

Exploring the experiences of operating room health care professionals' from the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic

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Abstract:

Background: The operating room nurses have encountered several challenges during the current COVID-19 Pandemic, which subsequently impact their clinical performance. The present study aimed to investigate the experiences of operating room health care professionals' regarding the COVID-19 pandemic challenges in southern Iran.

Methods: This is a descriptive qualitative study. The required data were collected using in-depth and semi-structured interviews. Accordingly, 19 operating room health care professions were included in this study through purposive sampling. The data were collected from February 2020 to August 2021 and then analyzed using the Granheim and Lundman's method.

Results: Three main themes and 9 sub-themes were presented in this study. They included: 1- Challenges of applying protocols and standards of care in the COVID-19 pandemic in the operating room (lack of specific guidelines regarding care protocols and standards for crisis management of Covid-19 in the operating room and impossibility of keeping social distance in the operating room). 2- Professional challenges (tedious and hard work, professional burnout, lack of adequate support by the managers and lack of personal protective equipment). 3- Psychological crises (indescribable anxiety and worry, parenting stress, and weakened resilience).

Conclusion: Based on the findings of the present study, it was indicated that lack of a specific guideline in the COVID-19 pandemic led to a sense of indecision and confusion among operating room staff. In this regard, performing tedious tasks, feelings of tiredness and exhaustion, lack of support by the authorities, and lack of access to adequate facilities and equipment were reported as the professional challenges of the healthcare staff in the current COVID-19 pandemic, which consequently affected the quality of care and patient's safety. It seems that hospital officials can use the results reported in this study for efficient planning and effective management during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Keywords: COVID-19, Challenge, Operating room, Qualitative research