



## **Nursing Management During and Post-Covid 19 Pandemic: A Review**

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### **ABSTRACT**

Nursing managers in the healthcare sector have been at the forefront of responding to the COVID-19 pandemic. In the midst of this crisis, nursing management has become a key factor in the overall success of nursing departments in providing quality care and meeting the needs of patients. During and post-COVID 19 pandemic, nursing managers have been tasked with leading and managing the nursing staff to ensure the safety and well-being of both staff and patients. This includes developing and implementing strategies to ensure that appropriate infection control protocols are followed, managing the workload of nursing staff, and providing education and support to ensure that all staff are up to date on the latest information and protocols. Additionally, nurse managers have had to adapt to the ever-changing landscape of the pandemic and develop strategies to ensure that nursing staff have the resources and training necessary to provide safe and effective care to patients. Post-COVID19, nurse managers will need to develop strategies to ensure the continued safety and well-being of both staff and patients, while also addressing issues related to staffing shortages, mental health, and quality of care. This review article summarizes the experiences of frontline nurse managers in nursing management during and post COVID19 pandemic in selected healthcare settings across the globe.

**Keywords:** COVID-19, Nursing Management, Nurse Managers, experiences

### **Introduction**

Nurses are placed in a critical position as the pandemic continuously affects many individuals. This resulted in the ineffective provision of treatment and management of health and nursing care around the world. In addition, there is a worldwide shortage of nurses prepared to care for COVID-19 patients and their families. As a result, nurse managers had to face challenges in performing nursing management due to the danger and threat imposed by the pandemic, scarcity of supplies and resources, overworked staff and limited workforce, and eradication of humanized care towards patients infected by COVID-19 and their significant others. Moreover, during the post-COVID-19 pandemic, some head nurses are overwhelmed because of the new protocols and rigid mandatory procedures that should be implied to adapt to the ever-changing virus [1]. Also, the new emerging variants of the COVID-19 virus after the peak of the pandemic are alarming nursing managers to create new ways to combat the spread of these foreign viruses and secure the workforce and safety of nurses in their hospitals [2].

In China, nurses face anxiety and depression while dealing with the rising cases of COVID-19 in their hospitals. Also, it was emphasized that there is insufficient mental health support given to nurses and nurse leaders who are in high-risk areas during the pandemic [3]. Additionally, nursing management was not well-performed by nurse managers during the height of the pandemic because Italian nurse managers developed a fear of contracting the virus and physical exhaustion during hospital duties in some hospitals in Italy. These negative effects affect their decision-making and planning of proper nursing care for their patients [4]. Additionally, Korean nurse managers employ different strategies to cope with the post-COVID-19 pandemic, among which are to promptly restructure the nursing system, improve team communication by ensuring proper handover procedure and utilization of coordinating materials for continuous care. Lastly, as frontline caregivers, nurses in general work to make healthcare more efficient all the time [5]. In the Philippines, the shortage of Filipino nurses negatively impacted the country's healthcare delivery system. The COVID-19 pandemic made a big change in the medical field and pushed nurses to work very hard in order to compensate for the patient's needs. In fact, head nurses in hospitals catering to COVID-19 patients during and after the COVID-19 pandemic are experiencing workplace burnout and societal discrimination that affects their performance at work and creates a chaotic workplace environment [6].

Nursing is a practical profession, and it needs continuous development to keep up with the new health challenges present at the current time. To better prepare for future health disasters, such as additional waves of COVID-19, this review article adds to the body of information on the unique experiences of nurse managers in nursing management during and after the peak of the pandemic.

## Methods

A narrative review of the literature which started last December 2022 was conducted using dependable databases but not limited to such: Google Scholar, ResearchGate, ScienceDirect, and CINAHL. The databases were carefully searched for applicable articles to ensure that all relevant existing types of literature were included. The review was created using search phrases such as "Nursing management during COVID-19", "Nursing management post-COVID-19". The search criteria were set up to only show published publications from March 2020 to December 2022

The researchers independently searched the literature review and discovered relevant articles. In order to better comprehend the first-hand experiences of nurse managers in selected countries during and beyond the COVID-19 pandemic, the literature was categorized into themes. Articles on the challenges and fears faced by nurse managers during and after COVID-19, studies on the pandemic's effects on nursing management during COVID-19 as well as articles on the nurse managers' perspectives and suggestions for nursing management both during and after the pandemic were included in the inclusion criteria for the literature search used for this study. The following, however, were included in the exclusion criteria: publications that did not address nursing management issues during and after COVID-19, studies that did not cover the lived experiences of nurse managers during and after COVID-19, and articles that were not published in English. All of the articles and pieces of material that had been obtained and met the aforementioned requirements were thoroughly scrutinized by the investigators.

## Related Literature

Nursing management is a multifaceted responsibility. Nurse managers are expected to be primarily responsible for implementing the organization's strategic vision, principles, and goals at the departmental level. Also, they not only serve as the unit's administrative and clinical leaders, but they are also responsible for the delivery of all patient care services 24 hours a day [7]. Nursing management is evident in providing a formal and informal role in ensuring patients receive high-quality nursing care at a reasonable cost [8]. During pandemic, the health care system was one of the most challenged sectors especially with the limited workforce, scarcity of supplies and lack of trainings and protocols in place to better handle the health crisis. Majority in the literature found revealed the difficulties and struggles of nurse managers, coping strategies, motivation and insights from their experience in managing their respective units.

Significantly, nursing is one of the essential services that should be available and accessible in hospitals. To guarantee the well-being of their patients, hospitals must keep their nursing services at a high standard. The quality of nursing care is reflected in how the head nurse performs his or her nursing management duties, which are especially important in the inpatient setting. The nurse manager or head nurse must possess managerial functions such as organizing, staffing, directing, and controlling. The head nurse's management strategy, especially in giving directions, is crucial in maintaining order in the clinical area. As a matter of fact, the level of stress and job satisfaction among employees is directly related to how well management is performed [9].

The COVID-19 pandemic reshaped the healthcare delivery system and nursing field massively. These changes resulted in an increase in the number of patients, more strict health protocols, unbearable workloads, and additional burden to head nurses managing different areas in the hospital. In addition, COVID-19 patients across the world are cared for by nurses and nurse leaders. They are also responsible for managing healthcare facilities with the goals of improving productivity, efficiency, sustainability, and risk reduction. Nurse supervisors may be at risk for mental health issues because of the stress and pressure they are under due to the COVID-19 pandemic [10].

Table 1. Summary of the Experiences of Nurse Managers during and POST-COVID 19 pandemic

Author and Year	Methods	Findings
Kagan et al.,2021	Mixed-methods	Change from a familiar routine to a new reality, i.e. becoming ordinary nurses rather than managers due to understaffing.
Jackson et al., 2021	Qualitative interview study	Expanding roles and responsibilities, i.e. managing three to four clinical areas instead of one.
Gab Allah AR. (2021)	Descriptive correlational design	Taking difficult decisions, i.e., taking difficult decisions like handling scarce resources (refusing an ICU bed due to limited resources), and replacing a nurse that had been tested positive for the virus.
Moyo I, Mgozeli SE, Risenga PR, et al. (2022)	Descriptive phenomenological research	a. Human resource-related challenges, i.e., allocation of Limited Staff Members; lack of trained nurses. b. More Administrative Work for Nurse Managers, i.e., screening of all staff and visitors, as well as tracing contacts of all patients that had tested positive for COVID-19.

Holge-Hazelton, et al. (2021)	Qualitative directed content analysis	Safety for patients and staff, i.e., they experienced that keeping both staff and patients as safe as possible could be difficult.
Deldar K, Froutan R, Ebadi A. (2021)	Qualitative content analysis	Facing the personnel's mental health, i.e., occupational burnout due to lack of job safety, emotional burden of ineffective treatment, the possibility of being a disease transmitter and knowledge limitations to the invisible virus.
Jackson et al., 2021	Qualitative interview study	Scarcity of PPEs and medical supplies, i.e., managing shortages of PPE and maximize available resources.
Fernandez, et al., 2020	Systematic review	Nurses' sense of duty, dedication to patient care, personal sacrifice and professional collegiality is heightened during a pandemic. Regardless of the circumstances, they felt a great sense of professional duty to work during a pandemic.
R Middleton, et al., 2021	Cross-sectional study	Nurse managers have anxiety related to the COVID-19 pandemic that can impact their ability to cope and ultimately their commitment to the organization.
Poortaghi, et al., 2021	Descriptive-qualitative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Personnel's stress can be reduced in various ways including dialogue and close communication with employees and providing the possibility of psychological and psychiatric counseling.</li> <li>b. Nursing managers with a strong presence in the field, despite having problems, were a good role model for other staff.</li> </ul>
Carter, et al., 2021	Descriptive correlational study	Use of a resilience-building intervention (WISER TOOL) showed improvement in nurse managers' emotional thriving and work-life balance during the COVID-19 pandemic.
Aquila, et al., 2020	Case study	To maintain their health and minimize the physical and emotional stressors of caring for others, nurse leaders need to focus on a self-care for themselves and their teams.

Moreover, the continuous increase of COVID-19 patients significantly impacted the healthcare delivery system, especially nursing. During the COVID-19 pandemic, head nurses face numerous difficulties in performing the nursing management job. For instance, studies about American head nurses reveal the critical importance of the staffing function during a pandemic, particularly regarding the psychological support of employees who are at a heightened risk of stress and anxiety on the job [11]. Similarly, head nurses prioritize the staffing function of nurses to provide biopsychosocial support during the pandemic [1]. Also, given the frequent occurrence of interpersonal and interprofessional disputes in the patient's ward during the pandemic, studies in Indonesia demonstrate that supervision and good communication are powerful, directing functions from the head nurse to implement quality nursing services to patients [12].

Consequently, head nurses must also devise plans for dealing with any issues that develop during the COVID-19 pandemic. Findings from this study indicate that the hospital's plan, established and implemented based on the head nurse's experience managing the inpatient ward, may successfully operate to minimize risks or challenges that may occur and cannot be foreseen during a pandemic [13].

More so, as COVID-19 cases are increasing, many head nurses are trying to sort their employees and distribute the responsibilities equally so that quality nursing care is still possible. Decision-making plays a big role for head nurses because a wrong decision can disrupt their ethical values and principles. On the other hand, economic and financial security was a huge concern when the pandemic peaked, and unemployment was rampant. In this situation, head nurses must facilitate their nursing personnel to think for the brighter side because many nurses also provide for their families. Thus, it is crucial to remain optimistic during a health crisis [14].

Moreover, challenges of a new and unprecedented nature have been thrown at nurses by the spread of the COVID-19 virus. In fact, recognizing the sources of healthcare workers' problems allows healthcare managers and leaders to address these concerns and provide specialized support to their healthcare workforce. Nonetheless, nurse managers must be prepared to respond to the pandemic's impact on nurses. Even with breakthroughs in healthcare and virus control technology, genuine success requires strong leadership [15].

On the other hand, the pandemic caused by COVID-19 presents a chance to reinforce nurse leadership and nursing management efforts toward reducing morbidity and mortality caused by this outbreak. In order to provide nurses with the possibility to develop their leadership and management potential, it is advised that nurse leadership should be cultivated at the country, regional, and global levels. Moreover, leadership and management work hand in hand and are closely associated with social responsibility, and the concept of good citizenship, which in turn relates to the professional and ethical obligations nurses have to advocate for the human right to health [16].

In addition, to maintain the complex political, social, and economic balance of adopting containment measures to decrease the impact of the pandemic while ensuring the provision of essential services, it is crucial to place resilience and empowered leadership behavior at the center, giving nurses the strength to recover quickly and face challenges. Nurses who are resilient are better equipped to deal with the stresses of their jobs and keep their minds

and bodies functioning normally [17]. On the other hand, British nurse managers were challenged to show outstanding clinical leadership skills as the Chief Nursing Officer of England declared that nursing managers need to conquer the pandemic with no fear as they stand as role models for young nurses. As a result, many nurse managers experienced high stress and psychological disorders [18]. Misalignment between work and pay can also cause people to take time off work, consider quitting, abandon their jobs, have trouble balancing their personal and professional lives, and become emotionally drained, depressed, anxious, and burned out. Since COVID-19 has been found to have long-term consequences on mental health, this effect on nurse managers must receive attention [19].

Finally, nursing leaders understand that nurses' sphere of influence as healthcare professionals extends beyond the people, families, and communities with whom they directly interact to provide high-quality nursing care during pandemics. Moreover, it reaches far beyond doctors and nurses to include their policy, management, and budgetary counterparts in the healthcare industry as a whole [16]. Collaboration between nurses spearheaded by the head nurse can result in better patient outcomes, especially during the pandemic [20]. Maintaining high standards of care and safety requires constant and transparent teamwork and clear communication [21].

The abovementioned literatures and concepts explain that head nurses' experiences in nursing management are more demanding and challenging and cause head nurses to employ multiple adjustments and careful decision-making, especially during and after the peak of the pandemic [22].

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## Conclusion

Nursing managers have been identified as critical stakeholders in addressing healthcare crisis – COVID 19 pandemic. Their experiences in nursing management during and post COVID-19 pandemic are supported by this article review which include the challenge and difficulties brought on by an unknown disease. The challenging circumstance led to the implementation of a number of solutions. Nursing leaders' technical knowledge and systemic viewpoint were essential in addressing issues and developing solutions to ensure the quality of care provided and the safety of employees, patients, and families. Using this understanding, nurse managers offer many insights for change and issues that must be addressed. Processes and existing policies aimed at improving the management of the COVID-19 crisis may be created to better handle the COVID-19 issues and outbreaks of a similar nature in the future. Establishing training programs for head nurses on emotional self-management and being encouraged to adopt a pro-active and visionary mindset could be an initial step to assist them in handling similar situations. Moreover, stressing their dual role as patient-staff mediators is essential for providing the best response in a crisis. Finally, more qualitative research must be carried out in a variety of settings to more thoroughly examine their contributions.

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## Conflict of interest:

The authors have no conflict of interest to declare.

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