

Compassion Fatigue in Emergency Nurses: An Integrative Review

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Introduction

Compassion fatigue:

- Identified in all areas of healthcare and the world
- Interferes with the nurse's ability to be kind and compassionate
- Symptoms mimic those of Post Traumatic Stress Disorder and affect the body, mind, and spirit
- Is considered "the cost of caring"

Objectives

An integrative review to look at:

- The concept of compassion fatigue
- The prevalence of compassion fatigue
- The need for compassion fatigue resiliency training in emergency nurses.

Search Methods

- Medical librarian was enlisted
- Narrow enough to capture the target population
- Broad enough to obtain all the many terms used to describe the phenomenon of compassion fatigue
- Both a title and abstract review were completed
- Inclusion criteria were English, full-text articles
- Articles were excluded if they did not pertain to emergency nurses or compassion fatigue/burnout
- The Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analysis (PRISMA) guidelines for reporting systematic reviews were used in this review

PubMed

Search: (((("Stress, Psychological"[Mesh] OR "Compassion Fatigue"[Mesh] OR "Secondary Traumatization" [tiab] OR "Secondary Traumatizations" [tiab] OR "Vicarious Traumatization" [tiab] OR "Secondary Traumatic Stress" [tiab] OR "Secondary Trauma" [tiab] OR "Secondary Traumas" [tiab] OR "Vicarious Trauma" [tiab] OR "Vicarious Traumas" [tiab] OR "compassionate fatigue" [tiab] OR "compassionate fatigue" [tiab])) AND ("Emergency Service, Hospital"[Mesh] OR "Hospital Emergency Services" [tiab] OR "Emergency Departments" [tiab] OR "Emergency Department" [tiab] OR "Emergency Hospital Service"[tiab] OR "Emergency Hospital Services" [tiab] OR "Emergency Units" [tiab] OR "Emergency Unit" [tiab] OR "Emergency Ward" [tiab] OR "Emergency Wards" [tiab] OR "Hospital Emergency Service" [tiab] OR "Hospital Service Emergency" [tiab] OR "Hospital Service Emergencies" [tiab] OR "Emergency Room" [tiab] OR "Emergency Rooms" [tiab] OR "Emergency Outpatient Unit" [tiab] OR "Emergency Outpatient Units" OR "Emergency Nursing" [mh])) AND (nurse [tw] OR nurses [tw] OR nursing [tw])

Cumulative Index to Nursing and Allied Health Literature (CINAHL)

| Search ID# | Search Terms | Search Options | Last Run Via | Results |
|------------|--|-------------------------------|---|---------|
| S4 | (S1 and S2)AND(nurse OR nursing) | Search modes – Boolean/Phrase | Interface-EBSCOhost Research Databases Search screen-Advanced search Database-CINAHL Plus with full text | 485 |
| S3 | S1 and S2 | Search modes – Boolean/Phrase | Interface – EBSCOhost Research Databases Search Screen – Advanced Search Database – CINAHL Plus with Full Text | 1,017 |
| S2 | (((MH"Emergency Service+") OR (MH"Emergency Nurse Practitioners") OR (MH"Emergency Nursing+")) OR (emergency N3 (unit* OR ward* OR department* OR service* OR room* OR nurs*)))) | Search modes – Boolean/Phrase | Interface – EBSCOhost Research Databases Search Screen – Advanced Search Database – CINAHL Plus with Full Text | 86,701 |
| S1 | (MH "Stress, Psychological+") OR (((secondary or vicarious) N3 trauma*) OR (compassion*N3 fatigue)) | Search modes – Boolean/Phrase | Interface – EBSCOhost Research Databases Search Screen – Advanced Search Database – CINAHL Plus with Full Text | 55,253 |

Other Data Bases

- PsychINFO
- The Joanna Briggs Institute
- The New York Academy of Medicine Grey Literature
- No further evidence was discovered with these additional searches

Method of Grading Evidence

- A comprehensive literature review of 19 articles was conducted
- Each piece was appraised as to its level and quality
- The Synthesis and Recommendations Tool guidelines from the Johns Hopkins Hospital/The Johns Hopkins University Tool was utilized

Synthesis of Findings

- Compassion fatigue is pervasive throughout the world in all areas of the caring professions
- Caring and compassion are essential to the practice of nursing
- All nurses are at risk for developing compassion fatigue, but emergency nurses are particularly vulnerable by the very nature of their work
- Compassion fatigue does not affect just the individual nurse; family, friends, patients, coworkers and institutions suffer as well
- All are in agreement that compassion fatigue is a significant issue that deserves the attention of administrators and those in leadership positions
- Only one study measured the effectiveness of a compassion fatigue prevention intervention
- Most intervention articles were opinion/anecdotal information at best

Next Steps

- A concept analysis of compassion fatigue to develop the terms and operational definitions in nursing
- Research in the area of why some nurses experience compassion fatigue and others do not
- Interventions that promote compassion fatigue resiliency with scientific measures of effectiveness
- Introduction of resiliency training into primary nursing education

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