



# Registered Nurses Perception of Caring for Self an Patients During the COVID-19 Pandemic

**Objectives/Background:** Nurses working through the pandemic are working in unprecedented, uncertain, and stressful times that have altered nursing care and routines eliciting new ways of nursing practice. Not only are nurses having to adapt to higher workloads and acuity, they must work within constant changes in practice to accommodate for the 'new normal' of COVID-19 nursing practices. This project explored the Registered Nurses' perceptions of caring for self and patients during the COVID-19 pandemic.

**Method:** A purposeful sample of 12 acute care nurses were interviewed on their lived experiences to gain a deeper understanding of the caring processes. Data was analyzed by an interpretive narrative approach and entered to NVIVO.

**Results:** Three key themes emerged from the data: sifting in personal and patient caring practices, psychosocial and environmental impact of ongoing change and variation in leadership approaches. Throughout the Covid waves, there was a teeter totter effect creating a personal, professional, and environmental pendulum motion.

**Conclusion:** Caring for self and patients during the COVID-19 pandemic was multifactorial in nature from the sheer scientific uncertainty of COVID. Variation and inconsistency of environmental policy and practices influenced the emotional impact on the nurses' sense of well-being and their feelings of being valued. Nurses working directly with patients need to be actively involved in effecting positive change within a work environment. Further research is needed to explore ways in which caring practices can be maintained or altered safely during these challenging times.

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# Background

The purpose of this research study is to gain a deeper understanding of the lived experience of the registered nurse and their perceptions of caring during the COVID-19 pandemic for themselves and their patients.

Nurses have been working with a high degree of uncertainty and unprecedented stress during the pandemic.



Constant changes resulting from the pandemic have required nurses to adapt and accommodate for the 'new normal' of their nursing practice.



# Methods

- Phenomenological methodology
- Purposeful sampling was utilized to recruit 12 Registered Nurses from acute care hospital setting
- Due to Covid-19 restrictions interviews were conducted via the online platform of Zoom
- Data was analyzed using an interpretive, narrative approach
- Transcripts were then inputted into NVivo for further data conceptualization

# Results

## Patient Care

- Decreased time with patients
- Increased workload and responsibility
- Variations in family engagement

## Psychosocial and Environmental Impact

- Nursing burnout, anxiety, & fear
- Constant fluctuations in policies & availability of resources
- Ethical challenges related COVID-19 protocols

## Leadership Variations

- Changes in leadership styles between and among units
- Successes and challenges in communication
- Learning curve for all

# Conclusion

- Impacts on caring for self and patients during the COVID-19 pandemic was multifactorial
- Continual change on environmental policy and practices played an influential role on the impact of caring
- Nurses working directly with patients need to be actively involved in effecting positive change within a work environment
- Further research is needed to explore various ways caring practices can be adapted and upheld to ensure continued safety during these challenging times

