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Abigail Slaktowski
Grand Valley State University

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Registered Nurses' Images of Nursing During a Pandemic

Abigail Slaktowski GVSU BSN Student & Dr. Susan Strouse PhD, RN

Introduction

COVID-19 is new to nurses. Effects on the image of nursing are unknown.

The purpose of this study is to uncover any new images of nursing while providing a safe and anonymous place to share firsthand knowledge and experiences.

Methods

Participants for this photoethnography were contacted via email through GVSU KCON Alumni Association members.

RNs submitted images and personal narratives via REDCap © between September 2020 and January 2021.

Data Analysis

Data analysis explored underlying patterns using Leininger's four phase method (1991).

Researchers read narratives and analyzed photos.

Analysis revealed 14 categories, condensed to 5 patterns, and finally 2 themes.

Data analysis was iterative in nature.

Saturation was confirmed by member check.

Demographics

Nurses in the sample ($n=5$) worked in med-surg units, academia/teaching, long term care, and a non-specified area.

Participants were all female and ranged in age from 20-59 years of age.

Research Question

Are there any new or transformed images of nursing from Registered Nurses' during the COVID-19 pandemic in the United States?



"A safe place to collect specimens, sometimes called "the swab" or "the tents"



"... I realized they were full of messages – some from patients to their families, some to the community as a whole.

"... this picture shows the delicate balancing act that we as nurses have to maintain during these times"



"The cover of a magazine provided by my work: showing the relationship between LTC staff and residents. They are providing care and family replacement of these residents during the pandemic



"None of the textbooks could fully prepare me..."

"But I'm still here. I choose to stay."

Acknowledgments

Thank you to KCON Alumni Association for allowing us to survey their members, especially while they were working during the pandemic.

Themes

Trying to make it work

"... leave work... come back that night... the policies have changed again."

"It's in the strength of my coworkers. My fellow nurses who keep fighting and caring; who find moments to laugh and smile and even cry; who speak out when voices need to be heard."

"Nursing school couldn't prepare me for my first year as a nurse"

Balancing competing and changing priorities

"Normally, our hospitals are a place of welcome and encourage visitors as this social contact contributes to better outcomes for our patients"

"I think nurses have had to weigh and balance so many things during the pandemic"

"Our safety concerns dropped in response to supply shortages"

"They [nurses] have to weigh their own fears versus caring for others"

Conclusions

Finding revealed new images of nursing due to COVID-19.

Nurses preserve through challenges and focus on the present during high stress times.

Small response rate is a limitation and possibly attributed to surge in COVID cases during data collection.

Nursing Implications

New images of nursing have implications for practicing nurses, new graduate nurses, and student nurses.

Nurses need support during these challenging and changing times.