

Resolving nurse burnout and improving nurse wellness: A *Systematic Literature Review*

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Abstract: *Burnout among nurses delivering services has been a major issue in the healthcare system, and healthcare leaders struggle to find ways to combat burnout and improve well-being. Healthcare leaders must address this issue; otherwise, the well-being of nurses will continue to deteriorate. This systematic literature review aims to identify strategies and practical methods that healthcare leaders can use to effectively combat burnout and improve the overall wellness of nurses when delivering services. A search of the literature transpired using CINAHL, MEDLINE, and APA PsycINFO academic databases following the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analysis Guidelines. Data from 22 relevant articles were carefully analyzed using a screening process directly related to the research question. The authors identified four themes that emerged from the literature during the data analysis process. These four themes included strategies and methods for nurse burnout and wellness (54%), healthcare leadership for nurse wellness and burnout (41%), burnout in nurses delivering care (77%), and combatting burnout and improving the wellness of nurses (64%). The result emphasized that promoting resilience, incorporating rest breaks, implementing mindfulness-based interventions, reducing isolation by enhancing team support and efficiency, integrating work-life balance initiatives and education, fostering a supportive work environment, and establishing policies or programs are vital components to developing effective strategies and practical methods to alleviate burnout and enhance the wellness of nurses during care delivery. The outcomes also demonstrated that enhancing the overall wellness of nurses who deliver services could improve patients' healthcare. These findings provide healthcare leaders with actionable strategies and practical methods to effectively combat burnout, increase staff retention, improve the overall wellness of nurses during service delivery, and strengthen organizational reputation.*

Keywords— nurses; burnout; wellness; well-being strategies

1. INTRODUCTION

Nurse burnout has been a serious healthcare issue for a long time, and healthcare leaders struggle to find ways to combat nurse burnout and improve their well-being (Tamata and Mohammadnezhad, 2023). The CDC (2023) reports that nurse burnout has been increasing over several years (CDC Study Finds Nurse Burnout Still on the Rise | NurseJournal.org, 2023). Nurses are often overworked and understaffed, which can cause nurses to be stressed out while working. If nurses experience burnout and decreased wellness, this may directly affect the care they deliver to the patients (Kakemam et al., 2021). In addition, healthcare leaders who apply a destructive leadership style can contribute to their staff experiencing burnout (Niinihuhta & Haggman-Laitila, 2022). Healthcare leaders face a continuing challenge in finding effective strategies and methods to manage nurse burnout, which negatively impacts both nurses' health and patient care (Pesata and Nieves, 2024).

The specific problem is that healthcare leaders need strategies and practical methods to effectively combat burnout and improve the wellness of their nursing staff when delivering services. Nurses experiencing physical and emotional burnout have reported that their decision-making skills and achievements at work have significantly decreased (Wei et al., 2022). If burnout and well-being are left unaddressed, the

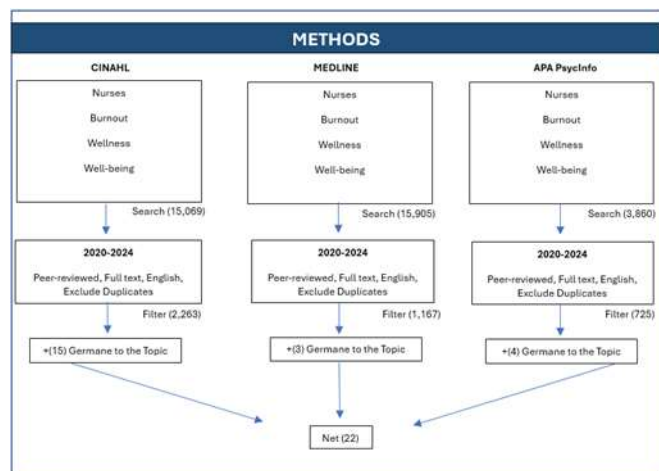
implications of these issues will persist. Stutting (2023) suggests one strategy to combat burnout and improve well-being, is allowing nurses to take additional rest breaks during their shifts. However, Kelly et al. (2020) argue any strategy implemented needs to integrate resources to prevent burnout and increase wellness, and that it is a complex issue with multiple factors contributing to burnout and decreased wellness, with heavy daily workloads as a top issue. With conflicting findings, further research is required to identify additional innovative strategies for improving burnout rates and well-being (Stutting, 2023). An agreement among authors is that nurse burnout can lead to prolonged stress, which negatively affects their mental health (Wei et al., 2022), therefore, it is crucial to explore comprehensive strategies for enhancing nurses' well-being and reducing burnout rates. The systematic literature review explores strategies and practical methods that healthcare leaders use to effectively combat burnout and improve the wellness of nurses when delivering services.

2. METHOD

After refining the research topic, a selection of articles pertinent to answering the research question occurred. The following was the research question: What strategies and practical methods can healthcare leaders use to effectively combat burnout and improve the overall wellness of nurses when delivering services? A literature search was conducted,

incorporating the Cumulative Index to Nursing and Allied Health Literature (CINAHL), Medical Literature Analysis and Retrieval System (MEDLINE), and American Psychological Association Psychology Information (APA PsycINFO) academic databases, adhering to the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analysis guidelines (Moher et al., 2009; Page et al., 2021). The method stages included the following phases: a thorough search for appropriate studies and screening of all articles based on eligibility criteria, assessment of studies that occurred to determine inclusion or exclusion in the review, extraction of data based on the pre-defined screening criteria from eligible studies, and syntheses of data used to identify emerging strategies and practical methods that emerged from the studies.

For inclusion of articles to review, publications had to meet all of the following criteria: (a) articles published between 2020 and 2024, (b) articles written in the English language, (c) peer-reviewed journal articles, (d) full-text articles, and (e), with a focus on strategies and practical methods that healthcare leaders can use to effectively combat burnout and improve the overall wellness of nurses when delivering services. A search of the academic databases using keywords such as 'nurses,' 'burnout,' 'wellness,' and 'well-being strategies' was conducted to further establish the scope and determine the best articles for review on the topic and to answer the research question. When the applied inclusion criteria were in place, CINAHL yielded 2,263 articles, MEDLINE yielded 1,167 articles, and APA PsycInfo yielded 725 articles. This review excludes articles not meeting the inclusion criteria above (see Figure 1.).



3. RESULTS

The critical research question examined was, "What strategies and practical methods can healthcare leaders use to effectively combat burnout and improve the overall wellness of nurses when delivering services?" An applied methodology followed the best practices proposed by the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) guidelines (Page et al., 2021), and included a comprehensive literature search, selection, and data analysis. A rigorous search across the Cumulative Index to Nursing and Allied Health Literature (CINAHL), Medical Literature Analysis and Retrieval System (MEDLINE), and American

Psychological Association Psychology Information (APA PsycINFO) yielded 34,834 publications. Among these studies, 22 articles were found to directly address the research issue and question (see Figure 1). After an extensive examination of the summary findings from each article, a final decision on inclusion in the review was made. Table 1 displays the titles and summarizes the key insights from these 22 selected studies.

The data from the 20 articles were used to categorize the frequency of occurrence of healthcare leadership, strategies, and methods to address burnout and improve nurse wellness, which led to four critical themes that directly align with the research question. These themes encompassed: (a) strategies and practical methods to solve the issue, (b) healthcare leadership within the issue, (c) burnout in nurses delivering care, and (d) combatting burnout and improving the wellness of nurses. Table 2 displays the occurrence of these four common categories from the literature.

The research findings indicated that strategies and methods for nurse wellness and burnout were shown in 54% of the 22 articles. Healthcare leadership for nurse wellness and burnout were featured in 41% of these studies. Theme three, focusing on burnout in nurses delivering care, emerged frequently in 77% of the articles. Theme four, combatting burnout and improving the wellness of nurses was also a significant concern, mentioned in 64% of the 22 articles.

Title	Findings
[1] A systematic review study on the factors affecting shortage of nursing workforce in the hospitals (Tamata & Mohammadnuzhad, 2023)	The findings show that one of the causes of nurse burnout is a lack of healthcare leadership.
[2] CDC: Burnout Keeps Rising for Nurses and Other Healthcare Workers (Wickstrom, 2023)	The results demonstrated that burnout rates keep rising in nurses and other healthcare workers.
[3] Burnout and its relationship to self-reported quality of patient care and adverse events during COVID-19: A cross-sectional online survey among nurses (Kalevorn et al., 2021)	The study results displayed that encouraging resilience is important for coping with burnout for nurses to improve care.
[4] A systematic review of the relationships between nurse leaders' leadership styles and	The research results displayed that different leadership styles have different effects on staff well-being.

nurses' work-related well-being (Niinihuhta & Häggman-Laitila, 2022)	
[5] Fear in Nursing: The Heroes Perspective OJIN: The Online Journal of Issues in Nursing (Peasata & Nieves, 2024)	Per the research findings, healthcare administrators must be aware of nursing dangers to protect their nursing staff.
[6] The prevalence of nurse burnout and its association with telomere length pre and during the COVID-19 pandemic (Wei et al., 2022)	The research outcomes indicated that reasons for burnout affect patient care quality.
[7] Scalable and Sustainable Approaches to Address the Well-being of Healthcare Personnel (Giordano et al., 2023)	The findings showed that rest breaks, along with different types of support can reduce burnout.
[8] Job Stress, Burnout, Work-Life Balance, Well-Being, and Job Satisfaction Among Pathology Residents and Fellows (Kelly et al., 2020)	The authors of the study displayed that addressing resources needed to prevent burnout and promote wellness is crucial.
[9] Implementing Brief Mindfulness-Based Interventions to Reduce Compassion Fatigue (Tripathi & Mulkey, 2023)	The findings of the study show that mindfulness-based interventions can reduce compassion fatigue in nurses.
[10] An Organizational Leadership Development Approach to Support Health Worker Mental Health (Shwartz et al., 2024)	The study results provide a strategy that changes organizations to well-being of healthcare workers.
[11] "Where You Feel Like a Family Instead of Co-workers": a Mixed Methods Study on Care Teams and Burnout (Lu et al., 2022)	Per the research findings, team efficiency and reduced isolation in the workplace can reduce burnout and improve well-being.
[12] Scalable and Sustainable Approaches to Address the Well-being of Healthcare Personnel (Giordano et al., 2023)	The findings show that it is essential for healthcare leaders to implement organizational changes to reduce burnout and promote resiliency.
[13] A Cross-Sectional Study of Professional Quality of Life in Pediatric Nurses at a Level II Trauma Center (Hayakawa et al., 2023)	The research outcomes show that individual and organizational strategies are much needed to reduce burnout and improve quality of life.
[14] Emotional Labor Strategies, Stress, and Burnout Among Hospital Nurses: A Path Analysis (Kim, 2020)	Per the study results, healthcare leaders must provide interventions for nurses to reduce stress and burnout.
[15] Stress Management Tools to Place in Your Nursing Toolbox (Stiller, 2022)	The research findings provide symptoms of stress and ways to reduce stress in nurses.
[16] A review of the potential impact of professional nurse advocates in reducing stress and burnout in district nursing (Miles, 2023)	The study results show that high levels of stress and burnout negatively affect patient care and staff wellbeing.
[17] Moral Resilience Reduces Levels of Quiet Quitting, Job Burnout, and Turnover Intention among Nurses: Evidence in the Post COVID-19 Era (Galaris et al., 2024)	The research findings show that burnout in nurses is connected to errors made in patient care.
[18] Depression and burnout among Chinese nurses during COVID-19 pandemic: a mediation and moderation analysis model among frontline nurses and psychological nurses caring for COVID-19 patients (Wang et al., 2023)	The research results show that positive coping styles and interpersonal relationships decrease burnout and depression in nurses.
[19] Prevalence of burnout among nurses working at a psychiatric hospital in the Western Cape (Turney & Martin, 2020)	The findings display that open communication between staff and management can help to reduce burnout among nurses.
[20] The resilience of nursing staffs in nursing homes: Concept development applying a hybrid model (Chang & Kim, 2022)	The study results show that encouraging resilience is important for coping with burnout for nurses to improve care.
[21] Impact of and mitigation measures for burnout in frontline healthcare workers during disasters: A mixed-method systematic review (Alsaifi et al., 2023)	Study findings display that burnout affects healthcare workers' work performance, behavior, and quality of care provided.
[22] Associations among professional quality of life dimensions, burnout, nursing practice environment, and turnover intention in newly graduated nurses (Gong et al., 2022)	Per the research findings, nurse managers should pay attention to the high rate of burnout among nurses.

4. DISCUSSION

This systematic literature was designed to find strategies and practical methods that healthcare leaders can use to effectively combat burnout and improve the overall wellness of nurses when delivering services. Twenty-two peer-reviewed articles published between 2020 and 2024 were chosen for the study, which allowed for a current analysis of nurses, burnout,

wellness, and well-being strategies. The results displayed in Table 2 provide the main themes from the literature. Four main themes came from the literature analysis, which included strategies and methods for nurse wellness and burnout (3, 7, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 18, 19, 20), healthcare leadership for nurse wellness and burnout (1, 4, 5, 8, 10, 12, 14, 19, 22), burnout in nurses delivering care (1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 8, 9, 13, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22), and combatting burnout and improving the wellness of nurses (3, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 18, 19, 20).

The first theme from the literature analysis was strategies and methods for nurse wellness and burnout, which came from 54% of the articles [3, 7, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 18, 19, 20]. A few strategies and methods for nurse wellness and burnout were encouraging resilience, rest breaks, mindfulness-based interventions, and reduced isolation. Kelly et al. (2020) explained that burnout is quite prevalent among nurses, and the findings in this article show that there is a need for strategies and methods to promote nurse wellness and reduce job stress and burnout. In contrast, Kelly et al. (2020) reported that the article focused on stress from the job, but many other factors contribute to wellness and burnout. However, Kelly et al. (2020) also explain that the biggest cause of burnout is the stressful workload and work-life balance. Lu et al. (2022) explained that team efficiency and reduced isolation have significantly lowered burnout and improved wellness. Some strategies and methods found to improve nurse wellness and reduce burnout relate to how individuals in healthcare leadership roles handle situations.

The second theme from the literature analysis was healthcare leadership for nurse wellness and burnout, which came from 41% of the articles [1, 4, 5, 8, 10, 12, 14, 19, 22]. The articles discussing healthcare leadership for nurse wellness and burnout highlighted that the absence of effective leadership or certain leadership styles in organizations significantly contributes to nurse burnout (1, 4). In contrast, Tamata and Mohammadnezhad (2023) explain that the biggest cause of nurse burnout is the shortage of nurses in the workforce. However, Tamata and Mohammadnezhad (2023) also explain that healthcare leadership plays a huge role in the turnover rate of nurses. Niinihuhta and Häggman-Laitila (2022) described how supportive leadership styles help to retain nurses because they feel more comfortable being able to talk with their supervisors, and the nurses feel motivated to grow and be involved. The ways that healthcare leadership deals with nurse wellness and burnout have a substantial impact on burnout rates in nurses delivering care.

The third theme from the literature analysis was burnout in nurses delivering care, which came from 77% of the articles [1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 8, 9, 13, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22]. Wickstrom (2023) explained that burnout rates among nurses continue to rise, which affects the care patients are receiving. In contrast, Kakemam, et al. (2021) explained that there is a negative correlation between personal accomplishment and poor care scores. However, according to Wei et al. (2022), nurse burnout is related to poor patient care quality. Burnout in nurses delivering care is the reason for needing to combat burnout and improve the wellness of nurses.

The fourth theme from the literature analysis was combatting burnout and improving the wellness of nurses, which came from 64% of the articles [3, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 18, 19, 20]. Closely related to the first theme, strategies and methods for nurse wellness and burnout, this theme is about ways to improve wellness and reduce burnout, but this theme provides ways that have been successful before. In contrast, Wickstrom (2023) talked about the fact that burnout rates among nurses are continuously rising, even after efforts to stop burnout. Addressing the issue of nurse burnout and improving the wellness of nurses requires healthcare leaders to implement practical strategies that emphasize the wellness of nurses (by integrating work-life balance and education, developing a supportive work environment, and creating policies practices, programs, and initiatives) that meet the needs of nurses (3, 7, 9, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 18, 19, 20). These efforts should, in turn, improve patient care (3, 16, 17, 20, 21).

The limitations that this literature review was subjected to were time constraints, search methods, and subjective nature. This review occurred in about eight weeks, give or take. The search methods used were searching CINAHL, MEDLINE, and APA PsycINFO academic databases for peer-reviewed journal articles germane to the topic, so articles outside of these databases could have been missed. The search took place using keywords, so it is possible that articles were missed because they did not contain the keywords. Finally, the subjective nature of the reviewer could have been an issue because of bias or misinterpretation.

In addressing these limitations, the review applied the PRISMA-based systematic review guidelines (Page et al., 2021) to ensure accurate results. A total of 34,834 sources were gathered, and specific filters were applied when using CINAHL, MEDLINE, and APA PsycINFO academic databases until no additional pertinent information could be generated to advance the research inquiry. Each article underwent a thorough review to evaluate its relevance to the research question. Despite inherent limitations to the study, the findings indicated the existence of strategies and practical methods that healthcare leaders could use to effectively combat burnout and improve the overall wellness of nurses when delivering services.

Future research is needed to improve nurse wellness and combat burnout completely. Researchers can use this study to find evidence of the efficiency of the tools provided. Healthcare leaders can also use this study for ideas to implement in their facilities, for their nurses experiencing burnout. These findings provide healthcare professionals with information to act upon and develop additional strategies and practical methods to manage nursing burnout. The results indicated that improving the overall wellness of nurses who deliver services could improve patients' healthcare. Future researchers may wish to collaborate with leaders from different specialties in the field to address this issue, which may lead to better outcomes.

5. CONCLUSION

Positioning Strategies and methods for improving well-being and burnout rates among nurses have been and continue to be a pressing issue, to figure out what can be done to solve it. Healthcare workers must be provided with support for improving well-being and reducing burnout (12). This systematic literature review aimed to identify strategies and practical methods that healthcare leaders can use to effectively combat burnout and improve the overall wellness of nurses when delivering services. The review provided four themes that helped to answer the research question. The four themes included strategies and methods for nurse wellness and burnout, healthcare leadership for nurse wellness and burnout, burnout in nurses delivering care, and combatting burnout and improving the wellness of nurses. Given the findings of the literature review, promoting resilience, incorporating rest breaks, implementing mindfulness-based interventions, reducing isolation by enhancing team support and efficiency, integrating work-life balance initiatives and education, fostering a supportive work environment, and establishing policies or programs are vital components to developing effective strategies and practical methods to alleviate burnout and enhance the wellness of nurses during care delivery. Improving the wellness of nurses and reducing burnout could improve the quality of care that patients receive in hospitals or any healthcare institution. The implications of these findings provide healthcare leaders with an opportunity to improve the retention of staff and their reputation.

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