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Challenges Encountered by Mental Health Nurses in Addressing Mental Health Issues

A Descriptive Literature Review

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<p>The purpose is to describe the challenges mental health nurses encounter when providing care to patients with mental health issues in mental health care environment. The aim of this study is to improve mental health care in mental care environment by addressing the following research question: What are the challenges mental health nurses encountered in acute care environments? For reliable and informative articles related to this topic, utilized the phrase “acute care environments” to conduct this more concise and easily accessible.</p> <p>Data were gathered using inclusion and exclusion criteria from the academic databases Cinahl, Medline, and PubMed. PRISMA was used to choose twelve research publications. The data were analyzed using inductive content analysis.</p> <p>In this thesis, 12 articles were selected to address the research question, "What challenges do mental health nurses encounter in acute care settings?" Seven (n = 7) of the twelve selected research publications were from Africa, with five (n = 5) from South Africa; one (n = 1) was from Brazil; and the other (n = 1) was from Ghana. One (n = 1) piece came from Indonesia, one (n = 1) from Turkey, and one (n = 1) from the United States. Two (n = 2) articles were from Europe, one (n = 1) from Sweden, and one (n = 1) from Belgium. Inductive content analysis was used to examine these articles. In the following inductive analysis, 27 sub-categories, 6 generic categories, and 1 main category were developed. 1)Challenges on mental health nurses, which was constructed from six generic categories and 27 sub-categories, is one of the main categories. Figure 3 depicts these groups and their results. In conclusion, mental health nurses in acute care settings face a variety of problems that affect the quality of treatment delivered and have long-term consequences for their well-being. Understanding these issues and the coping techniques used is critical for improving the workplace, increasing patient care, and promoting the mental health and job happiness of these devoted professionals.</p>	

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Tämän tutkimuksen tarkoitus on kuvailla haasteita, joita mielenterveyshoitajat kohtaavat hoitaessaan mielenterveysongelmista kärsiviä potilaita akuutin hoidon ympäristössä.

Tämän tutkimuksen tavoitteena on parantaa mielenterveyshoitoa akuutissa hoitoympäristössä.

Tässä opinnäytetyössä valittiin 12 artikkelia käsittelemään tutkimuskysymystä: 'Mitä haasteita mielenterveyshoitajat kohtaavat akuutissa hoitoympäristössä?' Seitsemän (n = 7) kahdestatoista valitusta tutkimusjulkaisusta oli Afrikasta, joista viisi (n = 5) Etelä-Afrikasta; yksi (n = 1) oli Brasiliasta; ja toinen (n = 1) Ghanasta. Yksi (n = 1) artikkeli tuli Indonesiasta, yksi (n = 1) Turkista ja yksi (n = 1) Yhdysvalloista. Kaksi (n = 2) artikkelia oli Euroopasta, yksi (n = 1) Ruotsista ja yksi (n = 1) Belgiasta. Artikkeleita analysoitiin induktiivisen sisällönanalyysin avulla. Seuraavassa induktiivisessä analyysissä kehitettiin 27 alakategoriaa, 6 yleistä kategoriaa ja yksi pääkategoria. 1) Työelämän vaikutukset mielenterveyshoitajiin, joka muodostui kuudesta yleisestä kategoriasta ja 27 alakategoriasta, on yksi pääkategorioista. Kuva 3 esittää nämä ryhmät ja niiden tulokset. Yhteenvetona voidaan todeta, että akuuttihoitoon mielenterveyshoitajat kohtaavat erilaisia ongelmia, jotka vaikuttavat hoidon laatuun ja joilla on pitkäaikaisia seurauksia heidän hyvinvointiinsa. Näiden asioiden ja käytettävien selviytymistekniikoiden ymmärtäminen on ratkaisevan tärkeää työpaikan parantamiseksi, potilaiden hoidon lisäämiseksi ja näiden omistautuneiden ammattilaisten mielenterveyden ja työonnellisuuden edistämiseksi.

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1 Introduction

In today's fast-paced world, the significance of mental health care cannot be overstated. Nurses are at the forefront of admitting, treating, and managing mental healthcare users (MHCUs) with a wide range of mental diseases in mental health institutions, and as a result, they encounter a myriad of challenges in their work settings (Sobekwa & Arunachallam 2015:4).

This makes the role of mental health nurses more significant than ever. However, despite their critical importance, mental health nurses often operate in the shadows of the healthcare system, facing unique challenges and obstacles in providing comprehensive care.

One common issue that mental health nurses face is the financial burden associated with addressing mental health issues in acute care environments. As per a study by the American Psychiatric Nurses Association, inadequate funding for mental health services results in increased workloads, limited access to essential resources, and heightened stress levels among nurses. The financial strain also affects patient outcomes and the overall quality of care. (American Psychiatric Nurses Association. 2018)

In an era where mental health has come to the forefront, it is essential to recognize the challenges faced by mental health nurses. By addressing these challenges, we can improve the overall quality of care, not only for patients but for the dedicated professionals who work tirelessly to ensure that mental health is an integral part of healthcare. This thesis strives to improve valuable insights into these challenges and offer solutions that can make a difference in mental health nursing. (Setona et al, 2020:2).

The purpose is to describe the challenges faced by mental health nurses in addressing mental health issues. The aim of this study is to improve insights into the specific challenges they face in mental health care environment.

2 Background and Key terms

Mental health is an integral component of overall well-being, and the recognition of its importance has grown significantly in recent years. As a result, there has been a surge in the demand for mental health services, including in acute care settings such as hospitals and emergency departments (Moura RC et al). Mental health issues have become a significant concern in acute care environments such as hospitals and emergency departments. Acute care environments, characterized by their fast-paced and high-stakes nature, present a distinctive set of challenges for mental health nurses. These settings, often found in hospitals and emergency departments, require mental health professionals to navigate a dynamic landscape where immediate intervention is crucial. Acute care environments deal with individuals during mental health crises, exacerbations of existing conditions, or the emergence of acute symptoms. Acute care settings demand rapid decision-making and intervention. Mental health nurses must navigate urgent situations, where the severity of a patient's condition may necessitate immediate responses to ensure safety and well-being. Acute care often involves collaboration with various healthcare professionals, including physicians, emergency staff, and other specialists. Mental health nurses must seamlessly integrate mental health care into the broader healthcare context, emphasizing effective communication and teamwork. Mental health crises are more likely to unfold in acute care environments. (Bekelepi et al, 2022).

Mental health nurses play a crucial role in providing care and support to patients with mental health conditions in these high-stress settings. However, they face numerous challenges that hinder the delivery of effective care.

A comprehensive study on this topic is essential to understand the specific challenges mental health nurses encounter in acute care environments and to identify potential solutions to improve their practice. To explore this subject, researchers should conduct a mixed-methods study that combines quantitative and qualitative research approaches.

Mental health nursing is a diverse discipline that focuses on the medical, psychological, and social requirements of psychiatric patients. It involves specialised training, the formation of therapeutic alliances, the management of problematic behaviours, and the administration of medications and treatments. Despite obstacles, mental health nursing could increase performance in hospitals and clinics. (Eisa et al, 2022: 261-262)

The role of mental health nurses in acute care environments is multifaceted. It encompasses not only the provision of therapeutic interventions but also the assessment of patients in crisis, de-escalation of volatile situations, monitoring for self-harm risks, and offering emotional support to patients and their families. However, this crucial role is not without its challenges. (Gaskin, C.J., et al.2017:299-305)

In summary, mental health nurses in acute care environments confront a myriad of challenges that influence the quality of care provided and have lasting implications for their well-being. Understanding these challenges and the coping mechanisms employed is essential for improving the work environment, enhancing patient care, and supporting the mental health and job satisfaction of these dedicated professionals.

2.1 Mental Health Nurses

Mental health nurses refer to registered nurses or healthcare professionals specializing in mental health. These professionals play a crucial role in the assessment, treatment, and support of individuals experiencing mental health challenges or psychiatric disorders within various healthcare settings, including acute care environments. They are trained to work with individuals of all ages and provide care in various healthcare settings, including acute care environments. (Jacobs et al,2012:2) In acute cases, mental health nurses are responsible for providing comprehensive care, coordinating with multidisciplinary teams, and implementing interventions customized to the specific requirements of individuals with mental health difficulties. Their role involves not only clinical expertise but also a compassionate and empathetic approach to support patients through their mental health journey.

2.2 Acute Care Environments

Acute care settings encompass hospitals, emergency departments, and other healthcare facilities where patients receive short-term, intensive medical and psychiatric care. These environments often handle patients with acute mental health crises in addition to physical health issues. (Rios et al, 2021)

2.3 Mental Health Issues

Mental health issues encompass a wide range of conditions, including depression, anxiety disorders, bipolar disorder, schizophrenia, and substance use disorders. Mental health nurses work with patients who present with these conditions, providing assessment, treatment, and support. (Jacobs et al,2012:2.)

3 Purpose, aims and research question

The purpose is to describe the challenges faced by mental health nurses in address mental health issues. The aim of this study is to improve insights into the specific challenges they face in mental health care environment.

The research questions are formed as follows: What are the challenges mental health nurses encountered in acute care environments?

4 Methodology and method

In this study, a descriptive review of the literature was conducted to collect the most updated and relevant scientific information on the challenges encountered by mental health nurses in managing mental health issues in care settings. It includes a literature review that "aims to address the study question, "What are the challenges encountered by mental health nurses in mental health care environments?"

The purpose of the literature review is to interpret the latest information. Because literature reviews include valuable information, researchers are encouraged to submit reviews that support the studies they are undertaking (Kangasniemi et al. 2013: 292). In this study, a thorough search of current research papers on the challenges encountered by mental health nurses in the context of mental health care settings from different electronic databases was conducted.

4.1 Data Collection Method

In this study, a systematic and comprehensive search of the literature was conducted to identify relevant studies that explore the challenges faced by mental health nurses in addressing mental health issues in mental health care units. This approach allowed for a thorough examination of existing research and the synthesis of findings to gain a comprehensive understanding of the topic.

It was searching through relevant academic databases, journals, and books. PubMed, CINAHL, and Medline are examples of academic databases. Inductive content analysis was utilized to examine and synthesize data or information from relevant publications. For each database, Boolean search terms were utilized, followed by keywords from related search articles.

Limiters were established to focus exclusively on articles published in English as the main language; the age range included all adults; and the year range was set from 2013 to 2023. Inclusion and exclusion criteria were established to obtain the most relevant article that matches the study subject. All the collected literature was sorted and evaluated based on basic literature information (title and year of publication) as well as general information about the population (mental health nurses) and the intervention (study design). The initial search was conducted by examining the titles and abstracts to screen duplicate literature and identify literature that did not meet the requirements. Finally, all academic articles relevant to this topic were read in full and chosen for inclusion in the study.

4.2 Data search and selection

For the systematic search of the literature on the challenges faced by mental health nurses in addressing mental health issues in mental health care units, a structured approach was taken, guided by the Pico framework.

Based on this Pico framework, a structured search strategy was developed that enhances the effectiveness of literature searches (Eriksen and Frandsen 2018: 421). The aim was to identify studies that specifically addressed the challenges faced by mental health nurses within mental health care units. Key term structures are employed in the search for relevant articles in databases. The key terms included "mental health

nurses" "challenges," "issues," "mental health disorders," and "acute care environments. Also, Boolean operators such as "AND" and "OR" and brackets were used to facilitate the search. The PICO framework used in this study is depicted (see table 1).

P (Population/Participants)	Mental Health Nurses
I (Interest/Issue)	Challenges Encountered in addressing mental health issues in acute care environments
Co (Context)	Acute care environments

Table 1. Pico (Population, Interest and Context) Framework

A systematic search of electronic databases, including PubMed and CINAHL, and MEDLINE, was conducted using a combination of search terms and controlled vocabulary terms related to mental health nurses, challenges, and acute care environments.

The process of searching for and selecting data for this thesis was guided by specific inclusion and exclusion criteria to ensure that the literature reviewed was relevant and aligned with the research objectives. These criteria are essential for maintaining the quality and focus of the study (Cooper, 1989). The literature search for relevant literature was conducted between January 2013 and August 2023 in the following databases: PubMed and CINAHL, MEDLINE. The databases were chosen because they had a broader coverage of peer-reviewed articles conducted in emergency care units or psychiatric settings that specifically addressed challenges faced by mental health nurses. To find the answers to our study question, "What are the challenges that mental health nurses face?" The following keywords were used in the CINAHL and MEDLINE databases: ("Mental health nurs* AND challenges OR issues AND "mental health disorders" AND "acute care environments"), and in PUBMED (Mental health nurs* AND challenges OR issues AND "mental health disorders" AND "acute care environments") with the help of librarian, we used completely different search terms for PubMed. These keywords were used to identify articles based on their title, abstract, and

full text. The data search process for this literature review was conducted using scientific database sources. The database search (appendix 1) was conducted using CINAHL, PUBMED, and MEDLINE with Boolean connectors "AND" and "OR." The hits that were obtained from CINAHL are 45, PUBMED is 91, and MEDLINE is 36. Of those, 11 from

CINAHL, 6 from PUBMED, and 5 from MEDLINE were selected based on the title and inclusion criteria. Then 10 articles from CINAHL, 5 from PUBMED, and 5 from MEDLINE were selected based on the abstract. Decisively, 4 full-text articles were selected from CINAHL, 5 from PUBMED, and 1 from MEDLINE. To find articles, appropriate keywords and keyword combinations were employed with the help of Librarian. For extra material, a manual search was also conducted. 2 articles were also obtained from search results for key terms related to the topic and study question.

12 articles in total were obtained and used in this study. The comprehensive results of the data searches are presented in Appendix 1, and the data selection procedure is depicted in Figure 1.

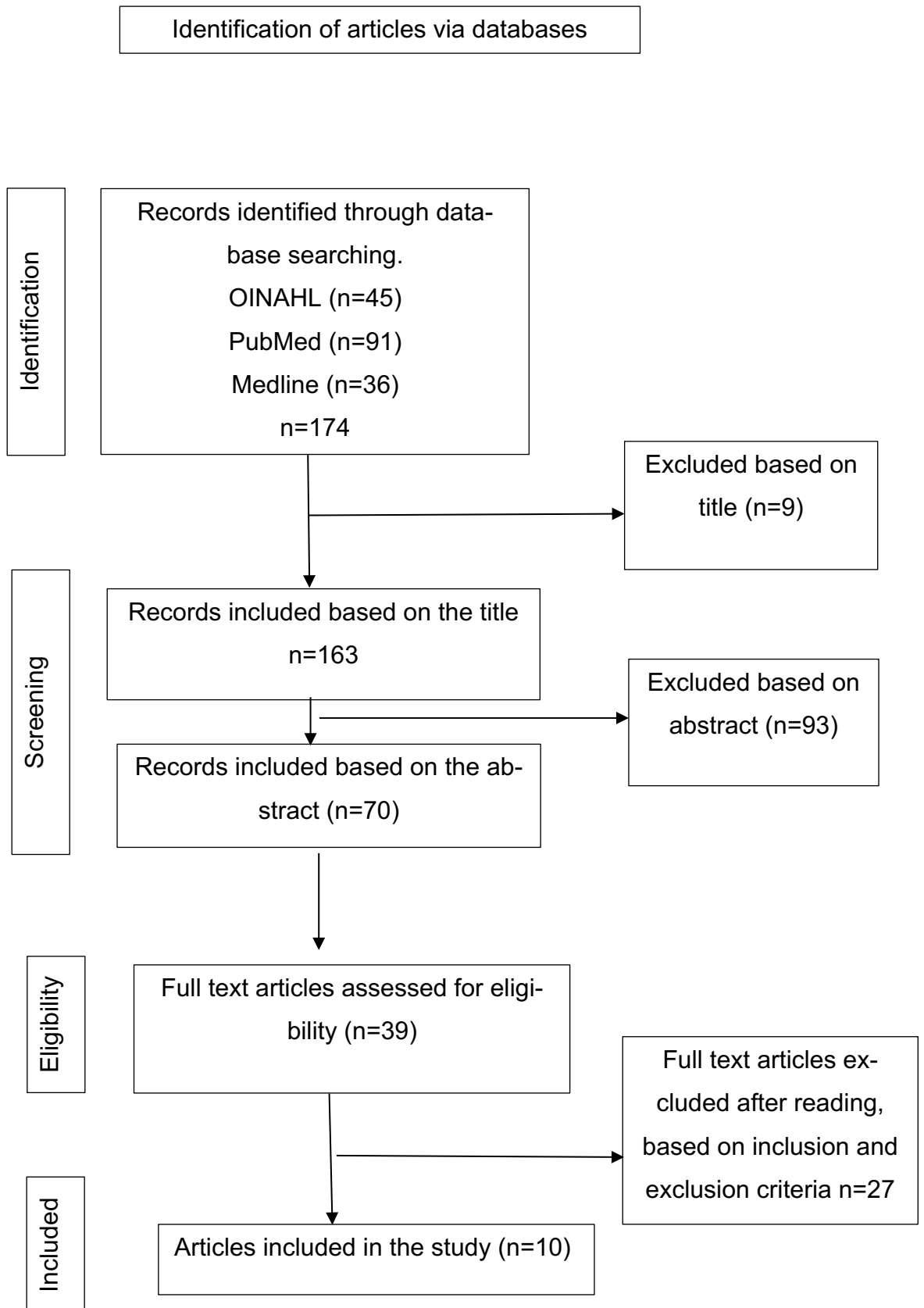


Figure 1: Prisma Flowchart on the data selection process.

The articles were selected based on inclusion and exclusion criteria. To be included in the research, the articles had to match the following criteria. The aim was to identify updated current nursing or health-related research articles on the challenges encountered by mental health nurses in acute care environments.

The following criteria for inclusion and exclusion were established (see table 3)

Criteria	Inclusion	Exclusion
Research Articles	Articles that are peer reviewed, nursing science articles and published in journals	Non-peer-reviewed articles
Publication date	Articles published within the last 10 years (2013-2023)	Articles published more than 10 years ago
Study focus	Articles focusing on challenges faced by mental health nurses	Articles that are not related to mental health nursing fields
Ages	All adult ages	Children, teenage
Language	Articles in English	Articles in languages other than English

Table 2: Inclusion and exclusion criteria.

4.3 Data analysis method

The study employed inductive content analysis as a data analysis method. Inductive data analysis is a widely used approach in qualitative research that allows for the generation of themes and insights directly from the data without imposing preconceived categories or theories (Thomas, 2006). This method is well-suited to the exploration of

the challenges encountered by mental health nurses in mental health care units because it allows for the development of complex and context-specific findings. The data were presented, for example, as one word, sentence, meaning, or topic, in the first phase of the analytical process. In the next stage, the manifest content, i.e., the transcribed text, was often evaluated (H. Kyngäs 2020: 14-15.) Therefore, the first step in inductive analysis involves open coding, wherein the data is dissected into smaller units and labelled with descriptive codes. These codes are derived directly from the data and represent the various aspects of the challenges faced by mental health nurses (Charmaz, 2006), as demonstrated in Table 4.

Meaning units (Original expression)	Coding
"Experience of entering an unsafe world where care becomes a burden, related to contextual challenges"	Encounter with a dangerous environment where caring for others turns into a burden and is associated with contextual challenges.
"You know we get exhausted as the healthcare providers, we become frustrated, and we develop anger burn out and all these other things, because we feel we are not supported well by the management, and we left alone to suffer.' (Participant 1, 53 years old, female)"	Healthcare providers experience exhaustion, frustration, anger, burnout, and other issues due to inadequate support from management and feeling left alone to suffer.
" Participants reported that they encounter physical violence daily, especially in acute wards. They mentioned that in those wards, patients are usually more aggressive, which exposes them to sustain injuries like human bites, fractures, bruises, and needle pricks"	Participants reported daily physical violence, particularly in acute wards, where patients are often aggressive, leading to injuries such as human bites, fractures, bruises, and needle pricks

Table 3. The meaning unit and coding

" An important part of the data abstraction process is analyzing open codes to form sub-categories, which can be grouped into categories and main categories." (H. Kyngäs 2020: 15) The categories and sub-categories are identified throughout the categorizing process, as indicated in Table 5.

Generic category	
Behaviour challenges	Personal well-being
Physical and verbal violence	Frustration
Sexual harassment	Burnout
Suicidal incidents or	Overwhelm
Self-injurious behavior	Anger
Aggressive behavior	Demotivation
	Disrespect
	Emotional toll
	Workload
	Job dissatisfaction

Table 4. The generic categories and sub-categories.

Following that, the researcher determined if the sub-headings are related to a previously recognized category or fit into distinct categories. Several categories are frequently formed at first, which must be established in the text from which they are derived. The meaning units are shifted back and forth inside the categories to properly in-

interpret the texts without becoming repetitive and to offer meaningful categorical outcomes (Bengsson 2016: 12). The main categories are then developed to summarize the basic significance of the texts, as depicted in Table 6.

Main category	Generic Category
Challenges encounter by mental health nurses	Personal well-being
	Administration challenges
	Stigma and public perception
	Behavior challenges
	Education and Training
	Ethical consideration
	Communication and collaboration

Table 5. The main categories and generic categories

Figure 2 depicts the key processing steps for inductive content analysis. Following these processes, the relevant extracted units were systematically examined and were ready for reporting with the inclusion of the main categories, generic categories, and subcategories employed in this data analysis process, as shown in Table 7.

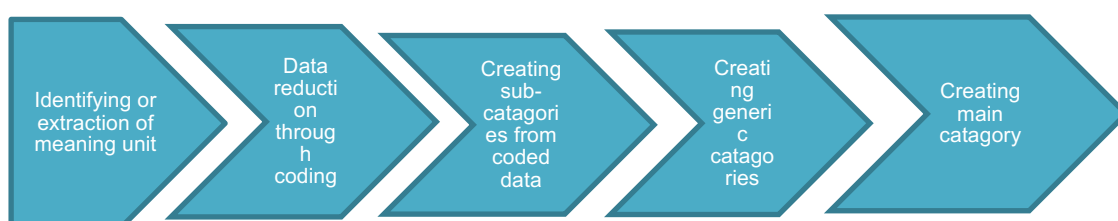


Fig 2: Inductive content analysis procedure

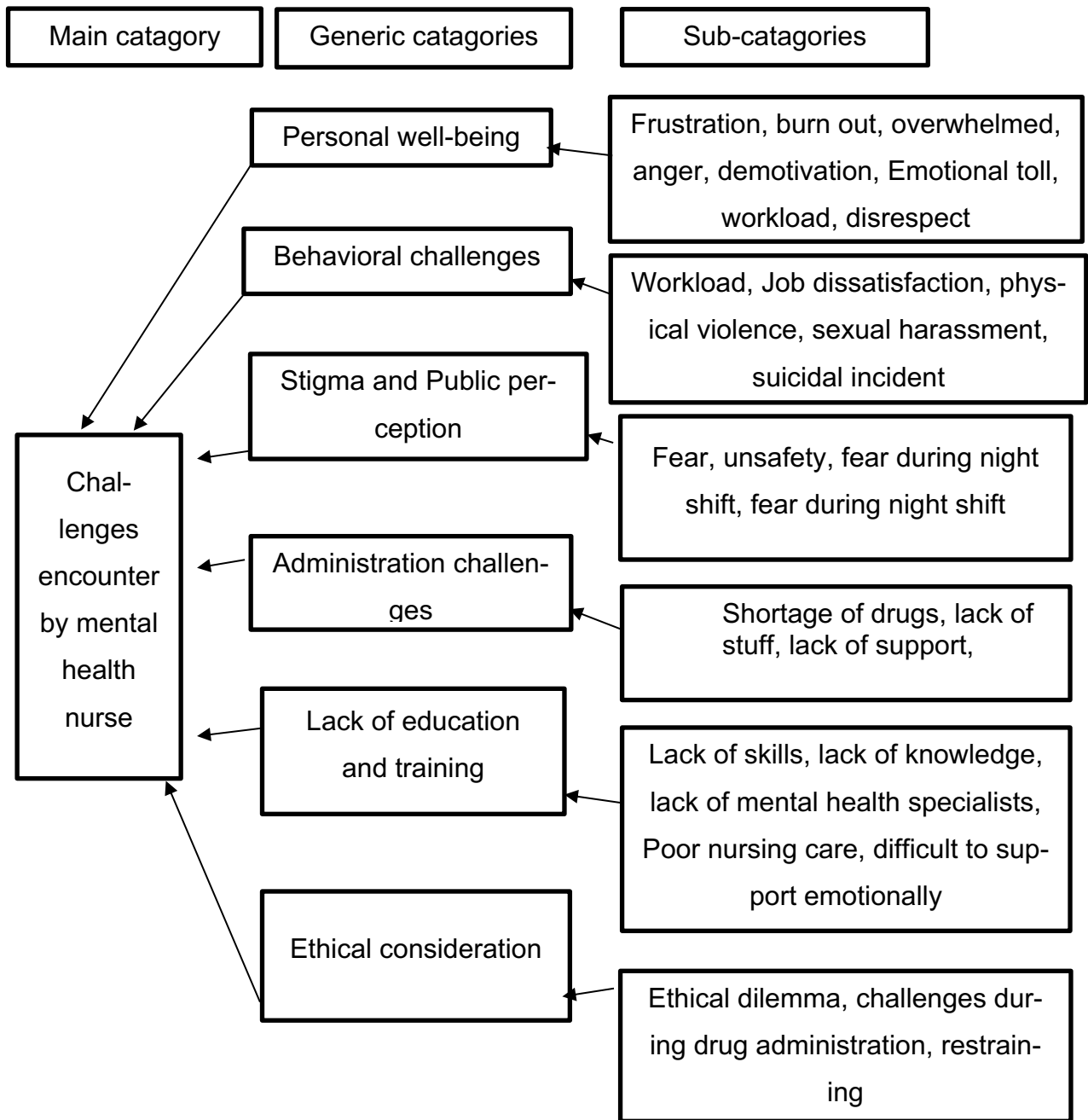


Figure 3. Categorization used in the inductive analysis

5 Result

In this thesis, 12 articles were selected to address the research question, "What challenges do mental health nurses encounter in acute care settings?" Seven (n = 7) of the twelve selected research publications were from Africa (Annikie, V.2022, Adusei-Nkrumah, J.2018, Elsie S, J.2012, Fortunate S, 2020, Henry A.2020, Bekelepi, N.2022, and Setona 2020) with five (n = 5) from South Africa; one (n = 1) was from Brazil; and the other (n = 1) was from Ghana. One (n = 1) piece came from Indonesia, one (n = 1) from Turkey, and one (n = 1) from the United States. Two (n = 2) articles were from Europe, one (n = 1) from Sweden, and one (n = 1) from Belgium, one (n = 1) from Palestine.

Inductive content analysis was used to examine these articles. In the following inductive analysis, 27 sub-categories, 6 generic categories, and 1 main category were developed. 1) challenges encounter by mental health nurses, which was constructed from six generic categories and 27 sub-categories, is one of the main categories. Figure 3 depicts these groups and their results.

5.1 Personal well-being

According to Mulaudzi et al 2020:5 Professional nurses are facing burnout because of their heavy workload, with some feeling emotionally fatigued and considering leaving or transferring to another department, describing their work as an imprisonment term. This study also conducted that work-related stress is affecting professional nurses because of heavy workloads. The study conducted in discovered that male participants were treated disrespectfully by mental health care units (MHCUs).

5.2 Training and education

People with mental diseases or other mental health needs must be helped in various wards of ordinary hospitals, not just in mental health-specialized facilities where a specialized staff offers treatment. The reality demonstrates the significance of critical and reflective study of mental health care as practices provided by unskilled workers, such as those on the nursing team, as well as the establishment of Permanent Education in Health (PEH) measures to reorient these practices. (Mulaudzi et al 2020:5). The every-

day experiences of nursing workers frequently require mental health care training, especially for persons with mental diseases or mood or behavior changes, which can contribute to professional development. Continuous training and educational support are vital to equip mental health nurses with updated skills and knowledge, improving patient outcomes (Amanda, Lais 2020: 3-18). Incorporating mental health expertise into the comprehensive care of individuals, along with recognizing when a patient requires specialized mental health and psychiatric nursing support, are crucial skills for any general care nurse. It is important to understand the integration of this knowledge into the curriculum of general nursing education. This article seeks to outline the development and structuring of mental health and psychiatry nursing education for undergraduate nursing students in Coimbra, Portugal. It aims to detail the specific mental health and psychiatric nursing course components included in the curriculum and examine their role in enhancing the skillset of nurses in general care. (Mendes, A.C. et al., 2018)

5.3 Ethical considerations

In acute care settings, circumstances may require the application of coercive methods, thus limiting personal freedom. The core ethical values in healthcare, including respecting autonomy, doing good, avoiding harm, and ensuring fairness, are pivotal in clinical practice. It is essential for nurses to understand which ethical concepts and principles should take precedence and the necessary values for comprehensive ethical deliberation. This research seeks to explore the ethical reflections of psychiatric mental health nurses and the elements that affect their decision-making when implementing coercive actions. (Manderious et al., 2023) Mental health nurses frequently encounter ethical dilemmas related to patient autonomy, confidentiality, and balancing rights with safety concerns. The research found that psychiatric nurses consider their actions in emergencies ethical, with restraining patients being considered ethical if it prevents harm to themselves or others. This ethical compliance subtheme is influenced by their experiences and understanding of the situation. Some nurses believe it is unethical and inhumane not to inform patients before restraining them, despite the potential protection. They suggest a padded room in clinics and believe restraining is a necessary management strategy (P.G. Zwane et al 2022: 4-5).

5.4 Stigma and Public perception

Mental health nurses play a critical role in challenging societal misconceptions and advocating for a positive change in the general public's perception of mental illness. According to qualitative study of P.G. Zwane et al 2022: 4 conducted in Africa, Mental health nurses in psychiatric hospitals face stigma and discrimination from non-mental health care workers. Additionally, the studies conducted in Palestine cited that a significant social stigma towards it. This is partly due to a lack of funding for awareness programs and lack of funding for raising awareness. Nurses at governmental centers have experienced stigma. The NGO mental health nurses reported that many people, including families and clients, were hesitant to participate in the center's mental health program due to social stigmas and lack of appreciation for its activities. (Marie et al 2017: 5)

5.5 Behavior challenges

Mental health nurses face frequent instances of verbal aggression and physical violence, impacting their overall well-being and the quality of care provided. Moran et al. (2009:599) found high aggression and violence in work environments led to emotional suppression. Bekelepi's study participants perceived violent episodes as challenges and accepted patient behavior. Mental health nurses felt unsafe in their psychiatry environment, but now they are more cautious. According to P.G. Zwane et al 2022, Participants described everyday physical aggression, particularly in acute wards, where patients are frequently hostile and vulnerable to injuries such as human bites, fractures, bruises, and needle pricks. Female nurses in a hospital experience sexual harassment, including rape attempts, which makes them worry for their lives, especially at night. Another study conducted in Indonesia cited that Sexual harassment against mental hospital nurses was disclosed through content analysis, with common events including pinching, inducing intercourse, accusing a prostitute, force hugging, grasping sensitive parts, forcibly kissing, and nakedness. Male patients were more prevalent, although some male nurses were victims of female patients as well (Yosep et al 2019: 5).

5.6 Administration challenges

Staff shortages in acute mental health settings led to increased workload and stress for PNPs, causing a sense of helplessness and difficulty in meeting demands like close monitoring and emotional support. Nurses report staff shortages at the facility, yet high patient numbers make their work difficult, reducing the quality of mental health nursing

care they provide. Additionally, Participants experienced unsupportive and unrealistic attitudes from family members, doctors, management, and security personnel at MHCU, which negatively impacted and burdened their job. According to Nyati and Sebit, the study found that families of mental health care units (MHCUs) lack support and understanding due to a lack of knowledge about mental illness. (Ngako et al 2012:6-9). Nurses highlighted the facility's significant challenge of inadequate infrastructure and lack of working tools, which negatively impacts the quality of mental health care provided to patients.

6 Discussion

Bekelepi and Martin's article brings attention to the serious challenges nurses face in acute settings, particularly from violent incidents. Nurses often deal with patients displaying challenging behaviors, such as those with substance-induced psychosis or aggression related to bipolar mood disorders, which increases their risk of facing violence. The article notes cases where nurses were physically assaulted, sometimes resulting in permanent disabilities. This demonstrates the severe impact of inadequate safety measures. Healthcare institutions, often providing training and support only after violent incidents, raise ethical concerns regarding staff preparedness and well-being. The emotional toll on nurses, including feelings of fear, anger, and violation, highlights the need for a better work environment that addresses both their psychological needs and proper coping strategies. (Bekelepi and Martin, 2022)

Integrated behavioural healthcare encompasses systematic efforts, conducted with thoughtful planning, to synchronise physical and mental health services within the same setting. This approach aims to enhance access to and deliver holistic healthcare, addressing the entirety of an individual's body, mind, and soul. The objective of this position paper, from the perspective of psychiatric-mental health nursing, is to provide leadership and guidance, advocating that nurses are uniquely positioned to spearhead the integration of behavioural health services across acute, primary, and extended care settings. (Soltis-Jarrett et al., 2017)

Zwane et al. highlight a range of challenges faced by mental health nurses in Eswatini, emphasizing both specific issues and the broader context of mental health nursing. Key concerns include safety risks for nurses, especially female workers, who face dangers like sexual assault and harassment most common during night shifts. These safety concerns emphasize the need for improved protection protocols. The stigma associated with mental health care is another significant issue, as nurses experience discrimination from both the public and within the healthcare profession, reflecting ingrained prejudices and misunderstandings about mental health. The structural dimension of stigma, encompassing institutional policies, cultural norms, and regulatory frameworks that perpetuate disparities for individuals with mental illness, is deeply ingrained within the medical system and its educational processes. An illustrative example lies in the apprehensions surrounding treatment seeking and disclosure of mental health issues throughout medical education. Medical students fear potential repercussions such as interference in their education, documentation of mental health history on official records, and negative impacts on career progression. Similarly, residents and practicing physicians fear threats to their training status, career advancement, and even licensure. These concerns are not unfounded, as evidence suggests that disclosure of mental illness can influence residency selection and may lead to discriminatory questioning by medical licencing bodies. For medical trainees and practitioners seeking support to overcome these fears and associated stigma, the available resources are often inadequate due to disparities in funding, inconsistent access, and insufficient mental health infrastructure within medical institutions. Paradoxically, the limited treatment options and perpetuation of stigma within these settings may reinforce the notion that those seeking help are undeserving of comprehensive care, exacerbating the challenges faced by healthcare providers experiencing distress, including burnout and moral injury. Moreover, the culture of academic medicine contributes to the perpetuation of structural stigma towards mental illness among healthcare professionals. Within this culture, values such as perfectionism and self-sacrifice are highly prized, while mental illness is often stigmatized as a sign of weakness. As students navigate this environment, stigma may become internalized, reinforced, and projected onto others. As they progress in their careers, the influence of this internalized stigma, directed towards those lower in the professional hierarchy, may create a cyclical pattern that sustains this culture of stigma within academic medicine. (W.E. Bynum IV and J. Sukhera 2021)

Administrative challenges, such as staff shortages and overcrowding in healthcare facilities, worsen these problems. These factors impact the quality of care provided and raise serious ethical concerns about workplace safety of patients and nurses. Zwane et al. brings attention to the need for a comprehensive approach to address these issues. Which should include policy changes, educational initiatives to combat stigma, improved workforce planning, and infrastructure development. By focusing on these areas, there can be considerable progress towards ensuring the safety and well-being of mental health nurses and the effective treatment of mental health patients. (Zwane et al. 2022)

There is a clear need for policy interventions, educational restructuring to provide nurses with skills to manage challenging behaviors, and ethical considerations to create a supportive work environment. Addressing these challenges is crucial for improving the quality of mental health care and the well-being of nurses working in these highly demanding environments.

7 Ethics and validity

The primary aim of adhering to ethical standards in literature research was to prevent any form of deception, distortion, or misrepresentation of information (Resnik, 2011). In the context of this thesis, ethical considerations were addressed throughout the search process. This involved assessing the original publication sources and professional backgrounds of the authors. Due to the limited availability of relevant results, the selection of included papers was centered on their ability to address the research topic effectively and their overall relevance. It was imperative to delve into how the identified issues might have impacted the policies and practices associated with mental health nursing in acute care settings.

In the context of our thesis on challenges faced by mental health professionals in acute care environments, validity refers to the extent to which our research accurately and

truthfully measures or assesses the concept of challenges. For reliable and informative articles related to this topic, utilized the phrase “acute care environments “to conduct this more concise and easily accessible. It signifies that our study’s findings are reliable, credible, and representative of the challenges encountered by mental health professionals in acute care settings. Validity ensures that our research effectively captures the phenomenon it seeks to explore.

Regarding qualitative research, the validity of the study is contingent on several key elements. These elements encompass the appropriateness of the tools employed, the overall research process, and the data collection methods. An essential aspect of ensuring validity involves integrating questionnaires seamlessly into the research process and aligning them with the research outcomes. The validity also depends on whether the sampling and data analysis methods employed are relevant and appropriate for the research questions posed. Furthermore, the strategies employed in the research methodology should be applicable to the research objectives. Lastly, the results of the research and the conclusions drawn from the findings should be directly pertinent to the sample and the specific context under investigation (Leung, L. 2015).

8. Limitations

It is important to recognize some limitations in the current studies when examining the challenges faced by mental health nurses in mental health care settings. A thorough understanding may be limited by the lack of qualitative studies that particularly focus on the experiences of mental health nurses in acute settings. Furthermore, because mental health disorders and healthcare dynamics are dynamic, new concerns may arise over time that need further research. The scope of this discussion is limited to the challenges that mental health nurses face, overlooking connections with deeper systemic concerns in healthcare. A more comprehensive assessment that includes organizational structures and policies would provide a more nuanced view. These limitations highlight the need for ongoing study and a multidimensional strategy to properly comprehend and solve the complex problems that mental health nurses encounter in acute care settings. Lastly, in terms of geographical scope, the articles focus on specific regions that may not represent challenges universally faced by mental health nurses in various acute care settings. On the other hand, in terms of methodological approach, the inherent limitations of some of the chosen research methods, whether qualitative or quantitative, can affect the breadth and depth of the findings.

9. Conclusion and Recommendations

In conclusion, the challenges that mental health nurses encounter while addressing mental health concerns in mental health care settings are varied and require careful attention. Nurses face substantial challenges due to the demanding nature of acute care settings and the complexities of mental health problems. Issues such as limited resources, ongoing stigma, and the need for improved multidisciplinary teamwork highlight the importance of comprehensive mental health nursing support measures in these critical contexts.

To effectively address these challenges, a comprehensive strategy that includes not only allocating sufficient funding and staffing but also cultivating a culture of understanding and destigmatization within healthcare facilities is needed. A cohesive and patient-centered approach to mental health care in acute settings can only be created by encouraging interdisciplinary teamwork and communication, which can be achieved through ongoing education and training for mental health nurses.

It is crucial to acknowledge the determination and dedication of mental health nurses in the face of these difficulties as we work to improve mental health outcomes. We can create environments that promote patients' well-being as well as those of the healthcare personnel committed to their care by working together, doing ongoing research, and making a commitment to prioritize mental health within acute care.

As a result of this study, the following recommendations are beneficial, particularly for mental health nurses:

- Recommendations for addressing the challenges faced by mental health nurses in acute care environments include fostering a supportive work environment through regular training and professional development programs. This can enhance nurses' resilience and equip them with the skills needed to navigate complex scenarios.
- It is critical to implement methods to eliminate stigma around mental health in healthcare settings. Open talks and educational programmes can help to change perceptions and promote a more inclusive society.

- To overcome resource restrictions, healthcare organizations should prioritize proper staffing levels, giving mental health nurses the resources, they need to provide effective treatment.
- Interdisciplinary cooperation should be emphasized, with a focus on developing good communication and teamwork among healthcare professionals. This approach can enhance the overall care experience for patients with mental health issues in mental health care settings.
- Lastly, further studies can be conducted to improve this study.

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Appendices

Appendix 1. Table 3. Database Search Results

Database	Search sentence	Number of hits	Papers/records included based on title*	Papers/records included based on abstract*	Papers/records included based on full text*
CINAHL	“Mental health nurs*” AND challenges OR issues AND “mental health disorders” AND “acute care environments”	45	40	25	12
MEDLINE	“Mental health nurs*” AND challenges OR issues AND “mental health disorders” AND “acute care environments”	36	33	23	13
PUBMED	((mental health nurs*) AND	91	88	20	12

	(challenges OR issues) AND (acute care envi- ronments)				
Manual search	With the name of title	2	2	2	2
Records in total		174	163	70	39
Records re- moved based on duplicates					
Records re- moved after reading the full text based on inclusion and exclu- sion criteria					27
Total num- ber of arti- cles in- cluded in the study					12

Appendix of Reviewed Articles

Summary of reviewed articles

Author(s), year, country	Topic / Title	Methodology & Methods	Partici- pants	Main Out- comes
<p>- Iyus Yosep, Henny Su- zana Mediani, Zabidah Putit, Helmy Hazmi and Ai Mar- diyah.</p> <p>-2019</p> <p>-Indonesia, West Java.</p>	<p>-Mental Health Nurses’ Perspec- tive of Work-Re- lated Vio- lence in In- donesia: A Qualitative Study</p>	<p>-Qualitative re- search. Focus Group Discussion (FGD) as a pri- mary method of data collection.</p>	<p>-Nurses at mental hos- pitals in West Java, Indonesia.</p>	<p>-The study identified vari- ous forms of violence, physical as- saults, and confronta- tions between nurses and patients.</p> <p>-Psychologi- cal symptoms such as fear, worry, trauma, anxi- ety, and oth- ers in re- sponse to vio- lence was ob- served.</p> <p>-The results showed that some nurses contemplated leaving their job due to the trauma expe- rienced.</p>

<p>-Annikie V. Hobyane, Nompumelelo Ntshingila, Marie Poggenpoel</p> <p>-2022</p> <p>- South Africa</p>	<p>-Experiences of psychiatric nurses caring for mental healthcare users with a comorbid disorder</p>	<p>-A qualitative, exploratory, descriptive, and contextual research method.</p>	<p>-8 psychiatric nurses caring for MHCUs (mental healthcare users) with a comorbid disorder.</p>	<p>-The researcher observed that the psychiatric nurses were exposed to various attacks from MHCUs. Psychiatric nurses described caring for MHCUs with a comorbid disorder within the psychiatric hospital as a 'challenging experience,' resulting in a sense of failure in their mission as nurses because of being overburdened by multiple challenges. Nurses also experienced exhaustion and stress.</p>
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<p>-Peter Van Bogaert, Sean Clarke, Kristien Wouters, Erik Franck, Riet Willems, Mieke Mondelaers</p> <p>-2010 to April 2011.</p> <p>- Belgium, Flanders.</p>	<p>-Impacts of unit-level nurse practice environment, workload, and burn-out on nurse-reported outcomes in psychiatric hospitals:</p> <p>A multi-level modelling approach.</p>	<p>-Cross-sectional study.</p> <p>-357 staff members from 34 acute and chronic care nursing units.</p>	<p>-Registered nurses, licensed practical nurses, and non-registered caregivers.</p>	<p>?</p>
<p>- Ndivhuwo P. Mulaudzi, Ntsieni S. Mashau, Henry A. Akinsola, Tinotenda S. Murwira</p> <p>- 2020</p> <p>- South Africa</p>	<p>-Working conditions in a mental health institution:</p> <p>An exploratory study of professional nurses in Limpopo province,</p>	<p>- Qualitative approach. Individual interviews.</p>	<p>- Professional nurses working in a mental healthcare institution.</p> <p>-From 26 to 50 years old participants.</p>	<p>-Themes that occurred:</p> <p>1. Inadequate safety measures: Violent behaviour of MHCUs and ineffective security measures.</p>

	South Africa		- Total of 18 participants (13 females and 5 males)	<p>2. Inadequate resources: Shortage of running water, poor condition of infrastructure, shortage of drugs, and insufficient budget.</p> <p>3. Impact of high workload: Stress and burnout.</p> <p>4. Shortage of staff: Shortage of trained mental healthcare professional nurses and shortage of psychiatrists.</p>
<p>- Maral Kargin, Adeviye Aydin</p> <p>- 2022</p> <p>- Turkey</p>	-The experiences of Turkish psychiatric nurses with psychiatric emergencies in the clinics of	<p>- Descriptive qualitative stud. Semi-structured in-person interviews</p> <p>- Content analysis technique used for data analysis.</p>	<p>- 20 psychiatric nurses working at a psychiatric hospital in Turkey</p> <p>- 55% female, 80% married,</p>	<p>- 5 main themes emerged from the interviews:</p> <p>1. Psychiatric emergencies: Aggression,</p>

	Turkey's mental health and diseases hospital: A descriptive qualitative study		55% had an undergraduate degree - Average age of 36.	<p>violence, suicide, and exacerbation of the primary disorder.</p> <p>2. Basic interventions: Security measures, restraining and isolation.</p> <p>3. Competency to provide care directly.</p> <p>4. Ethical compliance and unethical behaviours.</p> <p>5. Skills required: Communication, patience, and ability to stay calm.</p>
-Ntombiyakhe Bekelepi, Penelope Martin -2022 -South Africa	-Experience of violence, coping and support for nurses working in	- Qualitative, explorative, descriptive design. Semi-structured interviews	- 14 nurses (12 females and 2 males) working in acute wards in	- Five main themes emerged: 1. Violence perceived to be part of the

	acute psychiatric wards	- Thematic analysis used for data analysis.	<p>three psychiatric hospitals.</p> <p>- Participants included various nursing categories: professional nurses, enrolled nurses, and enrolled nursing assistants</p>	<p>job: Participants justified violent behaviour as an inherent attribute of working in acute psychiatric wards.</p> <p>2. Contributing factors to patient violent behaviour: Changes in hospital smoking policy, patient diagnosis, and type of admission were identified as factors.</p> <p>3. Physical and psychological effects on nurses: Participants reported trauma, physical injuries, and psychological effects after violent incidents.</p>
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				<p>4. Adaptive and maladaptive coping strategies: Participants shared ways of coping, including talking about the incident, using humour, being hyper-vigilant around patients, and withdrawing from certain patients.</p> <p>5. Perceived support from stakeholders: Varied experiences of support, with some feeling supported by managers, family, and colleagues, while others felt a lack of support from top management.</p>
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<p>Tetteh Dela Deborah, Edusei Kwaku Anthony, Eric Badu, Budu-Ainooson Amy, Naomi Gyamfi, Adusei-Nkrumah Josephine, Maxwell Preprah Opoku</p> <p>Year:</p> <p>Ghana</p>	<p>The burden of caregiving among mental health nurses providing services to consumers with depression in Ghana</p>	<p>The study employed an interpretative phenomenological design and qualitative data analysis to explore the experiences of mental health nurses.</p>	<p>Mental health nurses who have worked for 3 years or more in the Psychiatric Hospital, located in the Greater Accra Region of Ghana. Specifically, 24 mental health nurses were interviewed, 60% were between 31 and 35 years, while 40% were below 25 years. Many of the participants (86.6%) were females, 73.3% were married,</p>	<p>The study found that health system constraints and individual factors contribute to the burden of caregiving. Challenges include the poor state of psychiatric facilities, stigmatizing attitudes, non-adherence to medication instructions, limited family support, and physical and verbal abuse. Mental health nurses use coping strategies such as self-motivation, setting emotional boundaries, and focusing on the perceived clinical</p>
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			and 93.3% were educated up to nursing training college level.	outcomes of treatment.
Amanda de Souza Rios, Laís Chagas de Carvalho	PERMANENT EDUCATION IN MENTAL HEALTH: NURSING TEAM PERCEPTION	The study employed a qualitative, descriptive, exploratory design, conducted in three inpatient units of a general hospital.	Data were collected through semi-structured interviews with 15 members of the nursing team.	The study highlights the experiences of nursing team members with mental health users, marked by difficulties in providing care due to a lack of specific knowledge and experience. It was found that when permanent education actions address technical-assistance themes, there
Brazil				
2021				

				is a motivation to seek information through discussions among peers and/or individual research.
Kelebogile R. Setona, Leepile A. Sehularo, Isaac O. Mokgaola 2020 South Africa	Challenges Faced by Mental Health Nurse Specialists in Northwest, South Africa	Qualitative research design; non-probability expert sampling method; interviews with seven mental health nurse specialists; data saturation reached; data analysis done independently by the researcher and a co-coder.	Mental health nurse specialists working in public mental health care institutions in Northwest, South Africa.	Three main themes emerged from the study: Challenges affecting mental health nurse specialists directly. Challenges directly influenced by the government. Suggestions to support mental health nurse specialists.
Phetsile G. Zwane, Mduduzi Colani Shongwe, Fortunate S. Shabalala	Challenges faced by mental health nurses working	Qualitative approach, exploratory-descriptive design; data collected from nine purposively	Nine mental health nurses from NPRH, majority with bachelor's	Five themes emerged from the study:

<p>2022</p> <p>Eswatini</p>	<p>with people living with mental illness in Eswatini: A qualitative study</p>	<p>selected mental health nurses at the National Psychiatric Referral Hospital (NPRH); in-depth interviews conducted and analysed using Colaizzi's method of phenomenological analysis.</p>	<p>degrees, female, with an average of 6 years of experience in mental health settings.</p>	<p>Physical violence faced by nurses.</p> <p>Sexual harassment in the workplace.</p> <p>Emotional distress due to verbal abuse.</p> <p>Stigma and discrimination against mental health professionals.</p> <p>Administrative challenges such as drug stock-outs, staff shortages, overcrowding, and inadequate infrastructure and medical equipment.</p> <p>The study concludes with a call for the Ministry of Health and the NPRH</p>
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				administration to design wellness programs for staff and to implement safety and management strategies to address these challenges.
<p>Jacobs K. Ngako, Elsie S.J. van Rensburg, Sanah M.L. Mataboge</p> <p>2022</p> <p>South Africa</p>	<p>Psychiatric nurse practitioners' experiences of working with mental health care users presenting with acute symptoms</p>	<p>Qualitative, explorative, descriptive, and contextual design; data collected from 21 psychiatric nurse practitioners (PNPs) through four focus group interviews; use of drawings, naïve sketches, and field notes for data triangulation; data analysed using Tesch's method of open coding.</p>	<p>21 PNPs working with mental health care users presenting with acute symptoms in a public mental health care institution in Gauteng.</p>	<p>Three main themes emerged:</p> <p>PNPs experienced working with these mental health care users as entering an unsafe world where care became a burden.</p> <p>PNPs experienced negative emotional reactions and attitudes towards these</p>

				<p>mental health care users that compromised quality nursing care.</p> <p>PNPs made a plea for a nurturing environment that would enhance quality nursing care.</p> <p>The PNPs also suggested the need for skills and competency development, organizational support, and external resources to create a positive environment and improve the overall wellbeing and mental health of PNPs.</p>
Catharina Eriksson and	Nurses' experiences of	Qualitative study; thematic content analysis of	12 nurses working in acute care	The study found that

<p>Britt-Inger Saveman</p> <p>2001</p> <p>Sweden</p>	<p>abu- sive/non- abusive caring for demented patients in acute care settings</p>	<p>interviews with 12 nurses.</p>	<p>settings with patients suffering from dementia.</p>	<p>nurses experi- enced vari- ous difficul- ties in caring for patients with demen- tia, leading to frustration and some- times abusive behaviour due to:</p> <p>Lack of time to treat patients satis- factorily.</p> <p>Disorderly conduct of the patients.</p> <p>Ethical problems in the care of these pa- tients.</p> <p>Organiza- tional issues in medical care.</p> <p>The problem- atic situations sometimes</p>
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				led to abuse and neglect of patients with dementia. The study highlights the need for specialized education in geriatric nursing and improvements in the acute care environment to better accommodate the needs of patients with dementia.
Jeanette Rossetti, Patricia G. Fox, Kenneth Burns	Advocating for the Rights of the Mentally III: A Global Issue			
2005				
United States				