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Effects of Compassion Fatigue and Burnout on Overall Patient Outcomes: An Integrated Research Review

Stephanie Pigg, M.Ed, B.S., RN

COMPASSION FATIGUE?



Background & Significance

- Healthcare workers in an intensive care unit or a unit with high death rates can be mentally, physically, spiritually, and emotionally demanding.
- Patient centered care can increase patient satisfaction, nurse satisfaction, reduce hospital stay, and overall improve patient outcomes (Youn et al., 2022).
- Burnout and compassion fatigue can greatly contribute to patient safety events (Bateman et al., 2020 & Yun et al., 2023).
- Anxiety, depression, posttraumatic stress, substance abuse, and suicidal ideation can grow throughout a nurse's career due to work-related stress (Bateman et al., 2020 & Powell et al., 2020).
- Intensive care nurses face compassion fatigue more due to exposure to patient death, high workload, and problems with patients and coworkers (Unlugedik et al., 2023).
- Nurses face stressors when connecting with patients and the families (Powell et al., 2020).

Methodology

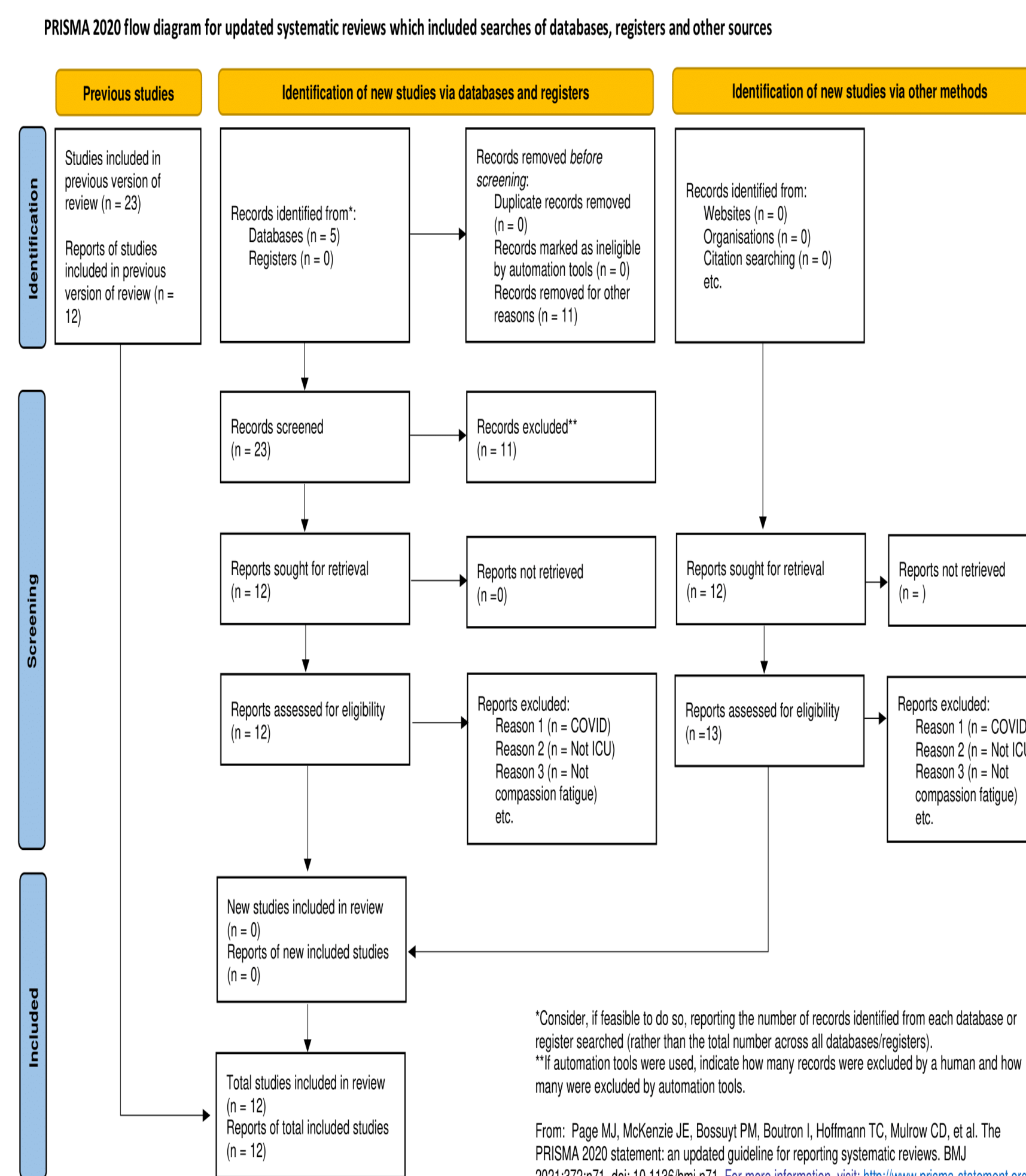
- The integrative research review method was derived from search design recommendations from Brown (2018), Whitemore & Knafle (2006) and "The Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis (PRISMA) guidelines (Page, et al., 2020).
- Comprehensive search was conducted with following search terms, "nurse burnout", "intensive care unit", and "compassion fatigue".
- Databases utilized: CINAHL, Health Research Premium Collection, Medline Complete, Cochrane Library, and Nursing & Allied Health.
- Same search terms applied to all databases.
- Exclusion Criteria: None ICU or palliative care, not compassion fatigue, and published before 2019.

Research Question

"In nurses working in an intensive care unit, how does compassion fatigue and burnout compared to no compassion fatigue or burnout affect positive patient outcomes throughout the patient's hospital stay."

Literature Search Flow Diagram

Prisma 2009 Flow Diagram



Literature Synthesis

- Nurses have lower levels of burnout and compassion fatigue with many different interventions such as resilience, support, relationships, spiritual interventions, and experience (Carton et al., 2022, Kubitz et al., 2023, Youn et al., 2022, & Yun et al., 2022)
- Nurses in intensive care units who experience organ donation are constantly facing grief and pressure (Silva et al., 2022).
- The creation of positive psychological interventions for intensive care nurses greatly decreases the pressure and stress (Unjai et al., 2022 & Youn et al., 2022).
- The risk of nurse burnout and compassion fatigue greatly decreased in experienced nurses (Carton et al., 2022, Unjai et al., 2022, Unlugedik et al., 2023, Youn et al., 2022, & Yun et al., 2023).
- Nurses with less experience tend to search for other interventions for burnout such as spiritual, support, and relationships (Kubitz et al., 2023).
- Systematic review (SR) showed current staffing shortages can greatly exacerbate burnout (Breseti et al., 2020).
- Genuine guidance, meaningful recognition, effective decision-making, and adequate staffing can be substantial predictors of secondary traumatic stress leading to burnout in intensive care units (Kelly et al., 2021 & Monroe et al., 2020).
- Proper time for reflection, processing, and counseling must be given to intensive care unit nurses in order to decrease the risk of burnout and compassion fatigue (Kubitz et al., 2023 & Unlugedik et al., 2023).
- The implementation of resilience for palliative nurses and intensive care nurses is important for patient safety (Carton et al., 2022, Unjai et al., 2022, & Zanatta et al., 2020).
- Nurse burnout and compassion fatigue can decrease the desire to make a difference for patients and the patient's family (Powell et al., 2020).

Clinical Implications

- Each study had different collection strategies for data and varied in interventions; however, burnout and compassion fatigue are great issues for nurses working in intensive care units.
- Standard practice guidelines for mental health for nurses are hard to measure and not specific.
- There is inconsistency of the definition of compassion fatigue and burnout, especially for nurses.
- Some limitations throughout research were finding participants, primarily female participants, and language limitations.

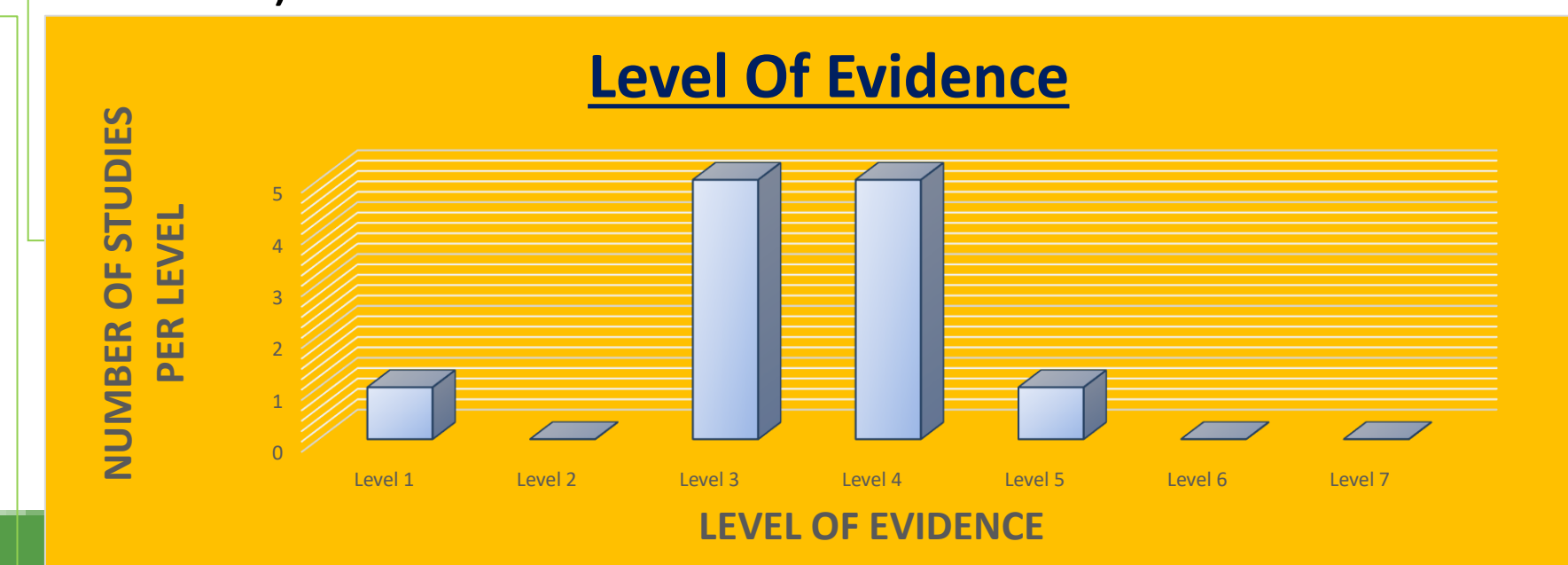


Discussion

- Researchers studying the impact of nurses facing end-of-life on a regular basis are trying to show the effects on patients.
- Significant trauma to nurses may increase the risk of patient neglect.
- Research can be improved by recruiting more and involving numerous different intensive care sources.

Search Results

- Initial search results included twenty-three articles and included zero duplicates
- Appraisal performed using the evidence-based research (EBR) tool, appraisal checklist by Brown (2018) & PRISMA checklist (Long & Gannaway, 2015-2024; Page, et al., 2020).



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References
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