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ABSTRACT

Aim: The specific aim of the study was to assess the impact of COVID-19 pandemic on nursing faculty experiences. **Background:** Academic nursing experiences were disrupted due to the COVID-19 pandemic. There is concern that the resulting stress threatens nursing faculty emotional well-being and reason to burnout. **Method:** A descriptive, quantitative study was conducted; exploring faculty academic and clinical roles during the COVID-19 pandemic by using structured, self designed, open-ended questionnaire to 401 institutionally attached nursing health professionals. The questionnaire includes various domains including Safety and Health, Challenges for teaching, clinical practise, supervision perception of institutional support provided; faculty burnout, satisfaction, and well-being. **Results:** Overall satisfaction with the working environment in the institutions with respect to total teaching experience showed a significant statistical. Participants perceived support from academic institutions and increased need to provide emotional support to students. **Conclusion:** Nursing faculty are essential to the profession. Nursing faculty require proactive and sustained institutional and personal support to provide exceptional ongoing education, build resilience, and support students.

KEY WORDS : Covid -19, Pandemic, Burnout, post effect of Covid- 19, Nursing faculty, Nursing professionals

Introduction / Need for the Study

Corona virus disease (COVID-19) is an infectious disease caused by the SARS-CoV-2 virus. The corona virus pandemic has caused major disruption of systems worldwide, including education and health services. The duration and scale of the impact is yet to be established. Globally, as of 15 March 2022, there have been 458,479,635 confirmed cases of COVID-19, including 6,047,653 deaths, reported to WHO.¹

The spread of COVID-19 has sent shockwaves across the globe. The public health crisis, unprecedented in our lifetimes, has caused severe human suffering and loss of life. The exponential rise in infected patients and the dramatic consequences of serious cases of the disease have overwhelmed hospitals and health professionals and put significant strain on the health sector.

The COVID-19 pandemic has also had a severe impact on higher education as universities closed their premises and countries shut their borders in response to lockdown measures. Although higher education institutions were quick to replace face-to-face lectures with online learning, these closures affected learning and examinations.

Nursing professors have an important and significant role in both the academic and clinical settings. Faculty are expected to uphold the values of their academic and clinical institutions, act as change agents, stay up to date on the latest teaching strategies and technologies, demonstrate leadership and management skills, and participate in advocacy strategies to help students and organizations grow. In the case of the present epidemic, all academic institutions are putting even greater pressure on already overburdened professors. For individuals inexperienced with the complexities of virtual learning, this endeavour has proved difficult,

adding both workload and stress at an already stressful time.²

Burnout has been widely studied in clinical nursing practice but has received little attention in nursing faculty (Thomas et al., 2019; Yedidia et al., 2014).^{3,4} Regardless of setting, burnout is characterized by feelings of emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and a low sense of personal accomplishment resulting from conditions in the workplace (Dolan et al., 2015).⁵ Emotional exhaustion, perceived heavy faculty workload, maintenance of advanced practice certifications, and dissatisfaction with teaching support have been found to be predictors of intent to leave in nursing faculty (Yedidia et al., 2014). Yedidia et al. (2014) reported that emotional exhaustion was more prevalent in nursing faculty than in nurses in clinical nursing practice (39 percent vs. 34 percent of samples, respectively).⁴

Though the availability of literature regarding impact of Covid - 19 is abundant, only few studies have been conducted to assess the challenges faced by the nursing academicians during Covid-19. Hence, the present study is conducted to assess Impact of Covid -19 on institutionally attached Nursing Professionals of Nepal.

Aim:

To assess Impact of Covid -19 on institutionally attached Nursing Professionals of Nepal.

Objectives:

To assess Impact of Covid -19 on institutionally attached Nursing Professionals of Nepal by using self designed, pre tested questionnaire.

To suggest any recommendations based on the findings of the study.

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Methodology

The quantitative, descriptive cross sectional study was conducted during mid 2021 to assess various challenges' faced by the nursing health professionals those who are attached to academic institutions.

Prior to start of the study ethical approval was taken from Formal approval will be obtained from concerned authorities i.e. NHRC (Nepal Health Research Council), NNC (Nepal Nursing Council) and Cyberjaya University College of Medical Sciences (CUCMS) Research Ethics Committee. Also permission was sought from all heads of nursing colleges to recruit their faculty in this study.

The research instrument was a structured, self designed, open-ended questionnaire which was pre-tested among a group of nursing health professionals who are attached to academic institutions in a pilot study under similar conditions. The questionnaire included 20 items questions which were categorized into 4domains. Domain 1 included questions related to the information regarding socio-demographic characteristics of study population, nature of job, salary, total teaching and clinical experience. Domain 2 included questions related to assess knowledge, practise and training related to Safety and Health during Covid-19. Domain 4 included questions related to Challenges faced by academicians for classroom teaching. Domain 5 included questions related to Challenges for clinical practise, supervision during Covid -19. Domain 6 included questions related to various activities conducted by institutions / organizations in response to academic challenges during Covid-19. Domain 7 included questions related to various effects on academicians during covid -19 in terms of teaching strategy, continue education and training, professional growth and development, salary on time & proper evaluation of work. Based on this entire domain, overall satisfaction level was assessed.

Data collection:

Data was collected by using Google form Questionnaire was sent to different 401 nursing faculty member all over the Nepal regarding academic challenges faced by faculty member during Covid-19. Participants were anonymous with no identifying data collection related to themselves or their workplace. Prior to study, Questionnaire was pre-tested and validated for construct, content & criterion validity and also assessed for reliability and ease of use. Only completely filled questionnaires were considered for analysis.

Data analysis:

Data analysis was conducted using SPSS 20. Descriptive statistics including frequency and percentage were conducted to describe the sample. Chi square test was used to check the difference in satisfaction level of working environment based on their experience & monthly salary.

Result

The present cross sectional study was conducted to assess the impact of Covid -19 on institutionally attached Nursing Professionals of Nepal by using self designed, pre tested questionnaire

Table No. 1: Socio-demographic characteristics of study population (N=401)

Socio-demographic characteristics	n (%)	
Age	Below 35	281 (70.1)
	35 and above	120 (29.9)
Marital Status	Married	305 (76.1)
	Unmarried/Separate d/Divorced	96 (23.9)
Monthly salary	Less than 25000	120 (29.9)
	25000-49999	174 (43.4)

Level of education	50000 and above	107 (26.7)
	BSc /Post-Basic Nursing	229 (57.1)
	Master/ Mphil/PhD in nursing	172 (42.9)
Nature of job	Permanent	109 (27.2)
	Contract	292 (72.8)
Total teaching experience	1- 5 Years	215 (53.6)
	6- 10 Years	115 (28.7)
	More than 10 Years	71 (17.7)
Clinical experience	Yes	347 (86.5)
	No	54 (13.5)
Years of clinical experience	1- 5 Years	271 (77.7)
	6- 10 Years	51 (14.6)
	More than 10 Years	27 (7.7)

Table 1 showed that the (70.1%) of the respondents were age below 35. The majority (76.1%) was married and most of them belong to the nuclear families (54.4%). It shows that, most of the respondent earns Rs.25000 – 49999(43.4%) as a monthly salary. Maximum had bachelor-level education (57.1%) and remaining had higher education level. Maximum respondent work as contract basis. Majority had 1-5 years of teaching experiences(53.6%) and 86.5% had clinical experience in which maximum 77.7% had only 1-5 years of clinical experiences only 7.7 % had more than 10 years of clinical experiences.

Table No. 2 : Socio-demographic characteristics of study population (N=401)

Domain / Area	Components	Frequency (%)	Adjusted R ²	sig
Safety and health component	Faculty members informed about safety and health	206 (30.4)	0.140	0.00
	Is there a safety and health committee	181 (26.7)		
	Faculty members are trained to respond to campus safety and health threats	146 (21.5)		
	Faculty members been trained on how best to work during the Covid-19 pandemic threat.	145 (21.4)		
Challenges to classroom teaching-learning due to Covid-19	No practical's	211 (18.7)	0.005	0.276
	lack of two-way communication	170 (15)		
	No proper assessment and evaluation	160 (14.2)		
	Time limitation for lectures	161 (14.2)		
	Lack of internet services	134 (11.9)		
	Work overload	124 (11)		
	Class doesn't go fast	88 (7.8)		
	Unusual & unfamiliar method of teaching-learning	82 (7.3)		
Challenges to clinical practice supervision	High risk to work in hospital due to lack of personal protective equipment(PPE)	280 (26.2)	0.027	0.08
	Very difficult to give case scenarios to first-year students who have not to expose to clinical work	250 (26.2)		
	Hospital posting is not allowed	216 (26.2)		
	Little clinical work is done	221 (26.2)		

	Not able to afford PPE as PPE are expensive	111 (26.2)		
Various activities carried out by organization s to respond to academic challenges during Covid-19 pandemic	Training on using Zoom/Teams/Google	237 (18)	0.038	0.003
	The university gave a clear decision reg. exam	228 (17.3)		
	Good support from the organization	202 (15.4)		
	Proper information and communication through management	191 (14.5)		
	Covid-19 insurance for faculty	159 (12.1)		
	Proper facilities for nursing faculty as compared to other departments	140 (10.6)		
	Training on covid-19 pandemic	85 (6.5)		
	Provides PPE	73 (5.6)		
Impact on nursing faculty in various aspects due to covid-19	Develop a new concept on teaching strategy	316 (40.8)	0.077	0.000
	High chance of continue education &training	138 (17.8)		
	Increase professional growth and development	119 (15.4)		
	Salary on time due to covid-19	103 (13.3)		
	Proper evaluation of work	98 (12.7)		

Table No. 3 : Socio-demographic characteristics of study population (N=401)

		Frequency (%)	Chi Square value =	sig
Overall satisfaction level with safety & Health	Very Unsatisfied	26 (6.5)	234.923	0.000
	Unsatisfied	106 (26.4)		
	Neutral	177 (44.1)		
	Satisfied	88 (22)		
	Very Satisfied	4 (1)		

Safety and health component

Maximum no. of faculties were informed about safety and health (30.4%), only (26.7%) organization have safety and health committee and they are trained to response to it (21.5%) but only 21.4% faculty were trained about covid-19 pandemic.

Challenges to classroom teaching-learning due to Covid-19 pandemic

There are certain challenges to classroom teaching due to covid-19, highest no of faculties agree with no practical's (18.7%), lack of two way communication (15.0%), no proper assessment and evaluation and as well as time limitation for lectures (14.2%), lack of internet services (11.9%), work overload(11.0%), only few respondent had agree with class doesn't go fast (7.8%) and Unusual and unfamiliar method of teaching-learning (7.3%).

Challenges to clinical practice supervision during covid-19 pandemic

Challenges to clinical practice, supervision during covid-19 pandemic is due to High risk to work in hospital because of lack of personal protective equipment(PPE) (26.2%) and expensive PPE (10.4%). Other challenges like Very difficult to give case scenarios to first-year students who have not to expose to clinical work (23.4%), Hospital posting is not allowed (20.2%) and little clinical work is done (19.8%).

Activities have been taken most effectively by organizations to respond to academic challenges during Covid-19 pandemic

Activities have been taken most effectively by organizations to

respond to academic challenges during Covid-19 pandemic are training on using zoom/Google/teams (18.0%), university gave clear decision regarding exam (17.3%), good support from organization (15.4%), proper information and communication through management (14.5%), Covid-19 insurance for faculty (12.1%), proper facilities for nursing faculty as compared to other departments (10.6%), training on Covid-19 pandemic (6.5%), provides PPE (5.6%).

Impact on nursing faculty in various aspects due to covid-19 pandemic

There are many Effect of covid-19 pandemic in academic like maximum respondents develop a new concept on teaching strategy (40.8%) but there is only 13.3% got salary on time and 12.7% respondents work had been evaluate properly. Other effect like, there was a high chance of continue education and training (17.8%) and increase professional growth and development (15.4%).

Overall satisfaction level with safety & health

Overall respondents were unsatisfied (32.9%), neutral (44.1%), satisfied (23.0%) with safety and health in organization.

Table 4. Overall satisfaction level with the working environment in the institutions with respect to total teaching experience and monthly salary

		Very Unsatisfied	Unsatisfied	Neutral	Satisfied	Very Unsatisfied	Total	
Based on teaching experience	1 - 5 Years	13	51	103	46	2	215	Chi Square value = 31.720 (P = 0.001*)
	6 - 10 Years	3	20	56	36	0	115	
	More than 10Yr	4	10	18	38	1	71	
	Total	20	81	177	120	3	401	
Based on Monthly Salary	Less than 25000	6	27	61	24	2	120	Chi Square value = 17.310 (P = 0.027*)
	25000 - 49999	9	36	79	50	0	174	
	50000 &above	5	18	37	46	1	107	
	Total	20	81	117	120	3	401	

Table 5. Overall rating of the working environment in the institutions with respect to total teaching experience and monthly salary

		Very poor	Need to improve	Good working environment	Excellent working environment	Total	
Total score based on teaching experience	1 - 5 Years	68	65	55	27	215	Chi Square value = 53.110 (P = 0.001*)
	6 - 10 Years	24	22	35	34	115	
	More than 10 Yr	10	10	14	37	71	
	Total	102	97	104	98	401	

Total score based on Monthly Salary	Less than 25000	40	38	30	12	120	Chi Square value = 36.772 (P = 0.001*)
	25000 - 49999	42	37	54	41	174	
	50000 &above	20	22	20	45	107	
	Total	102	97	104	98	401	

Overall satisfaction with the working environment in the institutions with respect to total teaching experience showed a significant statistical Chi Square value = 31.720($P = 0.001^*$) with study subjects having experience more than 10 years showing higher level of satisfaction where as those having less than 10 years were mostly neutral.

Overall satisfaction with the working environment in the institutions with respect to monthly salary showed a significant statistical Chi Square value = 17.310 ($P = 0.027^*$) with study subjects having Monthly salary of 25000 - 49999 showing higher level of satisfaction where as those having above 50000 were of the opinion where they rated the working environment to be very poor or need of improvement. On the contrary, those with salary above 50000 rated the working environment as good (20) and excellent (42).

Discussion

Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, a known threat to nursing education was the faculty shortage, with faculty workload and an inability to meet role expectations as one factor contributing to the shortage (Yedidia et al., 2014).⁴ Younger faculty members reported higher burnout levels (Thomas et al., 2019) and more emotional exhaustion, which have been associated with intent to leave (Yedidia et al., 2014).⁴ This may be exacerbated by the economic environment, including furloughs and cutbacks seen across college campuses as the COVID-19 pandemic continues (Bauman, 2020)⁶

While the long-term impact of the crisis is uncertain, the pandemic may affect public spending on education as funds are diverted into the health sector and the economy. The impact of the crisis on education Public financing of education in OECD countries 11% of public expenditure was devoted to education before the pandemic. However, the current crisis may affect education budgets more quickly as public revenues decline sharply and governments review the prioritisation of education in national budgets.

Conclusion

Nursing faculty were part of the essential workforce during the initial wave of the COVID-19 pandemic. Nursing faculty require proactive and sustained institutional and personal support to provide exceptional ongoing education, build resilience, and support students.

The COVID-19 pandemic response is ongoing, Further research related to the continued effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on nursing faculty and students is warranted.

Recommendations

In view of covid -19 pandemic, implementing learning recovery programs, protecting education budgets, organisational support and preparing for future shocks are best tools to overcome such situation.

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