

## Exploring the Factors Contributing to Stress and Coping Strategies of Nurses at University Teaching Hospital of Butare in Rwanda

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### Purpose and objectives

The aim of the study was to explore the factors contributing to nurses' stress and related coping strategies used by nurses in the University Teaching Hospital of Butare (UTHB), Rwanda. The objectives were to: Explore the stressors faced by nurses at UTHB; identify the coping strategies of nurses for stress management among nurses at UTHB, and identify the consequences of stress among nurses at UTHB.

### Methods

The researcher used a non-experimental, descriptive study to explore the factors contributing to nurses' stress and related coping strategies used by nurses in the University Teaching Hospital of Butare, Rwanda. This study was informed by a stress and coping theoretical framework. A questionnaire was used to collect the demographic characteristics of participants while nurses' stressors were assessed using the questionnaire of nurses' stressors previously developed elsewhere. The ways of coping were evaluated using already published procedures. A convenience sample of 85 registered nurses working at UTHB participated in this study. The data were analysed using SPSS version 15 and was summarized using descriptive statistics.

### Results

The findings of the study revealed that registered nurses at UTHB face a variety of stressors such as shortages of staff and materials, facing death and dying, dissatisfaction with the work environment, work overload and time spent on bureaucratic activities. It was shown that consequences of stress experienced by registered nurses could be low quality of care, job dissatisfaction and burnout syndrome. Among the major strategies of coping with stress by registered nurses were problem solving, social support, and accepting responsibility. This study indicated that stress can be prevented and managed by using nursing strategies such as team work, effective communication, improving work conditions, and fostering the managerial nursing strategies in working units.

### Conclusion

Drawing from these findings, it can be inferred that nurses' stressors need to be addressed in order to create a working environment conducive to high quality of care and also to enhance nursing staff morale, satisfaction, motivation and retention.

**Key words:** nursing stress-job satisfaction – nursing burnout- job satisfaction-turnover