

CONCISE LITERATURE REVIEW ON BURNOUT AND WORK STRESS AMONG MENTAL HEALTH NURSES IN MALAYSIA

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INTRODUCTION

Burn out and work stress issues are increasing among nurses especially among mental health nurses (Appelbaum, 1981).

These issues had lead most of the nurses to leave the profession and some of them had developed correlate medical illnesses such as cardiovascular problem and other relevant mental health disorders such as emotional disorder and mood disorders (Hart 1994).

This is because they unable to encounter with burnout and work stress. Anecdotal review was conducted through out personal working period had indicated that about 80 percent of the nurses especially in mental health nurse agreed that they had experience stress and burnout during their working period. Hence, reviews about burnout and work stress among mental health nurses in Malaysia have to be explored to validate the anecdotal reviews.

DEFINITION OF WORK STRESS AND BURNOUT

“Work stress may be viewed as the consequence of disparity between an individual’s perception of the characteristics of specific work and what is actually being achieved by the individual currently performing the specific work” (Thomas 2004, pp.12). Thus, when work load expectations exceed what is achieved and work stress occur (Humprey 1988).

Burnout is a condition of combined syndrome of emotional exhaustion, depersonalization and reduced personal accomplished that can occur among individuals who do “people work” of some kind (Carson et al, 1995). According Maslach & Jackson(1986), *“emotional exhaustion defined as is the key characteristic of the syndrome and refers to feelings of being emotionally overextended and depleted of one’s emotional resources”* (Wright & Cropanzano 1998,pp. 487).

Meanwhile, depersonalization involves negative pessimistic, feel of separated and impersonal attitudes and feelings towards other people and reduced personal accomplished represent to the reduction of feelings of capability and successful achievement in one’s work as well as a tendency to assess oneself negatively especially when one’s work with other people(McConnell 1982,

pp 5). It is response to a severe strain emotional state toward others especially during they are having problem (van Dierendonck et al. 2001).

Burnout is usually associated with working in caring professions, under significant stress, for long period of time (Wellsells et al.1989). Characteristics include:

- a) Loss of motivation
- b) The development of negative towards the job and others.
- c) The loss of sense of humor.
- d) A sense of a limited choice of options.
- e) A feeling that one is responded upon rather than exercising choice.

(Wellsells et al.1989)

MATERIAL AND METHODS

In order to examine the literature for the types of burnout and work stress among the mental health nurses and its relevant topics, a combined search of CINAHL, MEDLINE, PSYINFO, PSYARTICLE and Nursing Science was conducted from the 25th of April 2007 to 15th of May 2007 using the following key words: *“burnout, work stress and mental health nurse”*. An additional literature search was conducted in the EBSCO Host Research Databases using the similar key words. There were no findings or relevant studies on CINAHL and MEDLINE. However, a search in PSYINFO, PSYARTICLE and Nursing Science had concluded four papers. Searches in the EBSCO Host Research Databases resulted in six papers. “Critical Thinking and Decision Path Model” was chosen to guide in the searching strategies which emphasized by LoBiondo- Wood and Haber (2002, pp.120). (See appendix 2)

Hand searching has yielded four papers from the Journal of Psychosocial Nursing, Journal of Mental Health Nursing, International Journal of Mental Health Nursing and Perspectives in Psychiatry Care. Google scholar was used to assist in searching relevant reference materials and another ten papers were yielded by using the same key words. Personally, Google scholar had provided the easiest access to the desired sources.