Exploring Mental Health Factors of Undergraduate Nursing Students Amid COVID-19

Abby G. Horton, MSN, RN
Michael A. Lawson, PhD

Capstone College of Nursing & College of Education – The University of Alabama

Introduction
With the outbreak of COVID-19, nursing students are facing a global pandemic, in addition to new potential stressors and challenges. More than ever, it’s particularly important to ask, “What makes people bounce back from challenges, risk, and adversity?” It is essential that we understand how COVID-19 is impacting the resilience and mental health of undergraduate nursing students, while exploring risk and adversity. A constellation of factors influences the resilience, mental health factors, and stress response of individuals.

Objectives
• Outline the importance of exploring the relationship of risk, resilience, and mental health of undergraduate nursing students in the context of the COVID-19 outbreak.
• Identify important Mental Health Factors.
• Identify Current Challenges within Nursing Education Amid COVID-19.
• Establish the need for more research on student risk factors, resilience, and mental health of undergraduate nursing students.

Purpose Statement
• The purpose of this study is to survey undergraduate nursing students on their self-reported levels of resilience and mental health factors amid the COVID-19 Pandemic.
• Given the outbreak of COVID-19, it is important to attend to the needs of undergraduate nursing students facing many unknowns in their educational experience.
• Resilience is believed to provide a buffering or protective effect against adversity, challenges, and hardships.
• Research is needed to explore the mental health factors of UG nursing students amid COVID-19.

Purpose Statement
The review of the research literature highlights a pressing need for more research on student risk factors, resilience, and mental health of undergraduate nursing students facing COVID-19.
• There is a lack of knowledge on the relationship of risk factors, resilience, and mental health for nursing students during a global pandemic.
• More research is needed on the ways in which student resilience may help to buffer mental health challenges and risks factors such as anxiety, stress, and now COVID-induced risk factors.

Mental Health Factors
Hartley (2011) describes resilience as “the complex interplay between an individual and his/her environment, in which the person can influence a successful outcome by using internal and external protective factors, defined as the personal qualities or contexts that predict positive outcomes under high-risk conditions” (p. 596).
• There is a strong correlation between resilience and mental health (Hartley, 2011).
• Stressful events have a significant impact on students’ mental health and wellbeing (Clark, 2018).

Resilience
According to the APA (2012), resilience is “the process of adapting well in the face of adversity, trauma, tragedy, threats or significant sources of stress — such as family and relationship problems, serious health problems or workplace and financial stressors.”
• Building resiliency in nursing students carries the potential to positively impact academic outcomes, patient outcomes, and overall student wellbeing and mental health (Boardman, 2016).

Conclusion
The review of the research literature highlights a pressing need for more research on student risk factors, resilience, and mental health of undergraduate nursing students facing COVID-19.
• There is a lack of knowledge on the relationship of risk factors, resilience, and mental health for nursing students during a global pandemic.
• More research is needed on the ways in which student resilience may help to buffer mental health challenges and risks factors such as anxiety, stress, and now COVID-induced risk factors.

COVID-19
Due to CV-19, Nursing Students are facing:
• Unknowns in their educational experiences.
• A rapid transition to online learning.
• Alterations in their coursework and clinical experiences.
• Cancellations or alterations in educational milestone events.
• Social distancing, which may impact mental health.
• Interruptions to their activities of daily living.
• Concern for their health and wellbeing and that of their friends and family.

References