

Determination of the Stress Coping Techniques Employed By Nurses

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ABSTRACT

This study was carried out for determinative purposes in order to investigate the stress coping methods employed by nurses. The sample of the research consisted of 97 nurses. Stress Coping Styles Scale and socio-demographic characteristics question form derived from the information in the literature were used as means of data collection. In the study, it was determined that the most widely used approach by nurses is the self-reliant approach and they usually employ the problem-oriented stress coping methods. Furthermore, it was observed that a great majority of the nurses fail to benefit from in-service training or training programmes regarding stress coping. In line with the data obtained, it is suggested to maintain the in-service training programmes on stress coping or support the participation of the nurses into such programmes and to conduct new researches examining stress-generating factors among nurses, coping methods and factors affecting them.

Keywords: Nursing, stress, coping

INTRODUCTION

Coping defines an important phenomenon that indicates the resistance of an individual against a stress giving event. An insufficiency in coping is observed in individuals who do not use the appropriate resources in the face of the events encountered and the individual goes through stress. In case the stress lasts long, the balance of the body is disturbed and physical, mental and social problems occur (Healy, McKay, 2000).

Working conditions that generate stress create pressure and difficulties on the employees (Baltaş, Baltaş, 2002). Certain coping methods are employed in the face of these pressures and difficulties; and in case these methods come up to be ineffective or last long, exhaustion, depression, performance decrease, job leaving and disturbances in interpersonal relationships may occur in time (AbuAlRub, 2000).

Nurses who face many stressors in working and social life also use various stress coping methods in order to be able to cope with the stressors. Nurses respond the stressors differently as a result of the factors affecting the stress coping styles of the nurses such as personal characteristics, characteristic of the stress generating situation, the year of working, the year of working in that particular service, the ability to choose the unit they work in, workload, perceived social support and the properties of the care organization. Among the frequently employed coping methods by the nurses in the face of stressors are ineffective coping methods such as the use of alcohol and cigarette, escaping, excessive eating and drinking, conflicting, trying to move away from the work or forget it, as well as effective coping methods such as employing the problem solving method, engagement with free-time activities, resting, the use of relaxation techniques and cognitive coping methods (Tully, 2004; Coffey, Coleman, 2001; Stordeur et al., 2001; Callaghan, 2000).

Nurses are responsible for the improvement of the society's health as well as the treatment of a disaster as they possess the necessary training and experiences with the knowledge accumulation that would develop human health. It is important that nurses who render health service to other people in a complete well-being and the continuity of this well-being is quite important. Thus, knowing the coping methods employed by nurses against stressors resulting from business and social life and developing positive behaviors is quite important both in terms of nursing and the receipt of qualified care by the society expecting service from them.

MATERIAL AND METHOD

Type of Research

This study was planned as a determinative research in order to investigate the working characteristics of the nurses and the coping methods they employ.

Place of the Research and Its Properties

This study was conducted in a hospital with a capacity of 300 beds where nursing services are carried out under the directorate of nursing services.

Universe and Sample of the Research

The sample of the research consists of 102 nurses working in hospital services. No sample selection method was applied and all of the nurses who accepted to participate in the study (102 nurses) were included in the study. The sample of the study consisted of 97 nurses as there were people who filled in the questionnaires deficiently.

Time of Data Collection

Research data were collected in May, 2014.

Data Collection Tools

Two main data collection tools were used in line with the purpose of the study.

Nurse Introduction Form

It is prepared by researchers as a result of literature reviews and contains variables on the demographic and working life of the nurses affecting their coping (Gündüz, 2000; Healy, McVicar, 2003; Nehir, 2003).

Stress Coping Styles Scale (SCSS)

In this research, the Stress Coping Styles Scale adapted into Turkish by Hisli and Durak (1995) from the "Ways of Coping Inventory" developed by Folkman and Lazarus (1987). This scale has two dimensions that can be named as the effective ways towards the problem and ineffective ways towards emotion. In the scale consisting of 30 items in total, it is indicated that stress coping is becomes effective as the scores obtained from the factors of self-confident, optimistic and applying to social support factors increase, and ineffective methods are used in stress coping as the scores obtained from the helpless approach and surrendering factors increase (Hisli, Durak, 1995).

Data Evaluation

Data were analyzed using number, percentage and mean in SPSS 17.0 environment.

FINDINGS

Almost half of the sample (48,5%) consists of nurses with 11 and more years of working. 25,8% of the nurses did not choose the service they work upon their own will. Nevertheless,

39,2% of them are pleased with the working environment. The weekly hours of working varies between 40 and 45 hours at the rate of 59,8%. It is observed that an important part of the nurses (81,4%) does not participate in any programme of stress coping.

Table 1. Working Characteristics of the Nurses

<i>Variable</i>		<i>Number (n)</i>	<i>Percentage (%)</i>
Period of Service in the Profession	1 Year and Less	10	10.3
	Between 2 and 5 Years	21	21.6
	Between 6 and 10 Years	19	19.6
	11 Years and More	47	48.5
Status of Choosing the Service They Work In	Willingly	72	74.2
	Unwillingly	25	25.8
Being Pleased of the Place They Work	Pleased	38	39.2
	Partially Pleased	50	51.5
	Not Pleased	9	9.3
Weekly Working Hours	40- 45 Hours	58	59.8
	46- 60 Hours	25	25.8
	61- 80 Hours	24	24.4
Situation of Participating in Programmes related to Stress Coping	Yes	18	18.6
	No	79	81.4
Total		97	100

According to the findings, the stress coping method most frequently resorted to by the nurses constituting the sample of the research is the “self-confident approach”. Other coping methods employed are listed as the optimistic approach, the approach of seeking social support, unconfident approach and surrendering approach.

Table 2. Stress Coping Methods Employed by Nurses

<i>Stress Coping Scale Sub-Dimensions</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>Minimum</i>	<i>Maximum</i>	<i>Average</i>	<i>Standard Error</i>
Self-Confident Approach	97	0	3	1.89	.485
Optimistic Approach		0	3	1.87	.460
Unconfident Approach		0	2.38	1.12	.442
Surrendering Approach		0	2.67	.97	.493
Social Support Seeking Approach		0	2.75	1.79	.317

DISCUSSION

The most widely employed stress coping method by nurses in the face of stressful events is the “self-confident” approach. Other coping methods resorted to by the ranking of use are the optimistic approach, social support seeking approach, unconfident approach and the surrendering approach (Table 2). The self-confident approach and social support seeking approach which are among the most widely used approaches are problem-oriented coping styles, while the optimistic approach is both an emotional and problem oriented coping approach. Those problem-oriented coping styles are among the most frequently used ones by nurses is one of the expected results from nursing. For, nurses learn the problem solving process both during the preparation period for the profession and clinical life and frequently encounter such situations in clinical environments. The success of the nurses during the problem solving process that is in the nature of nursing directly affects their coping styles. Furthermore, it is observed that the years of service of almost half of the nurses constituting the sample are 11 years and above (Table 1). That professional experience and problem solving skills increase with the increase in the years of working in the profession accounts for why nurses use the problem-oriented coping methods more.

While different scales were used in the literature in order to assess the coping behaviours of the nurses, these findings of the study are in accord with other studies carried out on nurses. In the studies carried out, it is seen that nurses frequently use the problem solving process and social support seeking approach (Callaghan et al., 2000, Healy, McKay, 2000). While the most widely used approach by nurses in the study carried out by Gündüz (2000) and Nehir (2003) does not comply with the use of the self-confident approach in this study, it is observed that nurses mainly use problem-oriented coping methods.

RESULTS

The following results were obtained in this study investigating the stress coping methods used by nurses:

1. Nurses constituting the sample use most the “self-confident approach” and least the “surrendering approach” as a coping method.
2. A great majority of the nurses did not participate in the programmes on stress coping.

SUGGESTIONS

According to the findings of the studies, the following suggestions were made to directors and researchers.

1. Maintaining in-service training programmes on stress coping or supporting the participation of the nurses into programmes with regard to this
2. Conducting new studies that will investigate the stress generating factors among nurses, coping methods and factors affecting this.

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