping eating is carried out with intrapersonal, interpersonal, material, and structural approaches (Scheunemann et al., 2023). Choosing the right coping strategy with a positive approach has been shown to reduce stress levels and the impact of other psychological symptoms (Panse et al., 2021).

Health workers, especially nurses who are at the forefront of service, need the support of coping mechanisms from management (Sehularo et al., 2021). Several studies have proven that social support is an important source of positive psychological qualities (Shi et al., 2022). In a pandemic situation such as Covid-19, hospital management must prioritize programs to provide support to nurses to be able to adapt to work pressure and protocol uncertainty (Cabansag et al., 2023). Support from institutions is very important to overcome the symptoms of physio-psychosocial stress experienced by nurses (Ali et al., 2022). Hospital management should provide opportunities for nurses to discuss the stress they are experiencing, support each other, and offer advice according to their roles and positions during this pandemic (Arnetz et al., 2020). Nursing management must pay attention to the conditions of nurses' work stress and factors that affect and provide solutions to maintain the mental health of nurses in providing services during the Covid-19 pandemic (Mo et al., 2020). Organizational coping and support strategies proved to be crucial in addressing harmful psycho-physiological symptoms experienced by nurses (Ali et al., 2022). To retain nurses who will remain loyal to their workplace, workplace agencies must provide the facilities and support they need. When they feel they don't have support they have the potential to quit their job (Heijden et al., 2019) Leaders and organizations play a very important role in building a positive coping mechanism for nurses to achieve self-efficacy at work (Bardhan et al., 2019). This research is important because the recent Covid-19 pandemic requires special policies in order to adapt quickly to the new service order.

METHODS

This study uses a descriptive qualitative approach. The sample of this study consisted of 8 nurses determined purposively with the criterion of having experience in providing direct services to Covid-19 patients. In addition to the implementing nurse, we involved 3 nursing managers as respondents. The first step was to carry out the FGD with the implementing nurses. The second step is an interview with the nursing manager. Data analysis using the Nvivo 14 device. The location of the research at the Dr. Soedono Madiun Regional General Hospital

RESULTS

To better understand the findings of this study, we can examine the visual representation of the data presented in Figure 1. This word cloud highlights the most frequently mentioned terms by the informants, providing insight into their experiences during COVID-19 services.



Figure 1 Word Cloud

Figure 1 shows that the word stress is the most dominant word conveyed by informants in this study, this shows that the majority of informants in this study have experienced stress in COVID-19 services

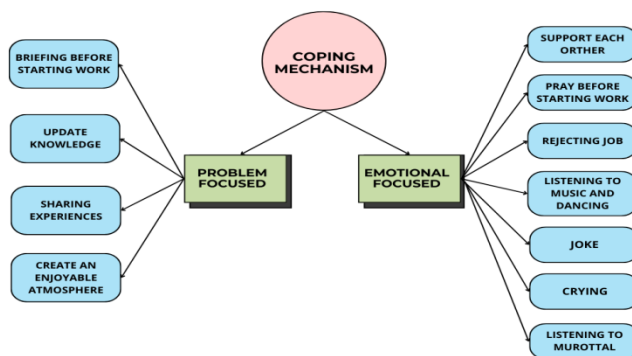


Figure 1 Mind Map Coping Mechanism

The coping mechanism in figure 2 is divided into problem-focused coping and emotion-focused coping. Problem-focused coping mechanisms consist of; followed the direction from the head of the room. Trying to gain new knowledge about the management of Covid-19 patients, discussing and exchanging experiences in dealing with sources of stress and trying to make the service atmosphere as comfortable as possible. Emotion-focused coping mechanisms consist of; Encourage each other between team members, always pray together before starting work, listen to music while dancing in between work breaks, joke with friends, listen to Morottal. Two maladaptive mechanisms in the form of refusing tasks and venting stress by crying. The second emotion-focused coping mechanism very effective in reducing work stress and improving the mental well-being of nurses in the face of high pressure at work (Achour et al., 2019)

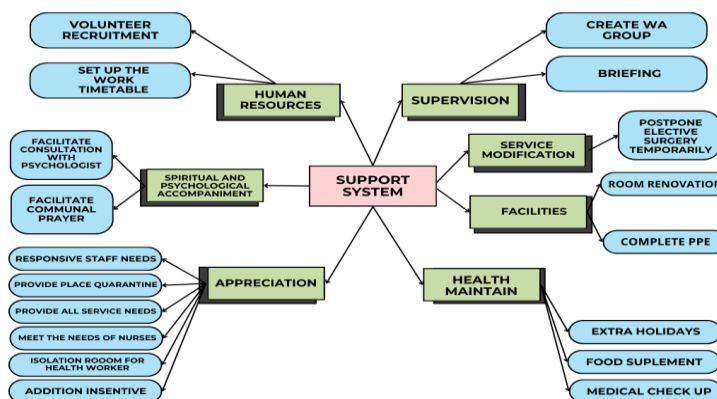


Figure 2 Mind Map Support System

In figure 3, there are 7 management policy themes that are considered to help nurses in coping mechanisms to deal with work stress during the pandemic, namely; Policies on human resource management, facilitating support in the form of psychologist assistance and spiritual support in the form of online recitation and prayer together, support in the form of appreciation, support in the form of health care and maintenance, support in the form of providing physical facilities, support in the form of service modification and supervision both directly and indirectly through WA social media.

DISCUSSION

Coping mechanism

Data analysis using Word Cloud The word stress is the most widely conveyed word by informants, namely 131 times or 2.06% of all words, this provides clues to many stress experiences experienced by informants when providing services during the Covid-19 pandemic. These results are in line with

most of the research that Nurses around the world are experiencing increased stress due to COVID-19, which is impacting their mental health Nurses around the world are experiencing increased stress due to COVID-19, which is impacting their mental health (Cabansag et al., 2023). Many studies have found that healthcare professionals including nurses around the world experience stress and burnout (Tomaszewska et al., 2022).

Briefing is the main choice as a problem-focused coping mechanism. Nursing staff hope that by attending the briefing they can keep up to date with the latest developments in the care of COVID-19 patients. During the briefing, nurses convey service problems to management to provide solutions.(Bakhuys Roozeboom et al., 2020). One of the causes of stress for nurses in providing services to Covid-19 patients is the frequently changing guidelines. Nurses feel the need to continue to gain the latest knowledge about Covid-19 (Cabarkapa et al., 2020b). Nurses choose to Share Experiences with fellow team members to reduce stress due to lack of facilities and infrastructure, especially when there is a shortage of PPE. Sharing experiences is felt by nurses to improve team morale and can reduce Stress in the Workplace(Aghaie & Sciences, 2023). Nurses strive to create a comfortable work atmosphere and environment. Creating a healthy work environment is very helpful in reducing stress for nurses, increasing job satisfaction, well-being, and patient safety (Efkemann et al., 2019).

The most preferred emotion-focused coping mechanism for nurses is mutual encouragement. Mutual encouragement means that team members provide emotional and mental support to each other. For example, when someone is facing stress or difficulties in their work, coworkers can provide support by listening to their concerns, giving advice, or even just showing empathy. This kind of support can help reduce feelings of stress and increase morale.(Priya & Christopher, 2024). One of the challenges for nursing managers during the covid-19 pandemic is the refusal of nurses to serve in the isolation room, or the resignation of nurses to serve in the isolation room. This kind of coping mechanism is maladaptive, so it needs further assistance from management (Allen, 2021). The coping mechanism is by listening to music. A study proved that listening to music reduces anxiety and controls vital signs such as heart rate and blood pressure, this shows that music has a psychological, physiological impact and is effective in lowering nurses' stress (Calamassi et al., 2022). Humor in a high-stress work environment can reduce psychological distress (León-Pérez et al., 2021). The informant in this study revealed that there were some nurses who vented their stress by crying. Crying is one of the coping mechanisms focusing on maladaptive emotions so that if not treated immediately, it can continue to become PTS (Portoghese et al., 2021).

Support system

A comprehensive HR management policy focuses not only on operational aspects but also on the overall well-being of employees. By providing psychological, spiritual, appreciative, health, physical facilities, and supervision through social media, management can create a healthy, productive, and sustainable work environment. This policy support is felt by nurses to have a positive impact. At the height of the pandemic, management faced the problem of a shortage of nursing staff, because most of the existing nurses had to undergo isolation, while the number of patients continued to increase. The only way to go is to *recruit volunteer nurses*. The role of volunteers is very helpful (Li et al., 2023) (Lopez, 2021). Nurses feel very distressed when they witness some of their friends dying in treatment. The management seeks to arouse the confidence and enthusiasm of nurses by facilitating online prayer events. This psychology and spiritual approach is felt to be an extraordinary resource for nurses in dealing with mental pressure. Prayer has proven to be a coping strategy for managing the negative effects of work stress (Momeni-Ghaleghasemi et al., 2024). Management provides Psychologist assistance to support nurses both actively providing motivation to the treatment room and private consultations (Abdul Hamid & Yu, 2023).

Appreciation for employees is one of the best ways to increase their motivation and loyalty. Management must be responsive to meet facilities in supporting the work of nurses. One of the things experienced by nurses is the stigma of caring for patients who are highly infected, so the facilities of management by providing quarantine places and special isolation treatment rooms for employees are considered very useful. Another form of appreciation from management is always trying to meet the needs of care, especially PPE, and no less important is the form of management attention is to provide additional incentives (Pfister et al., 2020). Employee health maintenance is a key element in

human resource management that aims to create a productive and healthy work environment. Vaccination has a positive impact on mental health by reducing anxiety and depression (Lewandowska et al., 2024). Providing extra breaks for nurses can help reduce stress caused by prolonged workload and time, work stress, and burnout (Jackson & Usher, 2022)(Hoedl et al., 2021). Supplements rich in vitamins and minerals can help boost immunity, maintain energy, and support overall health. (Pavlidou et al., 2024). Medical check-ups are an important part of disease prevention efforts, besides that health checks are also considered by nurses as a form of management attention to nurses' health (Republic et al., 2024). Equipping facilities in the treatment room is absolutely necessary to keep nurses safe from the risk of infection. Modification of a regular treatment room into an isolation room is very helpful in meeting the increasing inpatient needs beyond the available bed capacity. The main consideration in renovating an emergency isolation room is to maintain the safety of both patients and staff. (Wessling et al., 2022).

During the Covid-19 pandemic, the number of regular patients decreased drastically while the number of covid patients increased sharply. This is the reason for the management to make a policy to modify services to reduce regular services to focus on mobilizing existing nurses to isolation rooms, including reducing elective surgery activities (Al-Jabir et al., 2020). Research on the effect of long work duration of nurses coupled with heavy workloads are very likely to cause nurses to feel anxious, depressed, tired, and sleepy(Jarrar et al., 2023). Management modifies the work schedule so that it allows nurses to get enough time off to rest to recover stamina. The role of nursing managers supervise has a significant effect on reducing the anxiety level of nursing staff During the pandemic, managers go directly to the treatment room to motivate and be ready to listen to complaints from staff (Malawat et al., 2021). Management creates a medium of communication with all staff through Whats App group. All nurses can submit complaints or proposals openly in the group and can be immediately responded to by the leadership (Masoni & Guelfi, 2020).

CONCLUSION

During the COVID-19 pandemic, nurses worldwide experienced significant increases in stress, which impacted their mental health. One of the most common problem-focused coping mechanisms used by nurses was attending briefings. Briefings allowed nurses to stay up to date on COVID-19 patient care and raise service issues with management. In addition, sharing experiences with colleagues was considered effective in boosting team morale and reducing stress due to lack of facilities and infrastructure.

Emotion-focused coping mechanisms, such as mutual support among team members, were also highly valued by nurses. Emotional support from colleagues helped reduce feelings of stress and boost morale. However, there were also maladaptive coping mechanisms, such as refusing to work in isolation rooms or listening to excessive music to reduce anxiety. The use of humor and crying were also identified as forms of emotional coping, although crying can be a sign of stress that requires further intervention.

Support from the management system is essential in creating a healthy and productive work environment. Comprehensive management policies, which include psychological, spiritual, and appreciation support, have a positive impact on nurses' well-being. For example, holding online prayer events, providing psychological assistance, and rewarding nurses' performance are some of the efforts made by management to support nurses' mental health. In addition, management also pays attention to nurses' physical health through vaccinations, supplements, routine health checks, and modifications to treatment rooms and work schedules to maintain the safety and well-being of nurses.

Overall, the combination of effective coping mechanisms and adequate management support has been shown to help nurses cope with mental stress during the COVID-19 pandemic, thereby creating a healthier and more sustainable work environment.

Author Contribution

All authors have significantly contributed to the conception, design, analysis, and/or interpretation of the study, as well as the writing of the manuscript. We have reviewed and approved the final version of the manuscript and agree to its submission to PJJSS

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