

Effectiveness of Psychological Program in Hospital in Batangas

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Abstract – Psychological well-being of healthcare providers greatly affects the delivery of safe and quality care. Healthcare organizations must invest in psychological programs to comply with the mental health law, sustain a safe operation, and satisfy their customers. This study determines the effectiveness of the psychological program of selected hospitals in Batangas. The specific objectives of; Identify the extent of utilization of psychological programs in hospitals; Determine the level of effectiveness of the psychological program; determine the relationship between utilization and effectiveness of the psychological program. This research was participated in by 163 nurses who were conveniently selected and identified based on the criteria set by the researcher. A self-made questionnaire with reliability results of Cronbach alpha of 0.7 had been utilized. The study revealed that most psychological programs utilized were among the curative aspects of health such as referral, counseling, and assessment. The most effective psychological programs were affected by the culture and norms of the respondents geared towards family reintegration and communication which is in line with the values of Filipino nurses. The research recommends that the healthcare organization must focus on the promotive and preventive aspects of mental health which technology-driven intervention should be considered such as social media should be used to educate nurses in terms of mental health programs of the organization, creation of support groups that focus on building a resilient unit, and psychological assessment before entry of the organization. These interventions will not only be sustainable but have a great impact on the healthcare providers well fare and their delivery of care.

Keywords – psychological program, utilization, effectiveness

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INTRODUCTION

COVID-19 disrupts the world not only in physiologic health but also in other realms of human beings. It includes the psychological disequilibrium and social disruption which is vital in the operation of a healthcare organization. These are being addressed by the different psychosocial programs initiated across the healthcare institution.

There were incidents of mental disorders that emerged in the advent of the pandemic which include anxiety, depression, suicide, and even substance abuse disorder. This disorder triggered by the pandemic should be addressed by healthcare administrators for not to disrupt the operation and not diminish the quality and safe delivery of care. One of the high risks for mental disequilibrium is our health workers because they are the front liners in this pandemic, they also have families to protect and add the burden from the stigma and discrimination of society. The initial response of society during the pandemic was to isolate the healthcare workers who they believe are the carrier of the virus which made the situation worse for the nurses and other healthcare providers. The global COVID-19 pandemic has had a devastating impact on the mental health of Health Care Providers (HCP). This systematic review synthesizes the quantitative evidence of psychological distress among HCPs in Asian countries, which showed that one-third of HCPs suffered from depression, anxiety, and stress, and more than two third of HCPs suffered from fear and burnout during the COVID-19 pandemic in Asia [1].

A healthcare organization has a responsibility to create a sustainable and beneficial mental health program for its employees. In accordance with the implementation of the Mental Health Act 11036 of the Republic of the Philippines, one of the purposes of this Act is to integrate mental health promotion strategies into educational institutions, workplaces, and communities. Mental health services must be accessible, available, affordable, and acceptable; provided by a sufficient number of qualified health professionals trained to provide qualified and environmental mental health care.

These are the components of assessing and

improving the quality of mental services which includes sustainability, accessibility, acceptance, capacity, efficiency, continuity, and safety. These indicators affect the quality of life, morbidity, mortality, and life expectancy, directly and indirectly [3]. This study showed that there should be an evaluation of the mental health services rendered and it has an impact on each individual and even in the organization. There have been anecdotal reports of nurses suffering from mental health issues such as depression and anxiety observed by researchers with nurses in clinical areas in Batangas. They shared that anxiety and depression limited their clinical functioning and emphasized during this pandemic. They said hospitals are focusing on isolation facilities, isolation procedures, and treatment for their nurses. Their mental health was not prioritized and targeted.

Some well-resourced facilities have started mental health programs such as counseling hotlines and referral systems if needed for universities and specialty hospitals such as the national center mental health. These initiatives are consistent with the Philippine Mental Health Act [2] which states that a healthcare facility must have a mental health program in place to ensure the well-being of all employees. These efforts have been shown across the country, not only in response to the surge in COVID-19 cases, the number of severe cases, but also for the mental health of the Philippines.

Based on the experience and observation of the researcher, there were commendable initiatives of the hospital in collaboration with their stakeholders. Starting from providing residences, supplies, food, and transportation and also having a hotline and platforms for communication regarding the mental health among the staff. The researcher wants to determine the program effectiveness which is vital in improving and enhancing the program for the welfare of the hospital staff.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

This study determines the effectiveness of the psychological program of selected hospitals in Batangas. The specific objectives of; identify the extent of utilization of psychological programs in hospitals; Test the significant relationship between utilization and effectiveness of the psychological programs; to recommend sustainable psychological program plans for hospitals in Batangas.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Research Design

The researcher utilized a descriptive correlational

study that determines the effectiveness of psychological programs in Batangas. It was conducted from August 2021 to March 2022.

Respondents of the Study

The sampling technique used was purposive sampling. There were 163 nurse respondents in this study with the inclusion criteria of the following: nurse in the hospital in Batangas; with a length of service of 6 months and above, and bedside nurses regardless of the area/department.

Data Collection

The researcher utilized a self-made questionnaire based on the related studies and literature. This is composed of three parts, the first part is the extent of utilization of psychological programs in the healthcare institution, the respondents will answer this on a LIKERT scale (1 - Never, 2- Rarely, 3- Once in a while, 4- Sometimes, 5-Always). Part 2 includes items that pertain to the effectiveness of the psychological program with the use of a LIKERT scale from 1 to 5 (1 - ineffective, 2- likely ineffective, 3 -neither 4- likely effective, 5 - highly effective), Part 3 open-ended question regarding their recommendation and suggestion for improvement of the program. The survey tool had been validated by a psychologist and a nurse manager as experts. Undergone a pilot study for 30 participants and a reliability test with the results of Cronbach alpha 0.71.

Data Analysis

The statistical analysis used was weighted mean and rank for the utilization and level of effectiveness of the psychological program. Moreover, Spearman Rho had been used to test significant relationships between the variables.

Ethical Considerations

The researcher observed the ethical principles of autonomy which respect for their choices and freedom from coercion. Anonymity and confidentiality also had been upheld, that all the data will be treated as confidential, and the researcher will be the only one who can access their responses. Sought and approved by the LPU ethic research committee.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Based on the results of the study it highlighted the importance of the roles of hospital leadership in prioritizing mental health.

Table.1 Extent of Utilization of Psychological Activities in Hospitals

Indicators	WM	VI	Rank
1. If I have some concerns about my mental health, I could reach the hospital to conduct a psychological intervention	3.60	Often	3
2. If I have troubles that affect my mental state, I could talk to an assigned professional for counseling	3.67	Often	2
3. I have participated in the stress management activities of the organization	3.17	Sometimes	6
4. I could reach the hospital through a specific Mental health hotline for my psychological concerns	3.13	Sometimes	7.5
5. I know the process of referral to a specialist when it is deemed necessary	3.70	Often	1
6. I notice that the hospital has a social media post regarding psychological wellness and management program	3.09	Sometimes	9
7. I recognize that the hospital has a program for psychological assessment	3.23	Sometimes	5
8. The hospital has created support groups for specific mental health concerns	3.13	Sometimes	7.5
9. The hospital has a program for family reintegration for the staff who had been displaced from their family	3.01	Sometimes	10
10. The hospital has its recognition and awards for the staff who had shown exemplary service in the organization to help boost their mental health	3.56	Often	4
Composite Mean	3.33	Sometimes	

According to a study, some implemented psychological interventions were not evidenced based thus resulting in weak and not sustainable outcomes. There should be a model to be followed and for the healthcare organization and administration to be guided on their plans and actions [8].

Based on the phased model (Figure 1. In the appendix) there should be a focus on the pre-phase wherein there are no cases of identified mental disorder which focuses on building resilience and individual responses towards better responses. Some of the proposed activities are enhanced self-compassion, social connection, social media utilization, mindfulness, the balance of home and work, etc. [9][10].

The top five among the intervention which highly utilized were preventive and curative aspects which include, referral, counseling, assessment, and other psychological interventions which eventually affects their function as nurses in the organization. On the other hand, the bottom 5 indicators were promotive aspects of mental health such as social support, health education through social media, stress management programs, and family reintegration which could prevent mental disturbance in this stressful and crisis situation.

Table 2 showed the extent of effectiveness of the psychological program which is effective with a composite mean of 3.67. The interventions were effective in promoting and enhancing mental health awareness in the healthcare organization in Batangas. Moreover, the first ranked item was regarding family reintegration through communication and followed by the recognition among the healthcare providers. This is very evident in the Philippine and Batangas culture nurses value their families and having constant communication with them is like a stress reliever. The second effective intervention based on the study was recognition among healthcare providers which is not only limited to monetary incentives but the recognition of their effort and worth in the healthcare organization. Reinforced by an article that Filipino nurses working abroad are better trained, trustworthy, caring, and compassionate; because Filipino nurses come from a caring culture where families take care of sick and elderly loved ones [11].

Based on a recent study on recognition, there had been a major role of the nurse manager in executing unit-based recognition which greatly affects the motivation of staff nurses to continue their work [12]. Awards and recognition might not be monetary but more on appreciation of the efforts of their staff through simple celebration and acknowledgment of staff efforts in this crisis time.

It was supported by the study emphasized that participants expressed and acknowledged symptoms of mental breakdown in the performance of their professional duties during this pandemic crisis thus there should be an effective and sustainable psychological

program in a healthcare institution that includes a promotive approach such as stress management program, strengthening in-house social support system

utilization of social media as health education tool or real-time coaching among healthcare professionals [5].

Table.2 Effectiveness of Psychological Program in Hospital

Indicators	WM	VI	Rank
1. Psychological Intervention Program (it includes the psychological first aid implemented in your institution)	3.60	Effective	6.5
2. Counselling (virtual counseling session with a trained mental health advocate)	3.59	Effective	8
3. Stress Management Program (a regular activity that promotes mental wellness such as team building, recollections, and others)	3.73	Effective	4
4. Mental Health Crisis Hotline (a contact number / social media platform available for inquiry and giving primary mental health interventions)	3.52	Effective	10
5. Referral System (there is a clear process of referral to a specialist if necessary)	3.75	Effective	3
6. Mental Health Education through social media (there is a social media platform that promotes the mental health being of an individual)	3.56	Effective	9
7. Psychological Assessment Program (the process in which there will be further assessment of an individual experiencing mental health challenges)	3.60	Effective	6.5
8. Support Group System (support group which enhances bonding and sharing for best practices regarding mental health interventions)	3.69	Effective	5
9. Family Reintegration Program / Communication Program (COVID-positive/quarantined staff are given the means of communication through modern technology)	3.86	Effective	1
10. Recognition and Awarding Program (regular awards and recognition to our healthcare providers)	3.84	Effective	2
Composite Mean	3.67	Effective	

Legend: 4.50-5.00=Highly Effective;3.50-4.49=Effective;2.50-3.49=Moderately Effective;1.50-2.49=Ineffective;1.00-1.49=Highly Ineffective

Table 3. Correlation Between Paired Variables of Psychological Program

Paired Variables	rho-value	p-value	Interpretation
Utilization and Effectiveness	0.711	0.000	Highly Significant

Legend: Significant at $p\text{-value} < 0.01$

Table 3 shows the correlation between the extent of utilization and effectiveness of psychological programs which yielded $p=0.000$ with the verbal interpretation of highly significant. Utilizing the existing interventions for psychological health resulted in more effective interventions however there had been discrepancies in the interventions highly utilized and effective which might affect the sustainability and acceptability of the healthcare providers.

Healthcare organizations should have a mental health screening plan and treatment, including counseling, should be made available. Based on underrated usage. In addition, keeping up to date with current data and information as well as being aware of the risks to self and others while caring for patients with the virus were emphasized but, in this study, had been underutilized. By monitoring and applying strategies to reduce stress and develop support systems, employees can minimize long-term impacts [6]. Another study argues that psychological coping task forces should be established, and psychological support platforms established to provide community support to healthcare professionals, which can help the needs of nurses and protect their mental health [7].

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

Psychological health must be prioritized in these times of pandemic in every healthcare organization.

The utilization of psychological programs was sometimes used due to the limited resources, advanced technology, and manpower allocation. Interventions were focused on the treatment and curative aspect of health and preventive and curative aspect was often utilized. The effectiveness of psychological interventions depends on the culture and norms. Filipino nurses viewed family reintegration and communication as highly effective due to it is familial inclination and source of social support. However, the promotive and preventive aspects should be on focus such use of social media platforms for mental health awareness, support group creation, and stress management program instillation.

The researcher recommends that the psychological program should be made by a multidisciplinary team and guided by a specific policy/plan/ program approved by the top management. This would create a structure for the organization to follow and evaluate over a period. Moreover, the program includes promotive and preventive approaches; strengthen stress management programs, more visible mental health education focusing on self-resilience, mental health awareness, and prevention, creation of support groups per unit, and quarterly psychiatric assessment to enable the staff or the manager to intervene promptly as necessary. Employers shall develop appropriate policies and programs on mental health in the workplace designed to: raise awareness of mental health issues, correct the stigma and discrimination associated with mental conditions, identify, and provide support for individuals at risk, facilitate access to individuals with mental health conditions to treatment and psychosocial support. Additionally, this research recommends future researchers utilize a qualitative methodology to further explore the challenges of psychosocial implementation in hospitals. An organization that prioritizes nurses' staff welfare would result in motivated, resilient, and high-spirited members which will translate to delivering safe, patient-centered, and quality care to their patients.

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