

Commentary: Challenges faced by nurse managers during the COVID-19 pandemic: an integrative review

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This integrated review adds to the existing evidence base around COVID-19 and the impact this had upon global health systems. This particular research focus was upon nurse managers and the impact COVID had upon them through the completion of an integrated review. This brought together the evidence and led to four themes being created. These illustrate the nurse manager perspective of the pandemic event. The workplace demands were a prominent theme, and one that a number of managers, but also the wider staff could relate to. Especially when faced with uncertainty around the virus and how best to manage this unique patient group. This certainly would link to the physical and psychological health theme, due to being faced with this uncertainty, and supporting their staff during this period. Despite these challenges, they also led to the third theme of creating new coping measures and resilience which were employed by the nurse managers. However, as the fourth theme suggests there is also the need to take this forward within the development of future support mechanisms that could be employed. The availability of support, that may entail and how it would be offered can be challenging to ascertain the most appropriate approach. As a future crisis or even pandemic may require the same level, but equally may present other challenges that need adaption and agility. The nursing workforce and managers responded to the crisis, and this has been shown within this integrated review, but these events require learning to occur.

COVID-19 and the subsequent after effects with new subvariants gives an indication as to how health services need to be able to mobilise and respond. The research itself offers insight into how healthcare providers could create and provide support specifically to nurse managers. The concept of consistent and clearer communication is one approach. This can be seen as pivotal when during the COVID period information was scarce with many contradictory points. It also challenged existing practices which would add to increase work pressures, but may also offer a means of coping, due to developing knowledge and experience. However, as the research indicates this takes time to achieve, but the findings add further depth to the issue itself. It also has offered a

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means of viewing what had occurred from a distinct perspective. As the world becomes even more globally connected, it also increases the risk of future pandemics. So does the need for our organisations internally, and externally to achieve greater collaboration and integration to manage future events. This research has shown that when people work together and communicate their thoughts and feelings positive change, even in the most turbulent of times, can occur. This is an important consideration when the workforce most affected as indicated within this research will be the nursing workforce. This is important to consider for current and future nursing managers, as the events around COVID-19 indicate the level of resilience that is needed. It also will need nurse managers to develop their skills, knowledge, experience, and to be more supported for any future events.

Garry Cooper-Stanton is a qualified nurse and is undertaking his doctoral research. He has worked across public, private, and charitable sectors, and is a specialist in lymphoedema.