

ORIGINAL ARTICLE

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Culture specific stress coping strategies used to alleviate occupational stress among Greek nursing personnel

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ABSTRACT

■ **Aim of the study** The strategies used by nurses in Greece to cope with occupational stress are investigated in this study.

■ **Material and Methods** This cohort study tracked 160 nurses working in nursing institutions of two major cities in Greece who have received different level of education. The data collection was carried out by filling anonymously a questionnaire made of 54 statements expressing coping strategies. In total, 18 positive and negative coping strategies, classified in six strategy categories (focus, social support, withdrawal, change of attitude, control, denial) and three strategy fields (behavioural, information seeking, emotional) were tested. The use of the studied strategies was quantified in three levels (low, moderate, high).

■ **Results** The 87.50% of the participants used behavioural strategies, the 80% used information seeking strategies, while the 75.62% used emotional strategies at a moderate level. Regarding sex differences, a larger percentage of females prefer stress coping strategies that concern behavioural and information seeking (94.06%), as well as social support (83.17%) and positive strategies (99.01%). Female participants who resided in Athens and had received post-secondary and technological education, employed more

coping strategies, compared to the rest of the study participants.

■ **Conclusions** This study seems to be useful in planning and implementing interventions that result in sustained, evidence-based improvements in the work environment of the Greek nursing personnel.

■ **Keywords:** Nursing staff, occupational disease, occupational health, stress disorders, Toulouze's Scale for Coping, Greece.

INTRODUCTION

It is widely known that nursing profession is linked to increased occupational stress in many countries including Greece.^{1,5} Work related satisfaction is generally reduced when occupational stress is high and this may interfere with the ability of nursing personnel to perform effectively their daily work tasks. Therefore, investigating the strategies used by nursing staff to cope with stress may allow the design for culture-specific stress management programmes, aiming to improve the quality of provided health services. So far, studies on stress management have focused mainly in patients' or educational staffs^{6,7} behaviour in stressful environments.

In Greece, there is a lack of research addressing coping strategies in general because the concept is rather new compared to other European countries and USA.^{8,9} As a result, to this date there are no available data on coping strategies employed by nursing personnel in Greek hospitals. This is related to a lack of programmes designed to effectively enable Greek nurses to overcome stress and

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