

# Work-related stress of Nurses working in General and Psychiatric Wards at Teaching Hospitals in Baghdad City: Comparative Study

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## Abstract:

**Background :** Job stress is one of the main psychological and social problems that individuals and institutions suffer from both, negatively affecting the health of the individual and his professional achievement, as well as the good running of the institution.

**Objectives :** To compare between the level of Job stress in nurses working of General and Psychiatric Wards.

**Methods :** Descriptive and comparative design was used with 140 nurses working in general and psychiatric wards at teaching hospitals in Baghdad City.

**Finding :** There was no statistically significant difference between the psychiatric and general nurses in relation to Job stress.

**Conclusion :** Implementation of programs aimed at education nurses how to deal with work stress and its effects as well as enhancing the capabilities of nurses regarding Coping and problem solving strategies. Hospitals must have nurse training programmers on how to face their pressures in effective coping methods.

**Keyword:** Job stress, nurses working of General and Psychiatric Wards.

## Introduction:

Workplace stress is acknowledged as a serious issue for health-care workers (Khamisa et al., 2015). Nursing has been identified as a profession with significant levels of stress, with stress involving an individual's knowledge of expectations and ability to deal with that stress, according to the study (Fredrick et al., 2020).

Occupational stress is defined as any force that causes a psychological or physical aspect to move beyond its capabilities, resulting in stress (Kim & Lee, 2014).

Work-related stress occurs when job demands do not meet employees' abilities, resources, or needs, resulting in unpleasant emotional and physical reactions. In other words, it is an interaction between the work environments, employee traits, additional job needs, and the stressors listed below that causes a person to be unable to fulfill their obligations. Workplace stress can also lead to poor health and even injury (Chatzigianni, et al, 2018).

Hospitals serve highly stressed people, and personnel are frequently exposed to stressful and emotional events, making the healthcare industry more stressful than other industries (Boyaci et al, 2014)

Nurses in various departments face a variety of stressors, including unexpected working conditions, traumatic incidents such as aggression, amputations, severe client suffering, under the influence of drugs or alcohol, as well as suspects in crimes brought in by the police, is all at risk of assault (Yada et al, 2015).

Workplace stress is a well-known issue that affects health-care workers (Khamisa et al., 2015). Nursing has long been known as a high-stress job (Burbeck, 2002; Greenglass, 2002). Nayomi (2016) according to their article, stress is defined as an individual's perception of expectations their article, stress is defined as an individual's perception of expectations and the ability to cope with those demands.

Workplace stress is an issue that affects everyone, but it is especially prevalent in the nursing profession. Workplace stress and health issues are social and economic issues (Nayak et al., 2016).

Workplace stress among nurses is frequent over the world, ranging from 9.2 percent to 68 percent. The stress of caring for a fragile, unwell, and traumatized client can be overwhelming for the nurse (Zeller, and Levin, 2017).

Although nursing is a wonderful job, it can also be a highly stressful one (Bhatia et al., 2010). Occupational stress has been found to cost health-care systems a significant amount of money (Azagba & Sharaf, 2011). Employee conflicts, healthcare utilization, hiring and retention issues, burnout, absenteeism, litigation, and quick turnover are all factors that contribute to a lack of productivity.

There are arguments for undertaking the current study based on earlier research. the current study investigates the psychological condition (stress level) of nurses in Baghdad teaching hospitals for the first time. This, in turn, hinders the proper assessment of stress condition among nurses'. As a result, if it is not discovered and addressed early enough, it may undervalue the major psychological problems that directly affect nurses and patients.

### **Objectives of the Study**

1. To assess the level of Job stress in nurses working in general and psychiatric wards at teaching hospitals in Baghdad city.
2. To compare between the level of Job stress in nurses working of General and Psychiatric Wards.
3. To find out the relationship between level of Job stress among nurses with their sociodemographic characteristics.

### **Methodology:**

To achieve stated objectives, a descriptive and comparative design was used to examine the levels of stress of nurses working in general and psychiatric wards at teaching hospitals in Baghdad City: Comparative Study; the study took place between November 16, 2020 and April 19, 2021. Consent has been granted for the questionnaire constructed from official permission granted from Baghdad Medical City Administration & AL- Russafa Health Directorate/Training to ensure their agreement and to facilitate the researcher's task of entering these hospitals and meeting the nurses after explaining the purpose of the study to them and obtaining their consent. The research was carried out in Baghdad City Teaching Hospitals, which included mental and general wards. Using a non-random convenience sample of 140 nurses, including 70 nurses from Baghdad Teaching Hospitals' mental units (AL Rashad Teaching Hospital, Ibn Rushed Teaching Hospital) and 70 nurses from Baghdad Teaching Hospitals' general wards. The data was collected using sociodemographic, (Gender, age, marital status, number of children, nursing qualification, years of service at work, and years of experience are among the seven variables).and Work-related psychological stress scale, This section introduces the items on the job-related stress scale; this scale has 26 items that can be used to measure job-related stress in nurses. The scale is divided into sub-domains that deal with work-related stress: **1. Workload:** Items are used to represent the workload (1, 2, 3, 4, 5).**2. Conflict** is symbolized by the clauses (6, 7, 8, 9).**3. A lack of support** is exemplified by things (10, 11 and 12).**4. Uncertainty over the patient's care**, as depicted by the items (13, 14, 15, 16).**5. Death and death clauses:** These are the clauses that deal with death and death (17, 18, 19).**6. Clauses** are used to represent organizational choices (20, 21, 22).**7. Inadequate planning:** indicated by clauses (23, 24, 25).**8. Section 26** represents sexual harassment. These were assessed as never stressful = 1, sometimes stressful = 2, and very stressful = 3 on a three-level Likert scale. The amount of job-related stress was calculated by splitting the overall scale score into three categories: mild, moderate, and severe. Mild = 25-37, moderate = 38-43, severe = 44-52, and very severe = 53-69 are the severity levels: severe, severe, and very severe. Face validity has determined throughout the use of panel of experts (7) Their responses revealed that they all agreed on the questionnaire's content, clarity, relevancy, and adequacy, therefore it is deemed valid after considering their suggestions and recommendations for improvement. The pilot study took place from March 14th to March 22nd, and this ten-person sample was omitted from the study's initial sample. The participants comprehended the questionnaire, and the average time needed to collect data was between (15-20) minutes, according to the findings of the pilot study. Cronbach's Alpha was used to measure the questionnaire's reliability, and it revealed that the questionnaire had 26 items. Cronbach's alpha was 0.84 for the Work-related psychological stress scale after excluding Sexual harassment (item 26) The Statistical Package for Social Sciences was used to examine the data (SPSS, version 26). Data was evaluated using both descriptive and inferential statistical approaches, such as the Chi-square test. The reliability of the questionnaire was determined using the correlational coefficient, and the level of statistical significance was set at 0.05. A significant relationship between job stress among nurses and their sociodemographic characteristics was discovered using the Chi-square test ( $\chi^2$ ); an independent samples T-Test was also used to compare job stress in nurses working in General and Psychiatric Wards.

**Results:**

Table 1: Distribution Nurses according to Demographic Data:

Nurses working in Psychiatry wards:(n=70)			Nurses working in general wards: (n=70)		Total nursing staff (n=140)	
Gender	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
Male	39	55.7	22	31.4	61	43.6
Female	31	44.3	48	68.6	79	56.4
Total	70	100.0	70	100.0	140	100.0
Nurses working in Psychiatry wards:(n=70)			Nurses working in general wards: (n=70)		Total nursing staff (n=140)	
age	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
20- 29	18	25.7	39	55.7	57	40.7
30- 39	14	20.0	16	22.9	30	21.4
40-49	29	41.4	7	10.0	36	25.7
<=50	9	12.9	8	11.4	17	12.1
Total	70	100.0	70	100.0	140	100.0
Nurses working in Psychiatry wards: (n=70)			Nurses working in general wards: (n=70)		Total nursing staff (n=140)	
Marital status	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
Single	14	20.0	25	35.7	39	27.9
Married	53	75.7	44	62.9	97	69.3
Divorced	2	2.9	1	1.4	3	2.1
widow	1	1.4	0	0.0	1	0.7
Total	70	100.0	70	100.0	140	100.0
Nurses working in Psychiatry wards:(n=70)			Nurses working in general wards: (n=70)		Total nursing staff(n=140)	
Do you have children	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent

No children	17	24.3	33	47.1	50	35.7
One children	5	7.1	8	11.4	13	9.3
Two children	10	14.3	9	12.9	19	13.6
Three children	7	10.0	11	15.7	18	12.9
Four children	19	27.1	5	7.1	24	17.1
Five children	9	12.9	2	2.9	11	7.9
Six children	1	1.4	1	1.4	2	1.4
Seven children	1	1.4	1	1.4	2	1.4
Nine children	1	1.4	0	0.0	1	0.7
Total	70	100.0	70	100.0	140	100.0
Nurses working in Psychiatry wards:(n=70)		Nurses working in general wards: (n=70)		Total nursing staff(n=140)		
Nursing qualification	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
Nursing school	2	2.9	1	1.4	3	2.1
Junior high nursing	27	38.6	29	41.4	56	40.0
diploma	29	41.4	30	42.9	59	42.1
Bachelor	11	15.7	10	14.3	21	15.0
Master or Ph.D.	1	1.4	0	0.0	1	.7
Total	70	100.0	70	100.0	140	100.0
Nurses working in Psychiatry wards:(n=70)		Nurses working in general wards: (n=70)		Total nursing staff(n=140)		

Years of service in nursing	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
2-9	12	17.1	25	35.7	37	27.1
10-17	22	31.4	16	22.9	38	27.9
18-25	17	24.3	11	15.7	28	19.3
26-33	5	7.1	9	12.9	14	10.0
34-41	14	20.0	9	12.9	23	15.7
Total	70	100.0	70	100.0	140	100.0

Table (1) demonstrates that male nurses (55.7 percent) worked in psychiatry, whereas female nurses worked in general (68.6 percent ) Almost all of them were female. Table (1) reveals that nurses working in psychiatry (41.4 percent) were between the ages of 40 and 49, whereas nurses working in general (55.7 percent) were between the ages of 40 and 49. (20- 29).. The marital status of nurses working in psychiatry (75.7 percent) and nurses working in general (62.9 percent) was shown in Table(1). 27.1 percent of Psychiatric Nurses have four children, while 47.1 percent of Nurses in general have no children. Table (1) reveals that the majority of Psychiatric Nurses (42.9%) and Nurses in general (42.9%) reported having a diploma's degree. Table reveals that 55.7 percent of Nurses working in Psychiatry reported having (10-25) years of nursing experience, while 35.7 percent of Nurses working in general reported having (2-9) years of nursing experience.

**Table2: Distribution of Nurses according to their Work-related Psychological Stress Scale.**

Work-related psychological stress scale						
	Nurses working in Psychiatry wards:(n=70)		Nurses working in general wards:(n=70)		Total nursing staff(n=140)	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
Mild	7	10.0	7	10.0	14	10.0
Moderate	5	7.1	3	4.3	8	5.7
Severe	3	4.3	5	7.1	8	5.7
Very Severe	0	0.0	5	7.1	5	3.6
Total	15	21.4	20	28.6	35	25.0

Nurses working in psychiatry wards have varying levels of work-related psychological stress, as shown in Table (2): Nurses working in general wards: 24.3 percent with Mild level; 32.9 percent with Moderate level; and Nurses working in general wards: 35.7 percent with Moderate level; 25.7 percent with Sever level; and Nurses working in general wards: 35.7 percent with Moderate level; 25.7 percent with Sever level; and Nurses working in general wards: 24.3.

**Table3:Association of Work-related psychological stress scale with selected socio-demographic variables of staff nurses working in Psychiatry wards.**

Socio-demographic variables	Work-related psychological stress Level					Chi-Square	df	P-Value
	Mild	Moderate	Sever	Very Sever	Total			
Gender								
Male	4	15	13	7	39	10.138	3	0.017
Female	13	10	5	3	31			
Total	17	25	18	10	70			
Age								
20- 29	5	7	3	3	18	9.076	9	0.430
30- 39	4	3	5	1	14			
40-49	4	12	7	5	29			
>=50	4	3	2	0	9			
Total	17	25	18	10	70			
Marital status								
Single	3	5	4	1	14	5.270	9	0.713
Married	12	19	13	9	53			
Divorced	1	0	1	0	2			
widow	1	0	0	0	1			
Total	17	25	18	10	70			
Do you have children								
no children	5	5	3	2	16	20.867	24	0.647
one children	0	4	2	0	5			
two children	2	2	3	2	9			
three children	3	2	3	0	8			
four children	3	5	5	5	19			
five children	2	5	1	1	9			

Six children	0	1	0	0	1			
Seven children	0	1	0	0	1			
Nine children	1	0	0	0	1			
Total	17	25	18	10	70			
Nursing qualification	Mild	Moderate	Sever	Very Sever	Total	Chi-Square	df	P-Value
Nursing school	1	1	0	0	2	7.639	12	0.813
Secondary	5	11	5	4	27			
Diploma	5	11	9	4	29			
Bachelor	4	2	3	2	11			
Master or Ph.D.	1	0	0	0	1			
Total	17	25	18	10	70			
Years of servicing nursing	Mild	Moderate	Sever	Very sever	Total	Chi-Square	df	P-Value
2-9	3	5	3	1	12	10.489	12	0.573
10-17	4	10	4	4	22			
18-25	5	3	5	4	17			
26-33	2	2	0	1	5			
34-41	3	5	5	0	14			
Total	17	25	18	10	70			

Work-related psychological stress scale and selected socio-demographic characteristics of psychiatry ward staff nurses Table 3 shows that there was no link between work-related psychological stress and age, marital status, whether or not you have children, nursing qualification, and years of nursing service, however there was a link with gender.

**Table 4: Association of Work-related psychological stress scale with selected socio-demographic variables of staff nurses working in general wards.**

Socio-demographic variables	Work-related psychological stress Level					Chi-Square	df	P-Value
	Mild	Moderate	Sever	Very Sever	Total			
Gender								
Male	7	6	4	5	22	1.237	3	0.744
Female	10	17	11	10	48			
Total	17	23	15	15	70			
Age	Mild	Moderate	Sever	Very Sever	Total	Chi-Square	df	P-Value



20- 29	9	13	7	10	39	8.696	9	0.466
30- 39	2	5	6	3	16			
40-49	4	2	1	0	7			
<=50	2	3	1	2	8			
Total	17	23	15	15	70			
Marital status	Mild	Moderate	Sever	Very Sever	Total	Chi-Square	df	P-Value
Single	5	6	6	8	25	5.182	6	0.521
Married	12	16	9	7	44			
Separate	0	1	0	0	1			
Total	17	23	15	15	70			
Do you have children	Mild	Moderate	Sever	Very Sever	Total	Chi-Square	df	P-Value
no children	10	7	7	9	33	22.386	21	0.378
one children	0	2	3	3	8			
two children	1	5	2	1	9			
three children	3	6	1	1	11			
four children	2	2	0	1	5			
five children	0	1	1	0	2			
six children	0	0	1	0	1			
seven children	1	0	0	0	1			
Total	17	23	15	15	70			
Nursing qualification	Mild	Moderate	Sever	Very Sever	Total	Chi-Square	df	P-Value
Nursing school	1	0	0	0	1	9.448	9	0.397
Secondary	9	9	3	8	29			
Diploma	5	11	8	6	30			
Bachelor	2	3	4	1	10			
Total	17	23	15	15	70			
Years of servicing nursing	Mild	Moderate	Sever	Very Sever	Total	Chi-Square	df	P-Value
2-9	6	7	5	7	25	14.800	15	0.466
10-17	2	7	4	3	16			
18-25	6	1	2	2	11			
26-33	1	4	2	2	9			
34-41	2	4	2	1	9			
Total	17	23	15	15	70			

Work-related psychological stress scale and selected socio-demographic factors of staff nurses working in general wards were found to be associated. Table 11 shows that there is no correlation between work-related psychological stress and gender, age, marital status, whether or not you have children, nursing qualification, or years of nursing service.

**Table5 :Comparison between the level of Job stress in nurses working of General and Psychiatric Wards.**

Group Statistics						
	Nurse	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Job stress	Nurses working in general wards	70	2.4000	1.08213	138	0.571
	Nurses working in Psychiatry wards	70	2.3000	0.99782	137.102	0.571

As shown in Table5 by the p-value ( $0.571 > 0.05$ ), there is no significant difference in job stress in nurses working in General and Psychiatric Wards.

**Discussion of Results:**

Table 1 shows how the row proportions in the table's various columns shift from row to row (1). Psychiatric nurses were almost entirely male (55.7%), while nurses in general (68.6%) were almost entirely female. This finding demonstrated that male nurses worked in psychiatry more than female nurses, despite the fact that nurses in general were almost all female. Due of the difficulty of working with patients, this is considered natural. According to Alharbi and Hasan (2019), the study participants were divided into two groups depending on their work environments: general and psychiatric nurses. Females predominated in both groups, accounting for 78.4 percent of general nurses and 58.8 percent of psychiatric nurses. Kourakos (2017) found additional support in their findings, reporting that (75.8%) were female and (24.2%) were male. According to Mustafa and Intisar (2014), the bulk of the sample was male. Male nurses were found to be more than female nurses in this study, according to Abdullah, Mirza, and Othman (2018). Faremi and colleagues (2019) This descriptive design study was conducted among nurses in two hospitals, and the results revealed that 86.9% of the nurses were female. Table (1) shows that 41.4 percent of psychiatric nurses are between the ages of 40 and 49, while 55.7 percent of all nurses are between the ages of 40 and 49. 20 to 29. General nurses have been discovered to have a higher age group than psychiatric nurses. For example, 55.7 percent of general nurses were between the ages of 20 and 29, whereas half of psychiatric nurses were between the ages of 40 and 49. This may be attributable to the Ministry of Health's plan to hire graduate nurses in both psychiatric and general hospitals. The nurses' ages ranged from 22 to 44, which is in line with Deh et al (2017). This findings contradicted Alharbi & Hasan's (2019) finding that general nurses were slightly older than mental nurses. For example, around 45 percent of general nurses were between the ages of 30 and 39, and about half of mental nurses were between the ages of 20 and 29. The marital status of nurses

working in psychiatry (75.7 percent) and nurses working in general (62.9 percent) was shown in Table(1). Alharbi & Hasan (2019) discovered that the majority of the study sample in both groups was married, which supported their findings. 27.1 percent of Psychiatric Nurses had four children, compared to 47.1 percent of Nurses in general. This result was consistent with Deh et al. (2017), who found that nearly 79.1% of the participating nurses had between one and three children, while only 20.9 percent had no children. The majority of Nurses working in Psychiatry and Nurses working in general (42.9 percent) reported having a diploma's degree, according to Zaki (2016) found that none of the psychiatric nurses in the study have a master's or doctoral degree, and that the bulk of them are diploma nurses, with more than half of them working as staff nurses. Table 1 shows that 55.7 percent of Nurses working in Psychiatry reported having 10-25 years of nursing experience, while 35.7 percent of Nurses working in general reported having (2-9) years of nursing experience. This conclusion is supported by Sailaxmi, (2015), who discovered that the majority of psychiatric nurses were between the ages of 24 and 35, with work experience ranging from 2 to 10 years. Nurses working in psychiatry wards have different levels of work-related psychological stress: 35.7 percent have a moderate level; 25.7 percent have a severe level; and nurses working in general wards have different levels of work-related psychological stress: 24.3 percent have a mild level; 32.9 percent have a moderate level. According to our findings, stress levels among psychiatric nurses range from moderate to high. Psychiatric nurses face a variety of stressors, including the care of violent and aggressive patients, frequent relapses, and a poor prognosis of mental illness; this has an impact on several aspects of the nurses' lives, including their physical and mental health. This finding is consistent with SeeBeh, (2012), who looked into work stress and coping techniques among public health nursing staff and reported that roughly half of the nurses surveyed had a nursing diploma. The majority of nurses in both groups, according to Al-Harbi and Hassan (2019), had a bachelor's degree in nursing sciences. According to Dee et al. (2017), 91.1 percent of nurses have a bachelor's degree, with the remainder having a master's degree. Work-related psychological stress scale and selected socio-demographic characteristics of psychiatry ward staff nurses There was no link discovered between work-related psychological stress and age, marital status, whether or not you have children, nursing qualification, and years of nursing service, although there was a link between gender and work-related psychological stress. According to Abdullah (2015), there were more female nurses than male nurses, which is to be expected given the difficulty of the job. According to the findings, there are no significant differences between work stress and other demographic variables such as gender, age, motherhood status, or educational level. Zaki (2016) discovered a statistically significant link between stress and sociodemographic factors, as well as a very significant link between stress and psychiatric nurse age. While there is no statistically significant link between psychological pressure and psychiatric nurses' work or educational level. The association between work-related psychological stress, gender, age, marital status, whether or not you have children, nursing qualifications, and years of nursing service of employees is depicted in Table4. Nurses on general wards discovered no link between work-related psychological stress, gender, age, marital status, whether or not you have children, nursing qualifications, or years of experience. According to Abdullah and Mirza (2018), while there is no significant variation in job stress among nurses based on age, years of experience, occupation, marital status, or

remuneration, there is a significant difference in education levels, preparation, gender, or hospital. Respondents' stress levels were linked to their age, marital status, workload, and educational background, according to Odonkor and Adams (2021). Table 5 shows that there are no significant differences in occupational stress between nurses on general and psychiatric wards ( $p$  value  $0.571 > 0.05$ ). Nursing has several characteristics, the most important of which is the provision of comprehensive care to all individuals, whether spiritual, physical or social and psychological care. This profession is also based on guiding the patient and all members of his family in the correct methods, providing disease prevention and improving his health to the best level. The nursing staff also works to reduce the patient's suffering and relieve the aches and pains he feels, while maintaining the safety of individuals, providing them with a better life, and maintaining the patient's secret and not transferring him to colleagues in the hospital or to the rest of the nurses. Nurses on psychiatric and general wards may confront comparable difficulties. In the course of their everyday professional tasks, they contribute to stressful situations. In their study, Jenkins and Elliott (2004) discovered that psychiatric nursing is similar to other nursing disciplines; Deh & Alhalaiqa (2016) The highest stress levels were identified in nurses working in psychiatric departments, followed by oncology nurses (ONs), ICU/CCU nurses, and emergency room nurses, in that order. Nurses in the medical and surgical fields experienced the least amount of stress.

#### **Conclusions:**

The study show that Nurses working in Psychiatry wards have the stress level ranges from moderate to high. There was association of gender with Work-related psychological stress of staff nurses working in Psychiatry wards. No association was found between the Work-related psychological stress and gender, age, marital status, do you have children, Nursing qualification and Years of servicing nursing of staff nurses working in general wards. There is no significant difference in Job stress among nurses working of General and Psychiatric Wards.

#### **Recommendations:**

1. Implementation of programs aimed at education nurses how to deal with work stress and its effects as well as enhancing the capabilities of nurses regarding Coping and problem solving strategies.
2. The nurse must be well prepared to suit the nature of nursing. Therefore, raising his scientific level in university training is a gesture Benign to help him bear the pressure.
3. The need for future research that should be directed at the effects of stress management.

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