

THE EFFECTS OF PRAYER AS A COPING STRATEGY FOR NURSES

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Introduction: Nursing is a very stressful profession with high energy demands at the mental, emotional, and physical levels. A nurse with intentions to remain in the nursing profession for approximately 35 years must find effective methods to cope with the stressors associated with being a nurse.

Identification of the problem: The problem was that although the effects of prayer as a coping strategy were well documented, the effects of prayer as a coping strategy for nurses were uncertain.

Purpose of the Study: The purpose of this research study was to determine the effects of prayer as a coping strategy for nurses.

Methodology: This study used a quantitative descriptive design. The population was the 15,000 nurses who were members of the American Society of Perianesthesia Nurses. Twelve-hundred fifty-nine subjects (8.39%) completed a demographic questionnaire and the Prayer Functions Scale (PFS). The Statement of Participation, demographic questionnaire, and PFS were available on SurveyMonkey.com for two weeks.

Results: Findings indicated that the majority of nurses surveyed used prayer as an effective coping mechanism. Results at $\alpha = .05$ were: female subjects, subjects in the birth ranges of 1964 and before, subjects who were married, divorced, or widowed, subjects with 21 years or more of experience in nursing, and subjects with Diploma or Associate degrees in nursing significantly statistically reported more use of prayer as a coping strategy than the other groups. Results indicated at $\alpha = .05$ that the nurses surveyed experienced the effects of provides assistance, provides acceptance, provides calm, and deferring as benefits of use of prayer as a coping strategy.

Discussion: Healthy coping has been shown to have an ameliorating effect on stress. Prayer as a coping strategy may be one coping mechanism that would help nurses alleviate stress.

Conclusion: As a strategy to cope with stress, prayer provides context and social connection, keeping a person's perceptions of stress well managed. Reduction of nurses' stress through prayer is one way to affect the ill effects that can impact nurses through stress.

Implications for perianesthesia nurses and future research: Nursing academics and nursing administration must be cognizant of the importance of prayer as a coping strategy for nurses. Inclusion of prayer is essential in nursing curriculum for nursing students, patients, and families.