A Scoping Review on Work Experiences of Nurses After Being Diagnosed With Cancer

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PROBLEM IDENTIFICATION: To map key concepts underpinning work-related studies about nurses with cancer and identify knowledge gaps.

LITERATURE REVIEW: A search was conducted in the PubMed®, CINAHL®, and PsycINFO® databases for articles about nurses with cancer and work-related topics published through March 2023.

DATA EVALUATION: The Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses Extension for Scoping Reviews Checklist was used to report results, and the JBI critical appraisal tools were used to assess the quality of studies. Eleven articles were included.

SYNTHESIS: The following four critical concepts were identified: role adjustments at work, cancer impacts on work, organizational support, and translating insights gained from cancer experience into work. Research gaps identified by the scoping review were a lack of theoretical or conceptual frameworks, lack of syntheses of main ideas, and lack of clear data about participants' socioeconomic status across studies.

IMPLICATIONS FOR RESEARCH: Minimal research exists to map predictors, outcomes, or intervention targets to guide organizational strategies to support nurses' retention in the nursing workforce. A guiding framework, recruitment of diverse nurses, and focus on the four critical concepts identified in this scoping review are suggested for future research.

Globally, nursing is the largest profession in the healthcare workforce, contributing tremendously to healthcare systems and population health. According to the World Health Organization (2020), there were 19.3 million nurses globally in 2018, comprising 59% of all healthcare professionals. However, the nursing workforce faces challenges, including a projected shortage of 5.7 million nurses by 2030 (World Health Organization, 2020), and nurses face elevated risks of poor health because of their work and work environment (Wills et al., 2020).

Nurses experience work hazards that elevate their risk of getting cancer (Ekpanyaskul & Sangrajrang, 2018; Gómez-Salgado et al., 2021; Papantoniou et al., 2018; Purdue et al., 2015; Ratner et al., 2010; Wegrzyn et al., 2017). The effects of cancer on nurses' experience of and ability to work can be substantial, and they may face difficulties when they attempt to remain working or return to their nursing positions after cancer diagnosis or treatment (de Boer et al., 2020; Goss et al., 2014). Understanding of work-related issues among nurses with cancer is lacking. This scoping review aims to clarify the key concepts and knowledge gaps in work-related studies of nurses with cancer.

Background

The nursing profession faces persistent challenges, including an aging workforce, retirement, and burnout, which influence nurses' health and affect the quality of patient care (Andel et al., 2022; Haddad et al., 2023; World Health Organization, 2020). Smiley et al. (2021) found that more than 20% of practicing nurses in the United States planned to retire from healthcare settings within five years. The COVID-19 pandemic has affected nurses' well-being and exacerbated nursing shortages in the United States and around the world (Buchan et al., 2022; Galanis et al.,