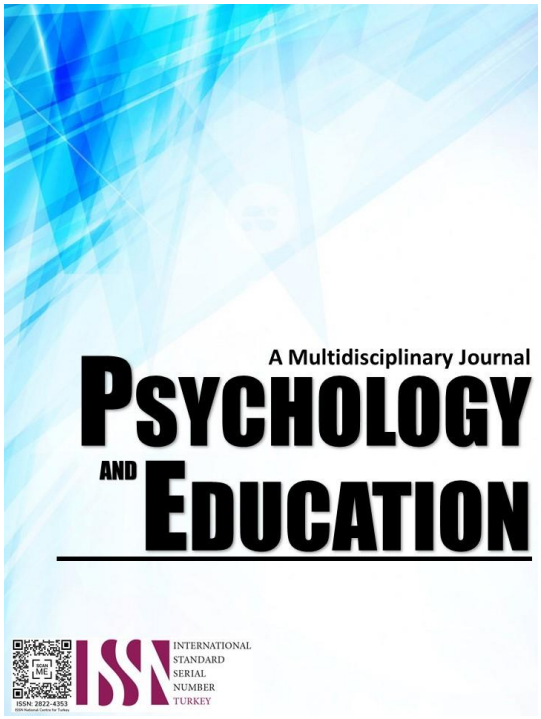
CARING FOR COVID-19 POSITIVE PATIENTS: THE CASE OF THREE NURSES IN SOUTH COTABATO



PSYCHOLOGY AND EDUCATION: A MULTIDISCIPLINARY JOURNAL

2022
Volume: 6
Pages: 1297-1309
Document ID: 2022PEMJ427
DOI: 10.5281/zenodo.7447063
Manuscript Accepted: 2022-13-12

Psych Educ, 2022, **6**: 1297-1309, Document ID: PEMJ427, doi: 10.5281/zenodo.7447063, ISSN 2822-4353

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Research Article

Caring for COVID-19 Positive Patients: The Case of Three Nurses in South Cotabato

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Abstract

The study explored and described the experiences of nurses on caring for COVID-19 positive patients. The study gained insights from the three nurses in South Cotabato who are employed in a private hospital, government hospital, and isolation facility. This research featured a qualitative method. The purpose of the qualitative method is to reveal the multiple realities of the phenomenon via the participants retelling of their experiences. The design of the research was holistic multiple-case study as it aimed to provide an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon within the case boundaries, which is an intensive, transferrable understanding of the phenomenon. This method was appropriate for the study since the researchers sought to describe the experiences of nurses in South Cotabato in caring for COVID-19 positive patients. The researchers conducted an online interview in collecting the data. The results showed that in the case of the three nurses, care was manifested in two ways: the physical and non-physical ways. The nurses experienced both negative and positive challenges. The nurses defined caring as holistic and in caring for patients they felt bounded and ambivalent.

Keywords: *experiences, nurses, COVID-19 patients, holistic multiple-case study, Philippines*

Introduction

The Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic has disrupted people's daily lives and slowed the global economy. Thousands of people have been infected by the pandemic, with many being ill or dying as a result of the disease's spread. Treatment is currently unavailable for this new viral outbreak, which is affecting humans for the first time. As an effect, people are advised on taking high precautions such as extensive hygiene protocol (e.g., regularly washing hands, avoiding face-to-face interaction, etc.), social distancing, and mask wearing, and plenty of other things (Haleem & Javaid, 2020). It is a great challenge for every individual to adapt to these new challenges since direct contact and face-to-face interaction are strictly prohibited.

Healthcare segments across nations are struggling to cope with the massive imbalance in supply and demand of medical supplies as well as the manpower in health care services. Indeed, COVID-19 pandemic surfaced unexpectedly and indeed surprised the whole world. With this, all aspects of the society are affected including the public and private sector, the education system, the economy, and the health sector which is the most contaminated part in the society.

Every aspect of the medical field has been heavily affected by the Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19). According to Arasli (2020), health care professionals especially nurses play an important role in disease prevention and limit the spread of the outbreak as a trusted health professional community. Nurses are the ones who have the most interaction with COVID-19 patients. During the COVID-19 era, nurses performed the most important tasks in rescuing critically ill patients and curing infected patients. While this is true, healthcare organizations have indicated that as the pandemic spreads, they will need more healthcare professionals.

Caring is at the heart of the healthcare profession, especially the nurses, and it is critical to their ability to form effective relationships with the people they assist. The nature of care itself and new ways of working are potentially highly stressful for nurses. The nurses are not only experiencing an increase in the volume and intensity of their work, but are having to accommodate new protocols and a very “new normal” (Bridges, 2020). Every nurse is expected to serve their utmost service towards their patients. Having close contact to COVID-19 positive patients is a great threat to nurses' social and mental aspects. Evidence from studies on COVID-19 and other infectious respiratory disease outbreaks by Bridges (2020) reflected high concern among nurses for personal or family health in the face of direct contact with a potentially deadly virus and the stress of balancing this concern with the ethical obligations of continuing to provide care.

Many healthcare professionals are vulnerable both to high risk of infection and mental health problems and this evidence was learned from the 2003 SARS outbreak. The 2014 MERS-CoV outbreak in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia had also caused emotional distress among the health care workers (Khalid et.al., 2016). Since Covid-19 pandemic is a new and a global-scale phenomenon (Sampaio, 2020), the researchers saw the

relevance to pay attention to the healthcare workers specifically the nurses who are in the frontline in combating the disease Covid-19. This study would be a great help in the field of Psychology since the researchers sought to explore the experiences of nurses which would greatly provide information about the physical, cognitive, and emotional experiences of the nurses in South Cotabato during COVID-19 pandemic.

Research Questions

This study aimed to describe the experiences of nurses in South Cotabato in caring for COVID-19 positive patients. Specifically, it answered the following questions:

1. How may the experiences of nurses on caring for COVID-19 positive patients be described in terms of the following:
1.1 Manifestation of care,
1.2 Challenges in caring; and
1.3 Coping mechanism to these challenges?
2. How do nurses understand care?
3. How do nurses feel about caring for COVID-19 positive patients?

Methodology

Research Design

This research featured a qualitative method. The purpose of the qualitative method is to reveal the multiple realities of the phenomenon via the participants retelling of their experiences. The design of the research was holistic multiple-case study as it aimed to provide an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon within the case boundaries, which is an intensive, transferrable understanding of the phenomenon. This method was appropriate for the study since the researchers sought to describe the experiences of nurses in South Cotabato in caring for COVID-19 positive patients. The study was conducted in South Cotabato, specifically in a government hospital, private hospital and isolation facility. The participants were nurses who have been serving in a COVID-19 facility. The researchers conducted an in-depth interview with the participants using a researcher-made interview guide that contains a series of questions. The researchers found in-depth interview as a suitable and conducive instrument in collecting the data in the said research because in-depth interview focuses on a small population of participants wherein it provides unlimited responses from the participants through intensive individual interview. In analysis of the data, the researchers used thematic analysis. The study focused on the experiences of nurses in South Cotabato in caring for COVID-19 positive patients. The researchers utilized inclusion criteria in choosing the participants. The inclusion criteria are as follows:

1. The participant must be a registered nurse.
2. The registered nurse must be deployed in any of the following: Isolation facility, Private hospital, and Government hospital
3. The registered nurse must be handling COVID-19 positive patients.

Participants of the Study

The participants of the study were composed of three nurses who were employed in a government hospital, private hospital and isolation facility and have experience in taking care of COVID-19 positive patients.

Adrian is a nurse employed in a government hospital in Surallah, South Cotabato, specifically at SOCSKSARGEN General Hospital. Adrian is a committed medical practitioner for almost four years. He is a dedicated nurse driven by purpose and passion to help COVID-19 positive patients despite the risk and deprived benefits. He made many sacrifices to be of service to his fellowmen in the Philippines. Adrian has prior experience in a government hospital which was at South Cotabato Provincial Hospital. Adrian is a registered nurse and a licensed professional teacher as well. He has been invited to seminars to be a resource speaker where he takes it as a great opportunity to be able to impart his acquired knowledge and experiences as a nurse to others.

Angelo is a private hospital nurse particularly deployed at Doctor Arturo P. Pingoy Medical Center. He is a registered nurse and has a degree in Masters of Arts in Nursing. Also, he has been affiliated in the same institution for more than six (6) years. Angelo experienced being assigned in various areas in the institution such as at ICU and Pediatric ward, but is now currently assigned as an emergency nurse. Caring for COVID-19 positive patients has honed him to be more effective in rendering quality care to his patients. Even though there is a lot of pressure inside the hospital due to the outrage of the said virus, he

passionately commits his service to help his patients recover completely.

Kristine is a community nurse that was assigned to an isolation facility in Zone IV, Koronadal City, South Cotabato. A registered nurse and has been a community nurse for almost five (5) years and was assigned and was actively imparting his service to an isolation facility due to the lack of manpower during the pandemic. Due to the outrage of the pandemic, Kristine becomes unstoppable rendering her service to her fellowmen despite the fatigue and inconvenience.

Research Instrument

The researchers used a researcher-made interview guide in order to explore the experiences and perceptions of the participants in the said study. The guide questions were composed by the researchers with supervision and was checked by their adviser. The Interview guide was formulated based on the statement of the problem and it can be found on Appendix A on page 118. Question number 1 is about the nurses' understanding of care, Question number 2 is about how nurses view their patients which were positive of COVID-19. Question number 3 is about nurses' experiences on caring for COVID-19 positive patients. Question number 4 is about nurses' feelings in caring COVID-19 positive patients. Question number 5 is about how the community reacts about nurses handling COVID-19 positive patients. Question number 6 is about how nurses deal with the treatment shown by the community. Question number 7 is about how nurses manifest their care towards COVID-19 positive patients. Question number 8 is about how nurses facilitate or handle patients with COVID-19. Question number 9 is about how nurses attend or address the needs of the patients with COVID-19. Lastly, Question number 10 is about how nurses communicate or connect with the family of the patients with COVID-19. With this, the researchers had gained a rich amount of information about the experiences of the three nurses in South Cotabato. The researchers conducted the study through an online platform specifically, Zoom Meeting and Google Meet.

Data Gathering Procedure

In this section, data collection procedures are presented which includes the instruments, preliminary preparations, fieldwork and quality control. The researchers used an interview guide questionnaire formulated by the researchers to answer the statements of the problem. The questionnaire was evaluated and authorized by the research adviser, panel members, and Ethics review board.

Ethical Considerations

The researchers aimed to be effective and ethical in conducting the said study. To prevent future misunderstanding and misjudgements, the researchers considered the following: (1) The researchers provided letters of approval and requests to formally select the qualified participants in the study; (2) The consent forms were aimed to protect the identity of the participants. The letter had the content to ensure and safeguard the rights, dignity, and well-being of the research participants; (3) The researchers aimed to provide knowledge, truth and avoidance of error. Hence, the researchers had honestly and truthfully interpreted the responses of the participants; (4) In order to promote trust and rapport, the researchers had approached politely and respectfully the participants of the said study; (5) The researchers had ensured that all data and information that were collected from the participants have been treated with full confidentiality; and (6) The researchers made sure to produce a conducive output that aims to help other people and have definitely been aware of negative interpretations and statements that would be degrading to the readers.

Results and Discussion

This section presents the results of the study on caring for COVID-19 positive patients: the case of three nurses in South Cotabato. It answers the question how may the experiences of nurses on caring for COVID-19 positive patients be described? How do nurses understand care? How do nurses feel about caring for COVID-19 positive patients? The succeeding sections are organized in view of the identified cases of the study.

CASE 1: ADRIAN

Adrian is a nurse employed in a government facility in Surallah, South Cotabato, specifically, at SOCSKSARGEN General Hospital. Adrian is a committed medical practitioner for almost four (4) years. The interview was conducted last September 21, 2021 at 8:30 in the evening. He is very enthusiastic and willing to share the significant experiences that he encountered as a government facility nurse. Adrian explicitly explained those challenges and experiences that he went through in doing what he loves, which is to care, despite being infected also with the COVID-19 virus.

SOP 1: How may the experiences of nurses on caring for COVID-19 positive patients be described in terms of the following:

Manifestation of care

Adrian talked about how the nurses in a government facility manifested care towards the COVID-19 positive patients and the themes that emerged in the manifestation of care are Physical assistance, Verbal guidance and information dissemination, Financial-aid and Assistive care. Under physical assistance, Adrian stated that nurses attend to the needs of the patients by giving medicines and food for the patients and physical monitoring. Adrian stated that: "*Naka attach yung mga patients sa mga machines sa mechanical ventilators inaayos yun, nag sa suction kung may mga secretions."*

Patients, depending on the disease severity, needed special attention and support from the health care team. To meet these needs, there are requirements for equipment such as intubation devices, thermometers, medications, etc., as well as health care procedures such as suctioning secretions, catheterization, and other physical care (Galehdar, et al. 2020). The second manifestation of care is through Verbal guidance and information dissemination which talks about the act in which nurses explain and spread correct information to the patients regarding the implications and the nature of COVID-19 . The third manifestation is the financial-aid wherein the nurses extended monetary help to the patients to uplift and give them encouragement. Adrian stated that: *"supportive nalang kung ano yung kaya mo mabigay, yun na lang.. May mga times na walang-wala na yung pasyente kaming mga nurse nag aambag-ambag para lang at least makabigay sa kanila…"*

The last form of manifestation is the Assistive care and its scope consisting of bed bathing for the patients and giving of food. Adrian stated: *"you do the bed bathing, kayo nagpapaligo sa mga pasyente, kayo nag papakain kasi walang mga watcher."*

Challenges in caring

As a government facility nurse, Adrian encountered a lot of challenges described to be filled with anxiety, stressful, traumatic, discomforting, fearsome and lacking support. The experience was full of anxiety because of having insufficient knowledge of the virus, hearing news about the deadly virus and the rising death count, unclear hospital protocols, unfair treatment to the staff and overwork. The experience was also stressful and it was because of financial and discrimination stress, hardship brought by the pandemic, incompetency of the government, lack of knowledge of the society about COVID-19, stress in the leadership of hospital management and physical stress in work. COVID-19 pandemic was already being identified as a major healthcare issue, evidenced by the growing incidence of stress, burnout, depression, drug and alcohol dependence and suicide across all groups of health professionals in many countries (Billings et al., 2021). The experience was also described to be traumatic due to the shortage of essential medical supplies such as alcohol, personal protective equipment (PPE) and oxygen. Working environment was unsafe because of the shortages which became traumatic for the nurses in the government hospital. As Adrian stated: *"nagkakaubusan ng PPE, nagkakaubusan ng alcohol, uhm now nagkakaubusan ng Oxygen. so, yun ang naging traumatic effect naming mga healthcare workers the sad thing pa is because of that incident of hindi naging safe yung working place environment"*

Nurses experienced discomfort in caring for COVID-19 positive patients due to wearing personal protective equipment for long hours, working more than their regular duty, compromising personal necessities, and being reprimanded to make an explanation letter of why Adrian became infected with COVID-19. The experience was fearsome for Adrian because of the fear of being infected of the virus, which eventually happened, and fear of infecting others after becoming positive for COVID-19. Adrian also feared to be scolded when wanting to take proper care of the COVID-19 positive patients because there were a lot of restrictions. *"So dun ako troubled na part in the performance of what is due for me I mean, in the performance of my profession, of my task as a nurse, hindi ko siya nagagawa because of, yun. Takot din ako na mapagalitan and na mahawaan ko yung kasama ko"*

Lacking support from the government was also noticed in the experience of Adrian since he said that there was a delay in the distribution of salary. Nurses were deprived of benefits and were given no freedom to speak for what is right. *"yung mga kasamahan ko sa province delayed yung sahod nila for three months. Imagine, how will you deliver a quality care kung mismo ikaw hindi napapangalagaan yung.. yung needs mo diba? nai-imagine niyo kung saan humuhugot ang isang nurse na.. na deprived of salary, deprived of*

benefits, deprived of liberty to speak out for what is right, diba?"

Coping mechanisms to the challenges

The nurses would not be able to survive these challenges without coping strategies. In the case of Adrian, those strategies were in the form of voicing out humor, boosting one's own morale and courage, and being patient. He voiced out the concerns about the protocols and mistreatment of the management and used humor to avoid discrimination from colleauges since Adrian became positive for COVID-19. Adrian experienced being avoided by his colleagues but he used humor to cope with the discrimination from the workplace. As Adrian said: *"kaya minsan dinadaan ko nalang sa biro ano ka ba? Naka hindi ano na ko wala na akong gusto mo hug kita ha ganon? Niloloko ko pa lalo"*

Uplifting own morale and courage instead of resigning also became a coping mechanism for Adrian, and being patient with everything since he understood the role of a nurse and how caring is important in his profession.

SOP 2: How do nurses understand Care?

Adrian was asked about his understanding of care and stated that care is the essence of a nurse, and caring is challenging. What entails with caring being the essence of a nurse is that you have to be compassionate, patient, and must be a health advocate. *"to care and to compass.. to be compassionate, I must be a health advocate I must be there.. their protector of their health. I should help them to attain the ultimate level of functioning na tinatawag." "caring is the essence of a nurse. You cannot be a nurse if you don't have a caring heart. You cannot be a nurse if you don't have a compassionate heart"*

Caring for COVID-19 positive patients was also challenging because of restrictions, as stated by Adrian: *"Caring in the midst of a pandemic is very challenging." "there are so many restrictions in the delivery of quality care during this pandemic"*

The lack of full protection for nurses across the health industry raises ethical questions about the extent of their duty, lack of personal protective equipment, and risk of failure of personal protective equipment.The significant number of nurses also experienced moral distress because they were under prolonged pressure to maintain the resources needed to provide safe and high-quality nursing care (Gebreheat & Teame, 2021).

SOP 3: How do nurses feel about caring for COVID-19 positive patients?

The researchers asked Adrian about how nurses feel about caring for COVID-19 positive patients and the two themes gathered are the feeling of fulfillment and restriction. Basically, fulfillment is felt if something good happens to the patient especially when the patient is recovering. The good treatment from the patients also contribute to the feeling of fulfillment just as Adrian stated: *"Siguro guys what drived us to still perform our task is.. yung simpleng thank you ng mga patients namin if ...yung makita mo yung patient mo nabubuti yung kalagayan because of the services you rendered yun.. it's more than a monetary value." "feeling ko gani gina-treat nakami nila as their family eh kasi alam mo yung sasabihin... Te, kamusta ka? Nagkaon kana? mga amo gud na. Oh diba maka-touch siya as a nurse"*

Aside from fulfillment, Adrian felt restricted in taking care of COVID-19 positive patients. One of the main issues pointed out by Adrian was the unclear protocols from the hospital wherein they were restricted so much because of the lack of manpower. The management tried to restrict the nurses in delivering quality care because another problem might arise regarding the lack of manpower if the nurses would be infected would the virus. As adrian stated: *"yung feeling na gusto mong alagaan, gusto mong magbigay ng care sa pasyente mo pero papagalitan ka ng senior mo"*

The WHO and government guidelines were changing continuously given the disease was new and previous knowledge was little. Consequently, doctors remained uncertain about the line of treatment. These uncertainties created additional mental stress for medical professionals (Arif et al., 2021).

Psych Educ, 2022, **6**: 1297-1309, Document ID: PEMJ427, doi: 10.5281/zenodo.7447063, ISSN 2822-4353

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Figure 1. *Schematic diagram of care of Adrian*

The schematic diagram above shows the overall experience of Adrian on caring for COVID-19 positive patients. Under the manifestation of care, there are four (4) themes which are

Physical assistance, Verbal guidance and information dissemination, Financial aid, and Assistive care. Also, there are six (6) themes that emerged from the challenges of Adrian as a government facility nurse namely, anxiety, stressful, traumatic, discomforting, fearsome and lack of support. There were five (5) coping mechanisms used by Adrian to cope with the challenges and these are being patient, boosting one's morale, voicing out, being courageous, and humor. When asked about Adrian's understanding of care, there were two (2) themes that emerged: challenging and the essence of a nurse. Under the essence of a nurse, one must be compassionate, patient, and an advocate of health. Lastly, on the feelings of caring for COVID-19 positive patients, Adrian said that he was fulfilled and restricted at the same time.

CASE 2: ANGELO

Angelo is a private nurse in Doctor Arturo P. Pingoy Medical Center located in Koronadal City. He was interviewed by the researchers at exactly 8:30 am on September 24, 2021. Out of the three nurses, Angelo has the most number of years working as a healthcare professional. As of six years of being in the field rendering quality healthcare in the said hospital, Angelo has seen through his own lens the different dimensions of care. Caring for other people is not just the call of Angelo's duty but it is his undertakings that turned out as his natural pursuit. However, it was challenged by the hit of the unfamiliar and unpredictable health crisis which was the surge of the COVID-19 pandemic– the unseen enemy Angelo did not see that it would be coming.

SOP 1: How may the experiences of nurses on caring for COVID-19 positive patients be described? In terms of the following:

Manifestation of care

His dedication to his profession was evidently manifested inside the hospital. Indeed, Angelo made a lot of sacrifices in taking care of COVID-19 positive patients. He manifested his care holistically. He addressed the physical needs of his patients with COVID-19 by means of monitoring their health status, considering the health protocols and providing life support equipment for the COVID-19 positive patients. Emotionally, by means of saying encouraging words that uplift the hope of the patients. Verbally, by means of giving proper instructions and providing information to the patients with regard to their medications. Spiritually, by means of prayer and interceding for fast recovery of their patients. Lastly, out of the three participants, Angelo manifested intensive care towards COVID-19 positive patients by means of reviving them in their most critical hours, he testified: *"May ara kami gaabot dira mga cs 3 so Glasgow coma scale of 3 over 15 so ibig sabihin tulog na siya. Wala gahambal, way gahulag,typically patay. So sa amon, ipilit na namon siya irevive. Piliton gid na namon siya irevive hanggat may pulso pa. piliton gid na namon siya irevive so amo na mga wor mga worst case scenarios" "...bal'an mo na ang pasyente gabato, may will, amo na makita mo na na siya eh. Actually, para saakon bal-an mo gid nga ang pasyente gabato, may will, e hatag mo tanan"*

Challenges in caring

Giving utmost care for the patients has transpired to be more constrained and challenging for Angelo. The pandemic brought a great deal of challenges and afflictions in his caring profession, wherein he stated that: *"Tiresome, stressful, lack of support usually para sa government" "syempre anxious, may fears sa part namon as nurses, health care providers kay syempre*

magpuli kami ang family"

Frustrations, fatigue, stress, unfair treatments and pressures inside the hospital are some of the major challenges Angelo faced in caring for COVID-19 positive patients.

Coping mechanisms to the challenges

Angelo became more flexible and resilient in his endeavors in rendering quality care amidst the pandemic. Thus, as he faced all these difficulties and with the challenging healthcare system in the country, he managed to develop coping strategies to battle the said challenges, once he quoted: *"Stop kagid kuha ka breather or gwa ka istorya ka sa someone na open ka gusto mo, 'istoryaha ko bi', gusto mo na ma vent ang emotions mo."*

Angelo made sure that he was taking care of his own health, and among the participants he was the only one who had not been tested positive of the said virus up to the day of the conducted interview and he was the only participant that shared that his coping strategy was talking to someone whom he trust to vent out all the intense emotions caused by frustrations, stress, pressures, toxic patients, and fatigue in taking care of COVID-19 positive patients. Hereof, in this time of pandemic, the world failed to see that the foremost provider of care stands in need of care also. Perhaps, the best way possible is for primary needs to be taken care of, not to compromise and must be prioritized especially the physical, emotional, mental and spiritual needs of the nurses.

SOP 2: How do nurses understand care?

"Treat the person not merely the patient." It was a statement found in the study of Leininger (1990). Hereof, Angelo believed that caring must be holistically rendered and this claim was supported by his statement: *"Care... holistic siya. For me ang care, hindi lang siya physical na factor ang ma involve, dapat isali mo man ang emotional factors sang patient…"*

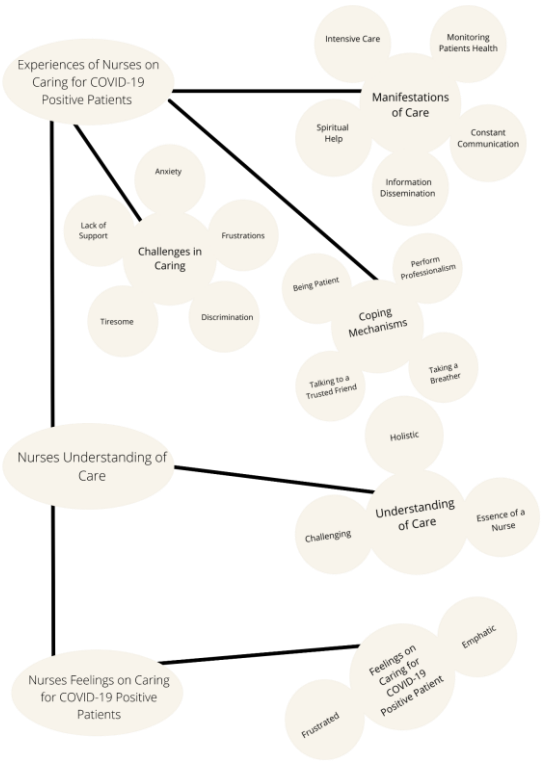
According to the study of Panchal et al. (2021), the physical condition of the COVID-19 positive patients have worsened because of isolation, fear, anxiety, loss of income and bereavement. So, it is not enough to just treat the patient of their physical condition but all the possible factors that would delay the recovery process. In the case of Angelo, he always had a small talk with his patients, comforting and uplifting them saying that everything will be alright and their main focus must be centered on their healing process.

SOP 3: How do nurses feel about caring for COVID-19 positive patients?

For Angelo, it was fulfilling knowing that he was able to cater not just the physical needs but also the emotional and mental needs of his patients. Unfortunately, the worst part of being a nurse who is really passionate in rendering care to COVID-19 positive patients is that not all of them would be able to survive their battle. As what Angelo shared: *"...kami nga mga nurses, gatalikod nalng kami sina tapos mastorya na kami kalooy siya no? amo nang at least, at least, ginaham kami pirmi naga naga ano kami ga group naga group meeting kami at least nahimo namon ang part namon."*

It was an enduring moment for Angelo and his colleagues every time their patients did not survive their fight against COVID-19. With this, It was clearly seen in the case of Angelo that the essence of caring is beyond their profession, it has something to do with knowing the right condition of the person in all aspects and care beyond the profession– perceiving care not just a call of a nurse but naturally, a call of every individual.

Figure 2. *Schematic diagram of care of Angelo*



The schematic diagram above shows the overall experience of Angelo on caring for COVID-19 positive patients. Under the manifestation of care, there are five (5) themes which are intensive care, spiritual help,information dissemination, constant communication, and monitoring patient's health. Also, there are five (5) themes that emerged from the challenges of Angelo as a private facility nurse and these are anxiety, lack of support, tiresome, discrimination, and frustrations. There are four (4) coping mechanisms used by Angelo to cope with the challenges and those are being patient, performing professionalism, taking a breather and talking to a trusted friend. When asked about Angelo's understanding of care, there are three (3) themes that emerged: caring is holistic, caring is the essence of a nurse and caring is challenging. Lastly, on the feelings of caring for COVID-19 positive patients, Angelo stated that he was frustrated and empathic at the same time.

The Case of Kristine

Kristine, who was an isolation nurse and now a community nurse in Brgy. Zone IV in the city of Koronadal had experienced a lot of things in terms of caring for COVID-19 positive patients. It was exactly 8:30 pm on September 24, 2021 when the researchers interviewed Kristine. At some point of the interview Kristine was not able to control her emotions, she cried when she was sharing the experiences and challenges she encountered during her duties with the COVID-19 positive patients. The interview was conducted online with the use of Zoom. The duration of the interview lasted for two hours.

SOP 1: How may the experiences of nurses on caring for COVID-19 positive patients be described? In terms of the following:

Manifestation of care

On the manifestation of care, Kristine showed care in six different ways: Through the use of technology, through physical assisitance, through positive verbal communication, through emotional assistance, through spiritual help and through giving proper instructions. With the use of technology, Krisitine was able to instantly send the current situation of the patients to the doctor, since it was not possible to have easy contact with the patients. Technology gives a big advantage in providing and showing care to the patient. However, these actions sometimes led to misinterpretation from the patients and patient watchers. As Krisitne stated: *"isa pud sa naga consume sang amon na time ng online, nang ara na tanan sa cellphone ang tanan bala haw amo na ang iban ma misinterpret nila ay si ma'am/sir sige lang ka cellphone pero di lang nila bal-an ga refer gali kami snag mga patient sa doctor or nang may ara gali nagpa check-up nga gahulat sang call or update nang amo na bala haw so amo na siya"*

Through physical assistance, Kristine manifested care not only by giving medicines and simply referring the patient to the respective hospitals. As Kristine revealed, when she referred a patient she assisted with proper care and she accompanied the patient to the hospital. As Kristine stated: *"hindi man pwede nga mag refer ka sang patient na hindi mo pag updan so alas tres sang kaagahun naabtan kami alas kwatro sang kaagahun ara lang dyapon kami sa provincial..."*

Through positive verbal communication and emotional assistance, Kristine shared that when caring with the patient she did not only show care physically but she also showed care by giving positive affirmations. As Kristine articulated: *"hindi lang sila patient na kailangan e attend ang physical concerns nila most of the patient nga gina uyatan namon, same siya sa condition namon mentally pud. Kay damo na mga patient nga nag positive na hindi maka pati nga nagka COVID nila"*

"by listening anay sa ila nga scenario saila nga shoes kung ano ang ila nga gina isip, ano ila ginabatyag, anong nahitabo kay uhm pag covid-19 abi ang gina istoryahan, as nurses hindi ka pwede mag react nga hala kailangan, pamatian mo ano ma'am, anong nahitabo , nag symptoms ka, pila na ka adlaw, nag isolate ka, may mga test ka, kailangan mamati ka saila kay in that way, mabal'an mo kung diin ka makabulig saila"

For spiritual help, Krisitine revealed that she always included the fast recovery of her patients in her prayers. As Kristine said: *"Gina release ko gid ang healing dira sa ila nga lawas everytime nga naga ga uyat ko saila nga kamot, kung mag BP ko saila, mag kamusta ko saila, ang prayers ko hindi gid na siya madula"*

Lastly, Krisitine said that in giving care they not only give the patient the medicine during the scheduled time but, they also instruct the patient on how to take the medicine properly. As Kristine stated: *"so ang strategy namon when it comes to medication, once the*

patient is capable sa pag take kag nang maka intindi naman siya ginahatagan lang na siya namon sang instructions how to take it like, ang right timing sa pag inom sang bulong

Challenges in caring

At some point Kristine experienced challenges in taking care of COVID-19 positive patients. She was able to encounter maltreatment from patients and patients watchers, wherein she stated that: *"ikaw pa bala ang masisihan nga imbes ara ka lang dira magbulig ka lang tani pero at the end of the day pag gina explain mo man saila, ng maanhan man sila, maumpawan man sila pero the pain, the words nga na release na nila saimo, naghatag na to siya sang emotional ano mo, stress saimo. Like dugay ka gid maumpawan pero ako personally, wala ko gid siya gina absorb ng daw gina anhan ko ng emotional lang to si sir, ng ano lang, sige lang"*

She also developed stress due to patients who were not following proper health protocols mandated by the authority. She explained how her efforts cannot be paid off when the people did not seriously follow proper health protocols. Kristine showed her sentiments by saying: *"nang very toxic patient, nang mga demanding lang gid or nang mga pasaway usually mga pasaway like naghambal ka nga mag-isolate tapos may mabatian ka halin sa kapitbahay nga waay ga isolate nang mga amo na"*

Not only she experienced maltreatment from the patient but also she experienced indirect mistreatment in work from the management that she worked with. She said that during her work she experienced fatigue due to working more than her work loads which resulted to less sleep and rest. As she said: *"pagka 12 midnight gid nga sirado nagtawag siya tapos may feeling nagid ko that time manug tulog nagid ko sa higdaan ko may feeling lang gid ko na daw may kailngan gid siya saakun kay tuod man gid abi kung waay kagid man labot pwede mo man gid siya hindi pagsabaton or basi kung may ano. So, tung pag check ko tapos nag ano siya, nagtext siya sa phone ko nga "ma'am nabudlayan nagid ko maginhawa" teh waay na nakatulog"*

Kristine was also able to do works that were not related to her job description. She revealed that during her work she experienced carrying and rolling oxygen tanks for her patients. As Kristine stated: *"naka try gid ko iroll ko gid ang tangke pasulod sa room tapos patindogon mo butangan mo sang tung pang sang sang oxygen"*

Coping mechanisms to the challenges

With all the given challenges Kristine experienced, she cope by praying and asking for the guidance of God, following health protocols and doing her job correctly, as she stated that: *"pero saamon abi as long as wala lang kami sang lagnat okay lang man kay ang experience kay more on battle siya sa isip gid siya na the more isipun nga gibutang kagid ni Lord diri nang amo na saakun spiritually kay ang spiritual life ko is a big factor kung ngaa ga stand lang dyapon ko asta subong"*

"Ang permi ko lang ginahambal is nang Lord e renew ang akon na strength adlaw adlaw wala nako naga hambal nga Lord kailangan makaya ko ni in 1 year, isa nalang ka tuig ang COVID, wala nako ga amo na, subong na adlaw, subong lang gid nga adlaw Lord hatagan mo lang ko sang kakusog nga mag serve sa iban nga tao"

She was also able to cope by being courageous and by being aware of the problems she encountered, as she said that: *"atubang mo gid siya with courage na kailangan maging strong ka para sa family mo" "as a frontliner kabalo ka gid mag filter sang stressors nga dawaton mo abi"*

SOP 2: How do nurses understand care?

Kristine defined caring as holistic as it attends all aspects of the patients wherein, she stated that: *"Para saakon, caring is holistically gid siya. Holistic care gid siya like hindi pwede nga physical lang..hatagan mo lang siya bulong okay na na, kailangan kamustahon mo man siya emotionally, mentally. Holistic care gid siya like kailangan, for me abi, hindi ako tung nurse nga amo na lang hatag lang sang bulong. Kung may time gid ko, kung hindi gid ko busy gahatag gid ko sang time sa patient nga magkamusta pero, may mga times pud na busy pud..Ang caring amo gid na siya, holistic care gid siya like tanan nga aspect sang area sang patient mo kailngan gid e-attend…"*

She also added that during this pandemic caring becomes more challenging as there protocols that need to be followed in order to provide care for the patients but, despite of the challenges she still view caring as

fulfilling part of her job, as Krisitne stated that: *"kapoy siya pero amo bi ning calling namon, amo man ni ang bal-an ko na best ko na maubra sa iban nga tao, So, kapoy siya pero fulfilling siya na trabaho*."

SOP 3: How do nurses feel about caring for COVID-19 positive patients?

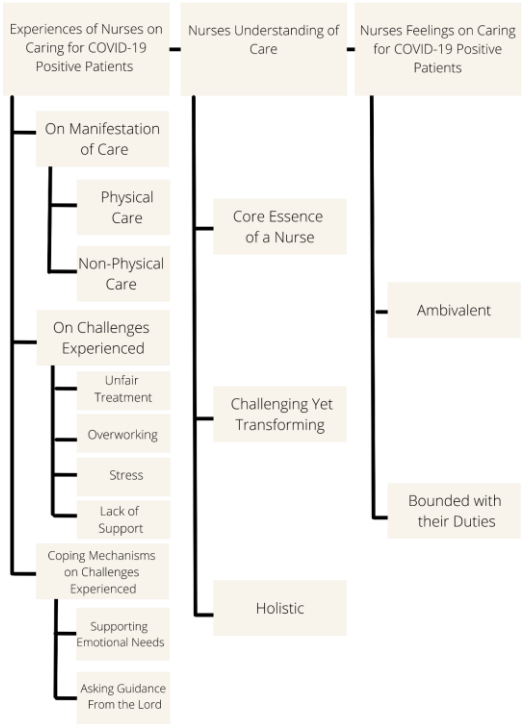
Kristine felt frightened in caring for COVID-19 positive patients and she also felt helpless but was still able to continue her work, as Krisitne stated that: *"so during that time ang battle mo abi is ang isip mo... every time may naga hambal na may gaka positive amo na gani nga na pull out kami so ang fear bala hindi gid siya madula." "daw ka give up-on nako kay grabe na ang pulaw kay ako abi, ano gid ko very important gid saakon ang sleep so pag na deprive gid ko sang sleep hindi gid ko ka function sina sang sakto like maka function ko pero hindi in a, in a full energy and full focus bala haw"*

With the given statements shared by Kristine, it was seen that caring is not an easy job, that caring is not a simple task. Caring is something that needs to be given enough time to perform.

Figure 3. *Schematic Diagram of Care of Kristine*

The schematic diagram above shows the themes that emerged in the thematic analysis on the case of Krisitne. Under the manifestation of care, there are six (6) themes which are physical assistance, use of technology, positive verbal communication, emotional assistance, spiritual help, and giving of proper instructions. Also, there are four (4) themes that emerged from the challenges of Krisitne as an isolation nurse and these are maltreatment from patient and watchers, overworking, less sleep, and less rest. There are five (5) coping mechanisms used by Kristine to cope with the challenges and these are praying to the Lord, following health protocols, doing job correctly, being courageous, and being aware of problems. When asked about Krisitne's understanding of care, there are four (4) themes that emerged: these are holistic, the heart of a nurse, profession, and challenging . Lastly, on the feelings of caring for COVID-19 positive patients two (2) themes emerged: frightened and helpless.

Figure 4. *Conceptual Framework on Care of the Three Nurses (Adrian, Angelo, and Kristine)*



The figure above shows the conceptual framework on care of the three nurses. Hereof, shows the grand themes based on the significant statements of the three nurses wherein, there are two (2) themes emerged in the manifestation of care namely physical and non-

physical care; four (4) in the challenges experienced, namely unfair treatment, overworking, stress, and lack of support; then, two (2) in coping mechanisms on challenges experienced, namely supporting emotional needs and asking guidance from the Lord. Also, three (3) grand themes that emerged under understanding of care, namely caring is the core essence of a nurse, caring is challenging yet transforming and caring is holistic. Lastly, there are two (2) grand themes that emerged under nurses' feelings on caring COVID-19 positive patients, namely ambivalent and bounded with their duties.

Conclusion

The following implications were extracted from the results of the study.

The results of the study implied that it is important for students to prepare themselves as they study a Bachelor of Science in Nursing and see the importance of being prepared in dealing with this kind of working environment. The nurses today experienced very tough situations and are challenged a lot. The students should not just learn the procedures of treating patients but also learn how to be prepared mentally, physically, spiritually, and emotionally. Knowledge alone will not be enough. That is why they need to learn from the experiences of the nurses in the study.

The medical community may entertain and address the concerns of the nurses. This study may bring awareness on what is happening inside the working facilities so that adjustments and actions needed to be done must be done. The response of the medical community will be valuable in order to place the nurses in a better position when taking care of COVID-19 positive patients.

The Nurses are sure that because of caring for COVID-19 positive patients, their mental health is compromised. May the Psychology community build the urge to help and support the frontliners especially the nurses with their concerns. Also, the nurses provided very relevant and significant ideas regarding their mental state in attending the needs of COVID-19 positive patients. May this inspire the community to and get some information that may contribute to the field.

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