
Filipino Nurses' Experiences in Caring for Children with Medical Complexities in Qatar: A Qualitative Study

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ABSTRACT

This study explored the lived experiences of Filipino nurses caring for children with medical complexities in Qatar. Using a descriptive qualitative design, the research aimed to understand the challenges, coping strategies, and professional growth of nurses working in a multicultural healthcare setting. Findings revealed that caring for children with medical complexities is both highly demanding and deeply fulfilling. Key challenges included emotional strain, heavy workload, time constraints, limited resources, and communication barriers influenced by cultural differences. Despite these difficulties, nurses demonstrated adaptability, compassion, and strong commitment to patient-centered care. The findings emphasize the need for improved institutional support, including adequate staffing, continuous training, and mental health resources, to sustain quality care and nurse well-being. This study contributes to the limited body of knowledge on Filipino nurses' experiences in Qatar and provides insights for policy development, nursing education, and future research in pediatric complex care.

Keywords: Children with medical complexities (CMC), Challenges, Coping strategies, Filipino Nurses, Multi-cultural healthcare setting

INTRODUCTION

The role of Filipino nurses in the international healthcare system has become quite prominent, with thousands of them employed in other countries to address the increased demand for qualified specialists. The utilization of Filipino nurses has constituted a substantial portion of the workforce in pediatric units, in which they are tasked with taking care of children with complex medical conditions (CMC).

Children with medical complexity (CMC), also referred to as "complex chronic" or "medically complex," are those who have multiple serious chronic health issues that affect multiple organ systems and cause functional limitations, high health care needs or utilization, and frequently a need for or use of medical technology (Leyenaar, et al., 2022). Despite these valuable contributions, a limited body of research specifically examines the lived experiences of Filipino nurses caring for children with medical complexities in Qatar. Addressing this gap will not only enrich the global discourse on pediatric and migrant nursing but also inform policies and practices that support culturally competent, family-centered, and sustainable care in Qatar's evolving healthcare system.

Statement of the Problem

The purpose of this study was to explore Filipino nurses' experiences in caring for children with medical complexities in Qatar.

Specifically, it sought to answer the following questions:

- 1.How do Filipino nurses describe their experiences in providing care to children with medical complexities?
- 2.What challenges do Filipino nurses encounter while managing the physical, emotional, and developmental needs of these pediatric patients?
- 3.How do Filipino nurses perceive the influence of family involvement and cultural factors on the care of children with medical complexities?
- 4.What strategies and coping mechanisms do Filipino nurses employ to ensure quality and compassionate care in a complex healthcare setting?
- 5.How do Filipino nurses perceive the impact of their caregiving experiences on their professional growth, ethical practice, and personal well-being?

Scope and Delimitations

This study focuses on the experiences and challenges of nurses caring for CMC. The study is limited only to Filipino nurses who have significant experience and currently assigned to handle pediatric patients with complex medical conditions in a hospital setting. The results obtained may not be applicable to nurses outside of this designation.

Review of Related Literatures

According to a clinical report published by the American Academy of Pediatrics in 2022, CMCs need frequent medical attention, have high utilization rates, and need technological support. Research also emphasizes the cultural, professional, and migratory dimensions of nursing care in international contexts. While migrant nurses often achieve professional growth and improved living conditions, they still struggle with language barriers, social isolation, and challenges to adaptation (Atta et al., 2025). These insights reflect broader themes of cultural competence, resilience, and the professional integration of nurses in multicultural healthcare systems.

On the other hand, no literature has been published yet on the experiences of Filipino nurses in taking care of children with medical complexity in Qatar. This study will be distinctive as the focus will be directed at the Filipino nurses' lived experiences and challenges in their provision of care to this vulnerable population.

Theoretical Framework

Jean Watson's Theory of Human Caring. Watson's carative factors guided the understanding of how Filipino nurses approached children with medical complexities. These factors included practices such as cultivating sensitivity to self and others,

developing a trusting relationship, and providing supportive, individualized care tailored to each child's needs (Bagheri et al., 2023).

Transcultural Nursing Theory. In a multicultural healthcare setting, Filipino nurses often deal with patients from diverse cultural origins. This theory guides nurses to provide treatment that is respectful, sensitive to cultural differences, and in line with patients' needs to improve patient outcomes.

Adaptation Model of Nursing. This idea explains how Filipino nurses deal with issues at work such heavy workloads, staffing shortages, and cultural differences. Through adaptive reactions in four modes—physiological, self-concept, role function, and interdependence—it highlights the nurse's capacity to preserve equilibrium and efficacy.

METHODOLOGY

This study explored the lived experiences of Filipino nurses caring for children with medical complexities in Qatar using a descriptive qualitative design.

Research Design

This study employed a descriptive qualitative research design to explore Filipino nurses' experiences in caring for children with medical complexities in Qatar. The descriptive qualitative approach aimed to provide a clear and comprehensive account of participants' experiences in their own words, focusing on how they perceived their roles, responsibilities, and challenges within a multicultural healthcare setting.

Research Steps

Prior to data collection through observation and interview, permission was obtained from the Dean of St. Bernadette of Lourdes College Graduate School of Nursing. Potential participants were identified based on the inclusion criteria, and written informed consent will be secured from all the participants prior to the interview. The data were then reviewed, compiled, and prepared for analysis. Colaizzi method of data analysis was utilized in this study

Data Collection and Sample Selection

A total of 9 Filipino nurses who are working with children with medical complexity were chosen as participants. The participants were recruited in the study using purposive and snowball sampling. The study was conducted in selected hospitals in Qatar where Filipino nurses were employed and directly involved in pediatric complex care. The primary instrument used in this study was a semi-structured interview guide, developed by the researcher based on a review of literature on pediatric nursing and care for children with medical complexities.

Data Analysis Methods

The study analyzed the data using Colaizzi's Method of Data Analysis. This approach entails reviewing transcripts several times, identifying key phrases, and deriving interpretations from participant answers.

Research Hypotheses and Validation

For this qualitative study, it is assumed that Filipino nurses caring for children with medical complexities in Qatar encounter both professional and emotional challenges that shape their overall experiences. Furthermore, the study presumed that Filipino nurses developed professional growth and resilience while addressing the complex needs of these children.

Study Limitations and Ethical considerations

Each participant who was invited to participate was informed that taking part was optional and given specifics about the data-gathering procedures and its confidentiality. Ethical clearance for this study was obtained from the Ethics Review Board (ERB) of St. Bernadette of Lourdes College under ERB Code: ERB-2026-096.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

SOP 1. How do Filipino nurses describe their experiences in providing care to children with medical complexities?

Complex Yet Meaningful Pediatric Caregiving. Nurses perceive caregiving for children with medical complexities as a multifaceted experience that combines both demanding and fulfilling elements. The coexistence of satisfaction and stress highlights the complexity of caregiving experiences.

SOP 2. What challenges do Filipino nurses encounter while managing the physical, emotional, and developmental needs of these pediatric patients?

Support Needs and System-Level Challenges. The findings revealed that nurses perceive significant gaps in workplace support and resources. These limitations increase workload and place additional pressure on nurses, affecting the quality of care provided.

SOP 3. How do Filipino nurses perceive the influence of family involvement and cultural factors on the care of children with medical complexities?

Family Involvement and Cultural Negotiation. Family involvement contributes to better patient outcomes and enhances the caregiving process. Cultural differences significantly influence patient care. Nurses must be culturally sensitive to provide appropriate care.

SOP 4. What strategies and coping mechanisms do Filipino nurses employ to ensure quality and compassionate care in a complex healthcare setting?

Emotional Burden and Compassionate Resilience. Nurses developed strategies to cope with stress and maintain balance. Maintaining well-being is crucial for sustaining performance.

SOP 5. How do Filipino nurses perceive the impact of their caregiving experiences on their professional growth, ethical practice, and personal well-being?

Professional Growth Through Clinical Complexity. Respondents' experiences shaped their career paths and professional identity. Caring for medically complex children significantly contributed to professional growth.

SUMMARY

The findings of this descriptive qualitative study reveal that caring for children with medical complexities is a highly demanding yet deeply fulfilling experience for nurses. Participants described their roles as requiring advanced clinical skills, critical thinking,

emotional resilience, and continuous adaptation to the changing conditions of their patients. Their experiences also contributed significantly to professional growth, enhancing their confidence, competence, and decision-making abilities.

CONCLUSIONS

Nurses rely on coping strategies such as teamwork, peer support, and self-care practices to manage stress and maintain resilience. Family involvement, cultural considerations, and ethical challenges play important roles in shaping caregiving practices and decision-making processes. These factors require nurses to demonstrate strong communication skills, cultural sensitivity, and ethical judgment. It also emphasizes that caregiving in complex pediatric settings fosters both personal and professional transformation.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of the study, it is recommended that healthcare institutions strengthen support systems for nurses caring for medically complex children. Increasing staffing levels and providing adequate resources can help reduce workload and improve the quality of care. Continuous training and professional development programs should be implemented to enhance nurses' clinical skills and confidence in handling complex cases. It is also recommended that future research explore additional factors influencing the experiences of nurses in similar settings. Healthcare policies should consider integrating family-centered and culturally sensitive approaches to care.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The accomplishment of this thesis would not have been possible without the kind support and help of many individuals. I would like to extend my sincere thanks to all of them. I am highly indebted to Dr. Joel John Dela Merced, the SBLC Dean for the Master of Arts in Nursing, for his guidance and constant supervision as well as for providing necessary information regarding the study. To my parents and family, their confidence in me has given me courage to pursue my life goals. To my husband and son, who gave me the much-needed support and understanding as I accomplish this study. Lastly, I express my heartfelt gratitude and faith to our Heavenly Father for all His abundant provisions and guidance.

AI DECLARATION STATEMENT:

AI-supported tools helped with grammar and structure in creating this article. No AI tools were used to collect, analyze, or interpret data; all authors are credited for their academic contributions.

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