

Review Article

Corona phobia among nurses: A narrative review

Mohammad Hashem Gholampour ^{a*}  | Fatemeh Zamani ^b | Samin Bakhshalizade Rashti ^c | Nasim-Sadat Hajehfroush ^d | Narjes Sadat Kazemi Bidgoli ^e | Mahsa Dadkhah-Tehrani ^f | Akbar Zare-Kaseb ^{g*}  | Amir Mohamad Nazari ^g

- a. Department of Medical-Surgical, Amol Faculty of Nursing and Midwifery, Mazandaran University of Medical Sciences, Sari, Iran
- b. Department of Geriatric Nursing, Faculty of Nursing and Midwifery, Mazandaran University of Medical Sciences, Sari, Iran
- c. Department of Community Health Nursing, School of Nursing and Midwifery, Shahid Beheshti University of Medical Sciences, Tehran, Iran
- d. Department of Psychiatric Nursing, Faculty of Nursing and Midwifery, Mazandaran University of Medical Sciences, Sari, Iran
- e. Department of Pediatric Nursing, School of Nursing and Midwifery, Shahrekord University of Medical Sciences, Shahrekord, Iran
- f. Department of Medical-Surgical Nursing, Kashan University of Medical Sciences, Kashan, Iran
- g. Department of Medical-Surgical Nursing, School of Nursing and Midwifery, Shahid Beheshti University of Medical Sciences, Tehran, Iran

*Corresponding author(s): Mohammad Hashem Gholampour (MSc) & Akbar Zare-Kaseb (MSc)

Mohammad Hashem Gholampour (MSc), Department of Medical-Surgical, Amol Faculty of Nursing and Midwifery, Mazandaran University of Medical Sciences, Sari, Iran.

Email: mohammadghola77@gmail.com

Akbar Zare-Kaseb (MSc), Department of Medical-Surgical Nursing, School of Nursing and Midwifery, Shahid Beheshti University of Medical Sciences, Tehran, Iran.

Email: akbarzare2014@gmail.com

<https://doi.org/10.32598/JNRC.P.23.41>

This is an open access article under the terms of the [Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 License](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/) (CC BY-NC 4.0).

© 2023 The Author(s).

Abstract

Since the onset of the pandemic, numerous investigations have been carried out to evaluate nurses' psychological and mental well-being. However, corona phobia and the nursing profession and related factors are unknown. Therefore, the study aims to review corona phobia in the nursing profession. A narrative review was applied through a widespread search in databases, such as PubMed, Web of Science, and Scopus, from December 1, 2020, to March 29, 2023. Keywords included "COVID-19", "2019-nCoV disease", "2019 novel coronavirus infection", "Nurses", "Nursing", "Phobia", and "Corona phobia". English-language published articles that matched the inclusion criteria were evaluated and included. Two authors carried out the search autonomously. The database searches initially yielded a total of 416 articles. After screening the titles, abstracts, and full texts and eliminating duplicate studies, 22 articles were selected for this review, and further data were extracted for analysis. The prevalence of corona phobia was different in different studies. Factors related to corona phobia in nursing included job burnout, department type, psychological well-being, and organizational and professional relocation. The prevalence of corona phobia seems to be high among healthcare professionals (HCWs), especially nurses. The burnout level of HCWs, the kind of job, the ward they work in, psychological well-being, and organizational and professional turnover intention are related to corona phobia.

Keywords: COVID-19, Phobia, Nurses, Nursing, Review.

1 | Introduction

COVID-19, first identified in December 2019 in China, is an extremely contagious illness caused by the SARS-CoV-2 coronavirus that can result in severe acute respiratory syndrome [1]. It quickly spread worldwide, profoundly impacting various aspects of human life [2]. COVID-19 is the most contagious disease in history (or the Omicron variant of SARS-COV-2 is highly

transmissible). Healthcare workers, especially nurses, remain worried about working in the COVID-isolated wards where COVID patients are admitted [3]. Healthcare professionals (HCWs) were on the frontline against COVID-19 and were grappling with significant psychological and physical challenges [4]. Psychological reactions such as fear, anxiety, sleep disturbances, depression, and suicidal ideation were common among HCWs,

particularly nurses, during the progression of the COVID-19 pandemic. During widespread outbreaks, healthcare workers were at an elevated risk of experiencing psychological trauma, stress-related disorders, and other mental health conditions due to their frontline role in treating COVID-19 patients [5, 6]. Given their essential role in continuously monitoring patients and their proximity to patients, nurses were at the most significant occupational risk of exposure to the virus infection while providing care amid the COVID-19 pandemic [7].

As nurses tended to work extended hours compared to other healthcare workers, they encountered a higher level of anxiety during the COVID-19 pandemic [8]. Furthermore, the persistent escalation in COVID-19 death tolls and the unbridled spread of the disease may result in psychological challenges such as fear, panic, or phobia [9]. COVID-19 phobia is a persistent state of anxiety and fear towards COVID-19, classified as a specific phobia anxiety disorder [10]. Corona phobia is a term used to describe an extreme form of fear and anxiety related to the COVID-19 pandemic. It is a specific fear driven by the pandemic and its associated risks [11]. The phenomenon colloquially known as "Corona phobia" has been connected to a range of psychological complications, including but not restricted to anxiety disorders, major depressive disorder, suicidal thoughts, and a sense of hopelessness [12].

In addition, the fear of the disease can impede appropriate therapeutic intervention for patients [13]. Fear of infection has caused many problems for hospitals and healthcare systems. One of these cases is leaving the workplace, increasing nurses' workload [14]. Also, in some studies, nurses have experienced symptoms of psychosis, including loss of appetite, sleep disorders, nervousness, and suicidal ideation, especially in intensive care units, because of the fear of corona [15]. Some studies found that nurses' corona phobia was mild to moderate [16, 17]. Another study showed higher corona phobia [18].

In spite of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic and the continuously evolving nature of information about its progression, management, prevention, and containment, it is imperative to collect and systematize some of the latest scientific discoveries. The purpose of this literature review is to comprehensively examine the literature related to corona phobia in nursing.

2 | Methods

A narrative review was applied through a widespread search in databases, such as PubMed, Web of Science, and Scopus, from December 1, 2020, to March 29, 2023. Keywords included "COVID-19", "2019-nCoV disease", "2019 novel coronavirus

infection", "Nurses", "Nursing", "Phobia", and "Corona phobia". English-language published articles that matched the inclusion criteria were evaluated and included. Inclusion criteria included all descriptive studies and reviews which evaluate the corona phobia in nurses during COVID-19. Grey literature and letters were excluded from the search results. Two authors carried out the search autonomously. Search results were managed through the 20th version of EndNote software. The database searches initially yielded a total of 416 articles. After screening the titles, abstracts, and full texts and eliminating duplicate studies, 22 articles were selected for this review, and further data were extracted for analysis (Figure 1).

3 | Results

3.1 | COVID-19 pandemic & nursing profession

Nurses were affected deeply by COVID-19, both physically and mentally [19, 20]. Regardless of their work experience, nurses were primarily afraid of unknown situations [21]. In additional research conducted by scholars such as Tan *et al.* (2020), it was discovered that nurses working on COVID-19 units exhibited a profound sense of obligation and fortitude. They placed significant emphasis on the value of camaraderie among nurses, likening the pandemic to a battle in a war. Similarly, Lai *et al.* (2020) found that nurses perceived that only their peers could truly empathize with their challenges [19, 21, 22].

3.2 | Corona phobia among nurses

Concerns, apprehension, and dread have been identified as noteworthy psychological aftermaths of the COVID-19 pandemic, as observed in previous pandemics [23]. Apart from being exposed to a heightened risk of exposure and infection, healthcare practitioners are also susceptible to experiencing excessive workloads, disillusionment, and seclusion [24]. Various investigations have revealed that women exhibit more significant levels of fear than men, whereas Ahorsu *et al.* have reported no discernible distinction in fear levels between genders [25-27]. A group of frontline healthcare workers was surveyed by Amin *et al.*, who discovered that having children and being younger were correlated with elevated levels of anxiety and depression [10, 28-29].

3.3 | Prevalence of corona phobia among nurses

The prevalence of corona phobia is comparable across related studies. A study by Yayla and Eskici İlgin (2021) revealed that many nurses working at a Health Application and Research Center in Turkey had mild to moderate levels of corona phobia [16]. Another study conducted in Turkey stated that the mean total

score of COVID-19 phobia in 112 emergency healthcare workers was 58.03 (SD=18.78). Health workers with coronavirus-positive patients have significantly higher corona phobia [18]. According to the findings of Çalışkan and Kargin, HCWs experienced a high level of fear towards COVID-19 [30]. All these results stated above are congruent with a study in the Philippines. Over half of the Filipino frontline nurses suffer from corona phobia [31].

3.4 | Factors related to corona phobia among nurses

The literature review revealed certain facets of "Corona phobia." In a study in Turkey, the degree of burnout experienced by

HCWs and the specific type of job and ward they worked in were linked to corona phobia [30]. Research investigating the link between the psychological well-being of nurses, their experience of corona phobia, and their work-life balance during the COVID-19 pandemic indicated that corona phobia had a significant impact on the psychological well-being of nurses [16]. In another study, there are more challenging related factors to corona phobia. Fronda and Labrague showed that corona phobia significantly affected nurses' intentions to leave their organization or profession [31].

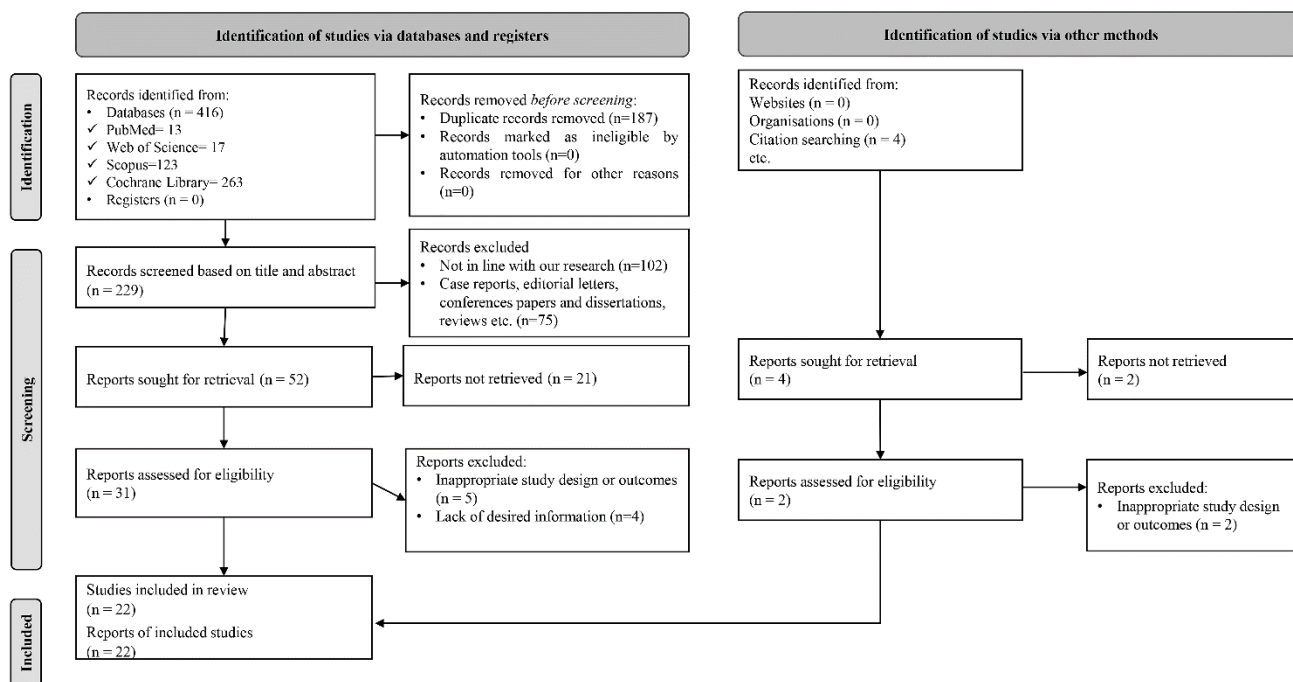


Figure 1. Flow diagram of study selection.

4 | Conclusions

The prevalence of corona phobia seems to be high among HCWs, especially nurses. The burnout level of HCWs, the kind of job, the ward they work in, psychological well-being, and organizational and professional turnover intention are related to corona phobia.

Acknowledgements

Not applicable.

Authors' contributions

Substantial contributions to the conception or design of the work; or the acquisition, analysis, or interpretation of data for the work;

MHG, FZ, SBR, NSH, NSKB, MDT, AZK, AMN; Drafting the work or revising it critically for important intellectual content: MHG, FZ, SBR, NSH, NSKB, MDT, AZK, AMN; Final approval of the version to be published: MHG, FZ, SBR, NSH, NSKB, MDT, AZK, AMN; Agreement to be accountable for all aspects of the work in ensuring that questions related to the accuracy or integrity of any part of the work are appropriately investigated and resolved: MHG, FZ, SBR, NSH, NSKB, MDT, AZK, AMN.

Funding

Self-funded.

Ethics approval and consent to participate

Not applicable.

Competing interests

We do not have potential conflicts of interest with respect to the research, authorship, and publication of this article.

Availability of data and materials

The datasets used during the current study are available from the corresponding author on request.

References

- Hui DS, I Azhar E, Madani TA, Ntoumi F, Kock R, Dar O, et al. The continuing 2019-nCoV epidemic threat of novel coronaviruses to global health-The latest 2019 novel coronavirus outbreak in Wuhan, China. *Int J Infect Dis.* 2020;91:264-266.
- Chen H, Guo J, Wang C, Luo F, Yu X, Zhang W, et al. Clinical characteristics and intrauterine vertical transmission potential of COVID-19 infection in nine pregnant women: a retrospective review of medical records. *Lancet.* 2020;395(10226):809-815.
- Shukla S, Deotale P. Knowledge, attitude and practices towards COVID-19 pandemic in the community: a cross-sectional web-based survey in India. *Int J Res Med Sci.* 2020;8(10):3652-3656.
- Xiao J, Fang M, Chen Q, He B. SARS, MERS and COVID-19 among healthcare workers: A narrative review. *J Infect Public Health.* 2020;13(6):843-848.
- Savitsky B, Findling Y, Ereli A, Hendel T. Anxiety and coping strategies among nursing students during the covid-19 pandemic. *Nurse Educ Pract.* 2020;46:102809.
- Kang L, Li Y, Hu S, Chen M, Yang C, Yang BX, et al. The mental health of medical workers in Wuhan, China dealing with the 2019 novel coronavirus. *Lancet Psychiatry.* 2020;7(3):e14.
- Smith GD, Ng F, Ho Cheung Li W. COVID-19: Emerging compassion, courage and resilience in the face of misinformation and adversity. *J Clin Nurs.* 2020;29(9-10):1425-1428.
- Hacimusalar Y, Kahve AC, Yasar AB, Aydin MS. Anxiety and hopelessness levels in COVID-19 pandemic: A comparative study of healthcare professionals and other community sample in Turkey. *J Psychiatr Res.* 2020;129:181-188.
- Arpaci I, Karataş K, Baloğlu M. The development and initial tests for the psychometric properties of the COVID-19 Phobia Scale (C19P-S). *Pers Individ Dif.* 2020;164:110108.
- Oktay Arslan B, Batum Ö, Varol Y, Şenel E, Uçar ZZ. COVID-19 phobia in healthcare workers; a cross-sectional study from a pandemic hospital. *Tuberk Toraks.* 2021;69(2):207-216.
- Asmundson GJG, Taylor S. Coronaphobia: Fear and the 2019-nCoV outbreak. *J Anxiety Disord.* 2020;70:102196.
- Lee SA, Jobe MC, Mathis AA, Gibbons JA. Incremental validity of coronaphobia: Coronavirus anxiety explains depression, generalized anxiety, and death anxiety. *J Anxiety Disord.* 2020;74:102268.
- Nguépy Keubo FR, Mboua PC, Djifack Tadongfack T, Fokouong Tchoffo E, Tasson Tatang C, Ide Zeuna J, et al. Psychological distress among health care professionals of the three COVID-19 most affected Regions in Cameroon: Prevalence and associated factors. *Ann Med Psychol.* 2021;179(2):141-146.
- Heydari A, Abdollahi M. Fear of Covid-09 in Nurses: A Concept Analysis with a Walker-Avant Approach. *J Torbat Heydariyeh Univ Med Sci.* 2021;9(2):72-83.
- Rahman A, Plummer V. COVID-19 related suicide among hospital nurses; case study evidence from worldwide media reports. *Psychiatry Res.* 2020;291:113272.
- Yayla A, Eskici İlgin V. The relationship of nurses' psychological well-being with their coronaphobia and work-life balance during the COVID-19 pandemic: A cross-sectional study. *J Clin Nurs.* 2021;30(21-22):3153-3162.
- Labrague LJ, de Los Santos JAA. Fear of COVID-19, psychological distress, work satisfaction and turnover intention among front-line nurses. *J Nurs Manag.* 2021;29(3):395-403.
- Sahin CE, Deger MS, Sezerol MA, Ozdemir MY. Covid-19 phobia in prehospital emergency medical services workers in Turkey. *Niger J Clin Pract.* 2022;25(8):1239-1246.
- Tan R, Yu T, Luo K, Teng F, Liu Y, Luo J, et al. Experiences of clinical first-line nurses treating patients with COVID-19: A qualitative study. *J Nurs Manag.* 2020;28(6):1381-1390.
- Mo Y, Deng L, Zhang L, Lang Q, Liao C, Wang N, et al. Work stress among Chinese nurses to support Wuhan in fighting against COVID-19 epidemic. *J Nurs Manag.* 2020;28(5):1002-1009.
- Jun J, Rosemberg MS. I Am a Nurse, Not a Martyr: Qualitative Investigation of Nurses' Experiences During Onset of the Coronavirus Pandemic. *Policy Polit Nurs Pract.* 2022;23(1):48-55.
- Lai J, Ma S, Wang Y, Cai Z, Hu J, Wei N, et al. Factors Associated with Mental Health Outcomes Among Health Care Workers Exposed to Coronavirus Disease 2019. *JAMA Netw Open.* 2020;3(3):e203976.
- Arora A, Jha AK, Alat P, Das SS. Understanding coronaphobia. *Asian J Psychiatr.* 2020;54:102384.
- Kang L, Li Y, Hu S, Chen M, Yang C, Yang BX, et al. The mental health of medical workers in Wuhan, China dealing with the 2019 novel coronavirus. *Lancet Psychiatry.* 2020;7(3):e14.
- Haktanir A, Seki T, Dilmaç B. Adaptation and evaluation of Turkish version of the fear of COVID-19 Scale. *Death Stud.* 2022;46(3):719-727.
- Andrade EF, Pereira LJ, Oliveira APL, Orlando DR, Alves DAG, Guilarducci JS, et al. Perceived fear of COVID-19 infection according to sex, age and occupational risk using the Brazilian version of the Fear of COVID-19 Scale. *Death Stud.* 2022;46(3):533-542.
- Ahorsu DK, Lin CY, Imani V, Saffari M, Griffiths MD, Pakpour AH. The Fear of COVID-19 Scale: Development and Initial Validation. *Int J Ment Health Addict.* 2022;20(3):1537-1545.

28. Arpaci I, Karatas K, Baloglu M, Haktanir A. COVID-19 Phobia in the United States: Validation of the COVID-19 Phobia Scale (C19P-SE). *Death Stud.* 2022;46(3):553-559.
29. Amin F, Sharif S, Saeed R, Durrani N, Jilani D. COVID-19 pandemic- knowledge, perception, anxiety and depression among frontline doctors of Pakistan. *BMC Psychiatry.* 2020;20(1):459.
30. Çalışkan E, Kargın M. The relationship between coronavirus 19 fear and occupational fatigue, burnout and recovery levels in healthcare professionals in Turkey. *Arch Environ Occup Health.* 2022;77(9):711-720.
31. Fronda DC, Labrague LJ. Turnover intention and coronaphobia among frontline nurses during the second surge of COVID-19: The mediating role of social support and coping skills. *J Nurs Manag.* 2022;30(3):612-621.

How to cite this article: Gholampour MH, Zamani F, Bakhshalizade Rashti S, Hajehforoush NS, Kazemi Bidgoli NS, Dadkhah-Tehrani M, et al. Corona phobia among nurses: A narrative review. *J Nurs Rep Clin Pract.* 2023;1(2):84-88. <https://doi.org/10.32598/JNRCP.23.41>.