Post Traumatic Stress Disorder In Nurses

It is estimated that up to 14 percent of the overall general nursing population experience symptoms that meet the criteria to be diagnosed with PTSD, which is 4 times higher than the general adult population(Hood,2019) Recent articles and statistics have shown that post traumatic stress disorder is plaguing working and retired nurses all over the world. Many causes are thought to be the blame for this effect. Failure to save a patient's's life, high-stressed working environments, and ineffective coping mechanisms are a few of those causes. This paper will provide evidence-based situations associated with the claims previously mentioned.

There are many traumatic factors that lead nurses in developing PTSD.

Nurses are constantly witnessing or actively involved in events that can be viewed as traumatic for example death of a patient, assisting with life sustaining support, and unsuccessful cardiopulmonary resuscitation. While working a nurse can experience multiple traumatic events in one day the fact that heshe has to continue on with the day helping other patients in need after the traumatic experience can eventually lead to Post Traumatic Stress Disorder. " Intensive Care Unit nurses are continually vulnerable to stressors while working any shift , including but not limited to end of life care issues such as trying to maintain and manage pain , prolongation of life via artificial support measures such as a breathing machine, provision of postmortem care, and participation in procedures that are painful for patients. Intensive Care Unit nurses in particular often experience psychological disorders such as Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, anxiety, panic attacks, depression and burnout syndrome, which is a secondary traumatic stress"(Mealer, Jones & Meek,2017) Nurses can unintentionally pick up unhealthy coping habits since they have to continue on caring for others after dealing with traumatic events. For example, right after dealing with a patient that just passed away and then turn around to help someone experiencing difficulty breathing. When does the nurse have time to really cope with what she just experienced. "The ability for nurses to remain resilient is likely associated with the working environment, it all comes with the job , however the when a nurse is unable to be resilient this can result in negative psychological outcomes and negative coping habits. ICU nurses with extremely high levels of resilience are significantly less likely than those with low levels to experience PTSD, anxiety, depression, and burnout syndrome, its suggested that resilience is associated with in some manner with the potential impact of the traumatic events.(Mealer, Jones & Meek,2017)

After trying to save a patient life and failing can also cause Post traumatic stress disorder and other negative psychological problems. Cardiopulmonary resuscitation can be successful or unsuccessful event there is no guarantee that doing Cardiopulmonary resuscitation will save a patient, but attempting it is very important is possibly saving the patient. " It is estimated that between 40% and 84% of all resuscitation attempts within critical care units result in immediate or imminent death of the patient within the first 24 hours".(McMeekin, Hickman,Douglas, Kelley,2017) Depending on how long CPR was given it can be extremely exhausting on the body and one may feel as if they are in a fight or flight mode which can be really stressful. After working really hard to save a patient with CPR can affect a nurse hard mentally, especially if she worked with the patient for a while. It can feel as if he or she lost someone personally. " it is hypothesized that critical care nurses who experience psychological trauma associated with

cardiopulmonary resuscitation efforts that unsuccessfully save or prolong the patient’s life will experience extreme states of stress, negative coping behaviors, and lower states of psychological health” (McMeekin, Hickman,Douglas, Kelley,2017)

High stressed working environments also negatively effects nurses. Most of the times the environments are stressful because you're dealing with someone else’s life, medication, and one mistake can cause a nurse, her job, license, and most important effect the patient.

Research has shown that high stressed working environments can negatively influence nurses and their quality of life. Certain high stressed environments can also lead to PTSD for example, working in the ER, especially in places where traumatic events are more likely to happen. “ Nursing is perceived as a strenuous job. Although past research has documented that stress influences nurses’ health in association with quality of life, the relation between stress and caring behaviors remains relatively unexamined,” (Sarafis, Rousaki, Tsounis, Malliarou, ..,2016) The question that should be asked is how can employers help nurses with post traumatic stress disorder, prevent it, and have resources since it is so common.

Post Traumatic Stress Disorder is commonly associated with veterans. When someone hears Post traumatic stress disorder, they automatically think about those who served terms. People fail to remember that Post traumatic stress disorder is a mental health condition that’s triggered by witnessing or experiencing a traumatic event, this means no one is immune to it, anyone can be affected. Remember nurses also are affected by Post traumatic stress disorder. Unsuccessful saving a patient's life, high stressed working environments, and many other factors can possibly cause nurses have PTSD. As long as nurses continue being resilient and use positive coping mechanisms most can overcome post traumatic stress disorder. “Resilience is a concept that is associated with one's ability to continue on or positively adapt to misfortune. Resilience is also believed to be a psychological mechanism that can thwart PTSD and is recognized as one of the most important factors for a healthy adjustment after trauma.” (Mealer, Jones & Meek,2017) However keep in mind there are nurses who are unable to cope effectively to such traumatic events while at work.