
● SUMMARY

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**STUDY OF PSYCHOPHYSIOLOGICAL SYMPTOMS OF NURSES
COMPARISON OF PSYCHIATRIC HOSPITAL NURSES
AND GENERAL HOSPITAL NURSES**

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It is very important to be able to maintain one's psychological and physical strength [health] for dealing effectively with work. Many hospital nurses are bothered daily by stress encountered in providing care and through general administrative practices. Many young nurses in their twenties leave or change hospitals. This is because many receive severe reality shock from hospitals. This phenomenon has been called burn-out syndrome. However, the actual extent to which this is a problem in Japan has not been studied.

The Japanese Nursing Association conducted research into the Burn Out Syndrome, demoralization, and physical stress in nurses working in psychiatric and general hospitals in 1987. We obtained several findings [results] about the relationship of stress and psychophysiological symptoms in nurses.

SAMPLE

Subjects were nurses from nine psychiatric hospitals (n=616) and two general hospitals (n=138).

SURVEY CONTENT

The questionnaire developed for this study included assessment of the occurrence of stressful events encountered in the workplace and in personal life, the perceived stressfulness of these events, and a series of potential mediators of the stress-symptom relationship. These included negative coping behavior, access to supportive persons, helplessness, and the following personality characteristics: Type A behavior, interpersonal dependency, and a set of original Japanese items. As dependent variables, the following measures were included: the Demoralization scale from the PERI, the Japanese version of the burn out scale originally developed by Pines, and a scale

measuring psychological and physiological symptoms in workers developed by the Institute of Labor.

STUDY FINDINGS

General hospital nurses tend to have higher levels of burn out and demoralization than psychiatric hospital nurses. This may be due to age. Three quarters of the nurses working in general hospitals were in their twenties, an age group that tends to have higher levels of symptoms. Helplessness was a strong predictor of demoralization and burn out in the general hospital sample. This may be a result of the lower levels of mastery among nurses in their 20's. On the other hand, [in contrast] psychiatric nurses have higher levels of physiological symptoms. A quarter of the psychiatric nurses were age 50 or above.

These results suggest that in general, young nurses may suffer from low levels of mastery. When they encounter reality shock from hospitals, they are unable to master it themselves. Older nurses, on the other hand, may better be able to master the situation, but it takes a toll on their physical well-being.