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The COVID-19 Pandemic:
Exploration of nurse leaders' experiences managing the clinical environment during a crisis

Chika Anueyiagu, DNP, RN-BC, NE-BC
Janene Batten, EdD, MLS
Patricia Span, PhD, RN, CPHQ, CENP

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Yale
NewHaven
Health

Research Team

Yale
NewHaven
Health

Sponsor:
Ena Williams, PhD, MBA, RN, CENP, FAAN
Chief Nursing Officer

- Principal Investigator:
  - Chika Anueyiagu, DNP, RN-BC, NE-BC
- Coinvestigators:
  - Patricia Span, PhD, RN, CPHQ, CENP
  - Janene Batten, EdD, MLS
  - Sandra Anyoha, DNP, MPH, CNML
  - Cheryl Green, PhD, DNP, RN, LCSW
  - Jane Dixon, PhD (retired)
- Research Mentors
  - Kelly Nicholson, PhD, MPH, RN, NEA-BC, NPD-BC
  - Janet Parkosewich, DNSc, RN, FAHA (retired)
- Statistician
  - Wei Teng, PhD

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Presentation Objectives

- Recognize the **top three experiences associated with distress** for leaders during Covid-19.

- Summarize nurse leaders' perception of the **importance and challenges related to leadership competencies**.

- Outline the **characteristics associated with leadership competencies** that were extremely challenging.

- Share **recommendations** based on these research findings.

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Who we are: YaleNewHavenHealth
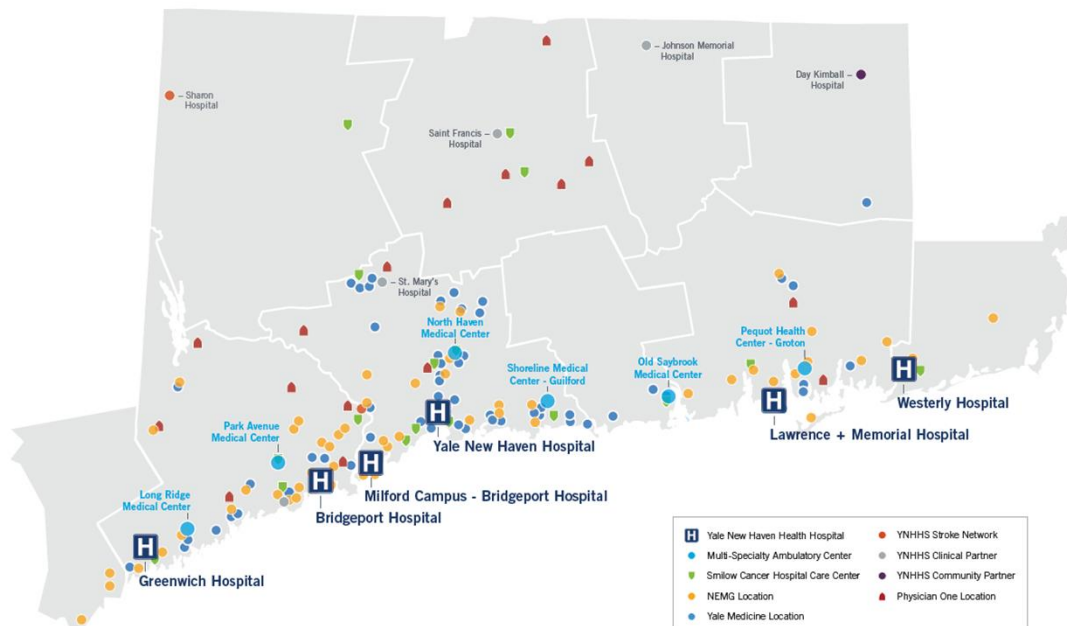
Study Purpose

o Describe experiences of nurse leaders as they manage nursing staff and their practice settings during the COVID-19 pandemic

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Study Aims

o Aim 1: Examine nurse leaders' experiences during the COVID 19 pandemic and associated intensity of distress and the mechanisms used to alleviate stress

o Aim 2: Describe nurse leaders' perceptions regarding importance of and challenges associated with specific leadership competencies during the COVID 19 pandemic

o Aim 3: Identify factors independently associated with leadership competences that were challenging

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Framework

AONL | American Organization for Nursing Leadership™

Science: Managing the Business

Leader Within: Creating the Leader in Yourself

Art: Leading the People

○ Based on Nurse Manager Learning Domain Framework (2015)

   ○ 3 domains guiding nurse leader's practice

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Methods

Design: Cross-sectional, descriptive

Sample: Nurse managers and assistant nurse managers practicing during COVID 19 pandemic (March 2020 to August 2022)

Setting: YNHHS inpatient & ambulatory areas

Data Collection: Qualtrics survey

Data Analysis: Descriptive statistics, bivariate analysis

Human Subjects: Yale University IRB / Bridgeport Hospital approved

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Results
Demographics

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Results (N = 151)

Sample Characteristics	Nurse Managers n = 99	Assistant Nurse Managers n = 52	p
Age	n (mean) 92 (46.8)	n (mean) 46 (41.7)	.006
Gender	n (%)	n (%)	.14
Female	88 (88.9)	44 (84.6)	
Male	11 (11.1)	6 (11.5)	
Preferred not to answer	0 (0)	2 (3.8)	
Race/ethnicity	n (%)	n (%)	.13
White non-Hispanic	78 (78.8)	40 (76.9)	
Black or African American non-Hispanic	4 (4)	4 (7.7)	
Hispanic	7 (7.1)	0 (0)	
Asian	4 (4)	2 (3.8)	
Preferred not to answer	6 (6.1)	4 (7.7)	
Other	0 (0)	2 (3.8)	

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Results (N = 151)

Sample Characteristics	Nurse Managers n = 99	Assistant Nurse Managers n = 52	p
Practice setting	n (%)	n (%)	.75
Ambulatory	19 (19.2)	12 (23.1)	
Critical care unit	15 (15.2)	10 (19.2)	
Inpatient unit	44 (44.4)	22 (42.3)	
Combined unit	21 (21.2)	8 (15.4)	
Number of units managed, mean	1.9	1.6	.14
Number of FTEs managed, mean	60.1	45.2	.02
My unit	n (%)	n (%)	
Became a COVID-19 unit	46 (46.5)	29 (55.8)	.23
Moved its physical location	32 (32.3)	13 (25)	.35

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Results
Aim 1

○ nurse leaders' experiences during COVID-19
○ associated intensity of distress
○ mechanisms used to alleviate stress

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Results: Aim #1 Top 5 Sources of Distress (N = 151)

| Sources of Distress	Total Sample N = 151 mean (SD)	Nurse Managers n = 99 mean (SD)	Assistant Nurse Managers n = 52 mean (SD)	p
1. Managing changes to unit staffing patterns	7.96 (2.1)	7.96 (2.1)	7.96 (2)	1.00
2. Dealing with conflicting information about infection control practices	7.77 (2.2)	7.79 (2.2)	7.73 (2.1)	0.88
3. Needing to constantly adapt to changing COVID-19 related policies	7.73 (2.2)	7.78 (2.3)	7.63 (2)	0.70
4. Managing an increased need to provide staff with emotional support	7.53 (2.3)	7.79 (2.2)	7.04 (2.5)	0.06
5. Worrying about the health and/or safety of your family and friends	7.27 (2.4)	7.29 (2.4)	7.3 (2.3)	0.62

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Aim #1 Sources of Distress

Workforce challenges

Ambiguity

Rapid changes / Volatility

Emotional & physical well being

Uncertainty

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Results: Aim #1 Mechanisms to Alleviate Stress (N = 164)

Stress alleviation	Used	Most helpful
Personal support from friends and family	152	67
Physical exercise/activity	88	38
Virtual colleague support	6	30
Faith-based practice/spirituality	49	14
Talking with my direct report (boss)	69	11
Talk therapy	38	11
Meditation	21	6
Yoga	17	2
COVID related employee wellness resources	6	0
Other (**Emotional well being support/self care/Time off**)	36	30

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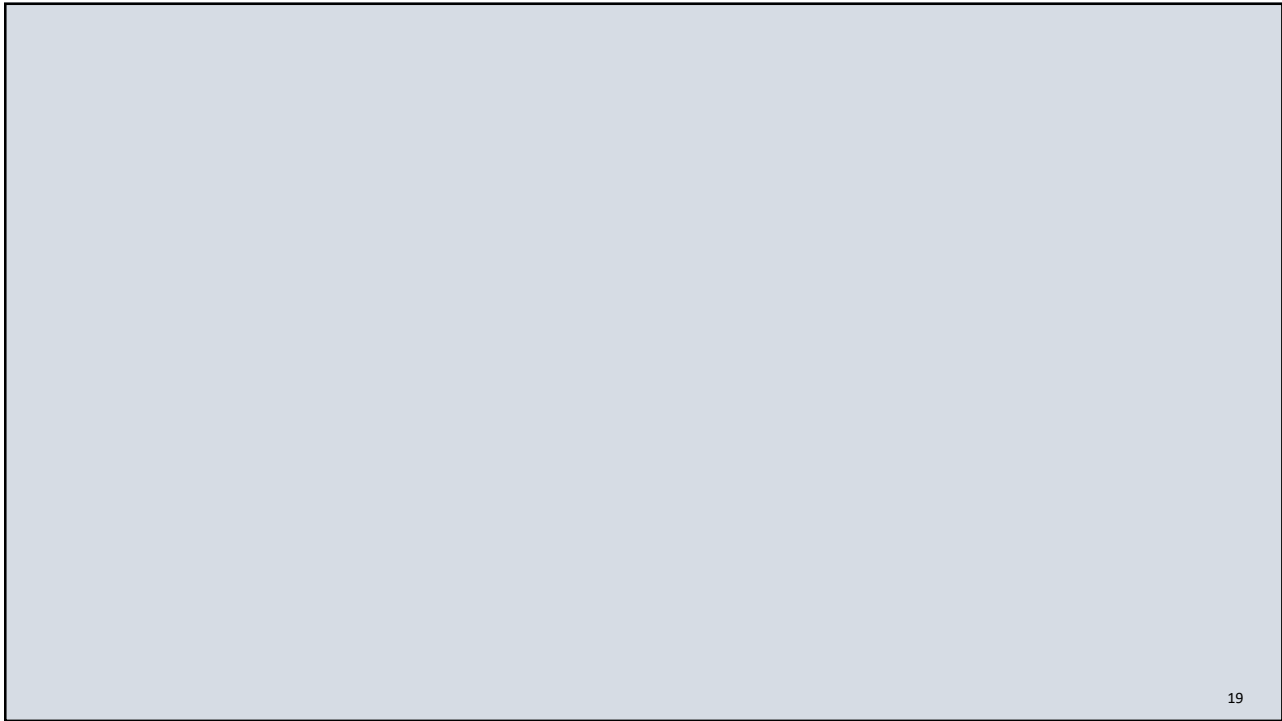
Results
Aim 2

- o importance of leadership competencies
- o challenge associated with leadership competencies

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Results: Aim #2 Leadership Competencies
Level of Importance

Competency (Domain)	Very/Extremely Important n (%)	mean (SD)
Advocating for nursing staff to ensure their safety (Science)	147 (97.4)	9.64 (0.88)
Maintaining effective communication pathways to keep up with the daily changes and updates (Art)	146 (96.7)	9.51 (1.06)
Managing internal experiences, staying grounded, and being clear as a leader (Leader)	140 (92.7)	9.13 (1.53)
Ensuring employee wellbeing and psychological safety using interdisciplinary approaches (Art)	142 (94)	9.11 (1.47)
Managing scarce human resources during a time of crisis (Science)	142 (94)	9.11 (1.35)

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Results: Aim #2 Leadership Competencies
Level of Importance

All competencies were rated as having a high level of importance.

The mean range of importance (6.99 – 9.64)

0   10
Not important ←————————————————→ Extremely important

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Results: Aim #2 Leadership Competencies
Level of Challenge

The mean range of challenge (5.73 – 8.40)

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Results: Aim #2 Leadership Competencies
Level of Challenge

Competency	Very/Extremely Challenging n (%)	mean (SD)
Managing scarce human resources during a time of crisis (Science)	125 (82.8)	8.40 (2.21)
Managing scarce material resources during a time of crisis (Science)	114 (75.5)	7.86 (2.23)
Managing practice environment during constant state of disaster (Science)	114 (75.5)	7.77 (2.33)
Making decisions without having specific details and in the absence of complete information (Science)	121 (80.1)	7.71 (2.16)
Relaying difficult news to staff (Art)	104 (68.0)	7.64 (2.3)

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Aim #2 Leadership Competencies

- Workforce safety
- Resilience
- Agility & Adaptability
- Communication & transparency
- Leading in ambiguity
- Innovation & Change management
- Emotional & Physical wellbeing
- Psychological safety
- Leadership integrity
- Emotional intelligence

- Resilience
- Agility & Adaptability
- Innovation & Change management
- Emotional intelligence

Resiliency and capacity to change

Being in touch with my emotions and regulating these emotional responses during interactions with staff

Results
Aim 3

○ factors independently associated with 2 leadership competencies that were extremely challenging

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Results: Aim #3 Factors Associated with Leadership Competencies

Challenging Competency	Very/Extremely Challenging n (%)	mean (SD)
Having resiliency and capacity for change (Leader within)	91 (60.3)	6.98 (2.68)
Being in touch with my emotions and regulating these emotional responses during interactions with staff (Leader within)	79 (52.3)	6.69 (2.76)

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Results: Aim #3

Identifying
potential predictors for
perceived high level of
challenge
(scored 8-10)
(Bivariate Analysis)

Independent Variable	Resiliency and Capacity for Change		In Touch with Emotion and Regulation	
	n (%)	p	n (%)	p
Gender		p=.070		p=.896
Female	70 (53.0)		70 (53.0)	
Male	5 (29.4)		8 (47.1)	
Preferred not to answer	2 (100)		1 (1.3)	
Race/ethnicity				p=.009
White non-Hispanic	55 (46.6)		61 (51.7)	
Black or African American non-Hispanic	3 (37.5)		0 (0.0)	
Hispanic Or Latino	5 (71.4)		6 (85.7)	
Asian	4 (66.7)		4 (66.7)	
Other	10 (83.3)		8 (66.7)	
Became a COVID-19 Unit				p=.028
No	35 (46.1)		52 (49.1)	
Yes	23 (51.1)		27 (60.0)	
Age*	Mean(SD)	t= (136) = 1.9; p=.05	Mean(SD)	t= (136) = .47; p=.63
Score 0-7	46.82 (10.90)		45.57 (10.67)	
Score 8-10	43.46 (9.83)		44.71 (10.34)	

Results: Aim #3

Predictors for high level of challenge:
Resiliency and Capacity for Change
(Multivariate Analysis)

Independent Variable	Odds Ratio	95% CI	p
Race/ethnicity			
Non-Hispanic Black vs Non-Hispanic White	.770	.163-3.65	.74
Hispanic vs Non-Hispanic White	5.14	.706-37.5	.10
Asian vs Non-Hispanic White	2.12	.36-12.36	.40
Other vs Non-Hispanic White	3.08	.58-16.33	.18
Gender	.225	.05-.87	.03
Age	.968	.934-1.003	.07
Current Role	.174	.45-2.22	.98

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Discussion

○ Alignment with AONL Leadership Competencies (2021)

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Study Implications

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Innovative self-care programs.

Study Implications

1 Innovative self-care programs.

2 Structured peer support and mentorship.

Study Implications

1 Innovative self-care programs.

2 Structured peer support and mentorship.

3 Prepare nurse leaders for leadership in challenging times.

Study Implications

1	2	3	4
Innovative self-care programs.	Structured peer support and mentorship.	Prepare nurse leaders for leadership in challenging times.	Customize programs that are equitable for diverse leaders.

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"We were standing on one side of a massive river of uncertainty and hardship… We're now seeing the other side of the river."

Christine Lagarde
President, European Central Bank

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