

NAGNF *Spotlight*



Dr. Jemimah Kodua, NAGNF DMV Chapter President honors late mother with a health fair

by Dr. Jemimah Kodua RN, BSN, MSN, DNP

Madam Mary Amoasoh will always be remembered as the health promoter she was, thanks to the efforts of her daughter. Dr. Jemima Kodua RN, BSN, MSN, DNP, our very own chapter president of the DMV, who is also a renowned professor, organized a successful free health screening event held for residents of Banko, in the Sekyere East District of the Ashanti region. At the fair, she urged Ghanaians to eat a balanced diet, exercise regularly and go for regular medical checkups to detect any health abnormalities early, for optimal treatment, and prolonged life, noting that a sick population negatively affects productivity and nation building. About 600 people benefitted from the health screening, which was led by a former Energy Minister and lecturer at Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology (KNUST), Professor Oteng Adjei; and health specialists from Komfo Anokye Teaching Hospital, Banko health facility and other neighboring jurisdictions. Ailments noted included hypertension, malaria, eye problems, diabetes, high cholesterol, arthritic pains, sexually transmitted diseases, worm infestation and conditions requiring physiotherapeutic treatment. Medicines worth over 12 thousand cedis were given free of charge to those in need. The Medical Superintendent at the Nkawie/Toaso Government Hospital, Dr. Emmanuel Boamah, urged the

people to consciously practice preventive healthcare to avoid contracting all diseases.

The screening not only focused on physical but spiritual health as well. Evangelism at the event was led by ministers of the Gospel from both Methodist and Presbyterian churches, Grace Arena Chapel, and Jesus the Truth Ministry (USA), with the help of Adum Ramseyer Presbyterian church's Outside Broadcasting Van. The mission van helped spread health information and covid-19 education, as well as spiritual healings and evangelism with a health focus. Dr. Kodua called on various religious faiths and benevolent organizations to help complement the government's efforts in addressing the numerous challenges confronting the rural population. She said it was time both state and private officials placed premium importance on the quality of health, and wellbeing of Ghanaians, by ensuring that the sick receive the best curative healthcare. She also noted that in the Orthodox Church, preaching Christ's Gospel has always gone hand in hand with evangelism, and caring for the education and health needs of people.

Many donations received included donations from NAGNF-DMV chapter, Mrs. Aboagye Berchie, Sandra

Nursing Services LLC, and a host of pastors including Dr. Rev. Owusu Bempa, Rev. Tagoe and Rev. Reginald Frimpong. One of the event highlights was the previous donation of an ambulance to the Banko Health Centre by the Banko Citizens Association of the USA. It was used to escort very ill patients at the screening to the hospital, with a referral from the team of doctors.

Dr. Kodua paid tribute to her late mother for the major role played in offering quality health care delivery not only at the Komfo Anokye Teaching Hospital where she served before her retirement, but in other health facilities. She worked in many health facilities from Tanoso to Sunyani and in between. She ended her career at the Komfo Anokye Teaching hospital, Kumasi, where she received the National Best Nurse Award. Some attendees who spoke to the media team recollected fond memories of the late Mrs. Mary Amoasoh for her selflessness and dedication, not only to the Ashanti region, but to Ghana as a whole. They expressed deep gratitude to her children, particularly Dr. Jemima Kodua for the gesture and therefore appealed for more of these health education, screening and evangelism exercises. Overall the health care screening in honor of Late Madam Mary Amoasoh was impactful, greatly appreciated and will be remembered for generations to come.

NAGNF Celebrates Two-Year Anniversary

by Irene Ahorlu, MSN, CRNA

The North America Ghana Nurses Foundation (NAGNF) celebrated its second anniversary on April 13 2021. The fledgling organization was founded in 2018 and inaugurated at the US-Ghana Embassy in 2019. Several events over the past two years have highlighted the achievements of NAGNF including annual conferences, educational sessions and mission activities. Most recently, NAGNF's \$3000 donation to the US-Ghana Embassy for the COVID relief fund to support COVID mitigation efforts in Ghana was presented on Friday April 16, 2021. Through the

collection efforts, the Ghana Embassy in DC collected over \$59000. The money was sent to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs who then presented it to the Ghana Private Sector Fund (GPSF). The GPSF is the agency responsible for several COVID mitigation agendas such as Feed-A-Kaya Yoo and the new infectious disease center. Our very own member, Dr. Nana Fosua Arkhurst Arthur (In yellow with dark glasses) represented NAGNF during the presentation. NAGNF is doing its part to effect change in our Ghanaian community here and back home.



The Awakened Dawn

by Irene Ahorlu, MSN, CRNA

The Day was long

It seemed it would never end

The hands of the clock looked stuck

The heat of the Sun was intolerable even as there was a familiar chill in the bones

The Drought had taken its toll

Leaving death, pain, famine and uncertainty in its wake

Children clung to their mothers

Mothers clutched their bosoms

Fathers grabbed on to a Source greater than themselves

The Evening crawled in

Small animals scurried in dark corners

Hungry children whimpered

Sitting quietly in huddles

... they All waited for the Dawn

The Night seemed even longer than the Day

...the crickets and toads were silent

Perhaps, they too were in waiting not wanting to disturb the sleeping Dawn

The cool night temperature was a welcome solace to the heat of the Day

In the early hours ...

Two brave robins take to flight

Clapping their tiny wings in defiance and breaking the silence

And that was the signal needed...

The sleepy but awakened Dawn stretched its arms and cracked the dark sky

Filling it with a royal dark blue

With each drip of the hour glass sand, the sky transformed into majestic awe-inspiring beauty

An array of purple, pink, red, orange and yellow

The chorus of birds singing and dancing from tree limb to tree limb is joyous.

The sway of the branches in the cool breeze of the morning is enchanting

The wetness of the morning dew on green blades of grass is a sign of a newness...

It's a new Day ushered in by an awakened Dawn!

Sandwiched: Balancing Financial Priorities

Courtesy of Fidelity Viewpoints 03/22/2021

Key Takeaways

Know more: Talk with your parents about finances.

Save more: Utilize tax-advantaged accounts.

Protect more: Have proper insurance coverage.

COVID-19 walloped many American households. In September 2020, the share of men in the workforce hit a record low, 60.5%, and the number of women working was the lowest it had been in 35 years, 49.2%. As if trying to meet day-to-day expenses while saving for retirement and paying for college isn't enough, many people find themselves increasingly responsible for the physical, emotional, and even financial challenges of caring for aging or disabled parents. Welcome to the sandwich generation—a growing part of the population feeling a financial tug from kids on one side and parents on the other. If this sounds familiar, you have plenty of company. In 2018, 12% of adults with a child younger than 18 at home were also providing unpaid care for an adult as well. Why are so many feeling this financial squeeze? People are living longer. They are having children later. Meanwhile, many young adults are finding it too expensive to live on their own. Hence, the "boomerang kids" phenomenon. Add in rising health care expenses for older Americans, and you have the makings of today's sandwich generation.

Pump up your planning

If you're one of the millions of Americans facing this challenge, a good way to cope is to "plan, plan, and plan some more," says Ann Dowd, CFP®, a vice president at Fidelity Investments. "Caring for kids and aging parents comes with many imponderables—there's no telling how much help they'll need or for how long. But don't let that paralyze you. Instead, embrace the uncertainty, think long term, and pump up your planning." How can you get started? "Begin by funding your emergency cash reserves, avoiding or paying down high-interest debt, and, above all, doing all you can to make your own retirement saving a top priority," says Dowd. "Though your heart may put your loved ones first, they're not responsible for your retirement security—you are." Here are some strategies to take control of your sandwich finances.

Know more

Even though it can be difficult to talk with your parents and kids about financial realities, try to do so early on. If you wait until a financial or medical crisis forces you to act, you may not have the time or flexibility you want or need. Over time, try to get a clear view of your parents' total financial picture, from expenses to sources of income and insurance, says Dowd. That way you can better understand what they can afford and if you need to fill in any gaps. For expenses, talk with them about their essential living costs (housing, food, transportation, insurance) as well as their discretionary costs (lifestyle choices like where they live and how much they travel). Help them match essential expenses to steady sources of income, such as Social Security, pensions, or annuity income, if they have any. Finally, check into their health care plans. To better manage their care, make sure they have a health care proxy and a living will in place. To see if they can pay for health care expenses, get details on their health and long-term care insurance, as well as any other available resources. "When you're caring for aging parents," says Dowd, "the boundaries between your financial plans and theirs can quickly blur."

Save more

If you're in the sandwich generation, it's even more important to save as much as possible. This is especially true if you have to take time off from work—and lose income—to care for parents. So be sure to take advantage of any and all tax-advantaged saving vehicles.

Put your retirement first. "Pay yourself first by contributing as much as possible to your workplace retirement plan," advises Dowd. "At least contribute up to any company match so you're not leaving 'free money' on the table." If you're already contributing the maximum to your workplace savings plan, consider funding an IRA if you're eligible. A health savings account (HSA) may be another tax-advantaged way to save for retirement as well. You do need to have an HSA-eligible health plan (more on that in the health care section). Even if you're only able to save a portion of the funds in your HSA for the future after covering current medical expenses, these accounts can be a tax-efficient way to save for Medicare premiums in retirement. If at all possible, don't use your retirement savings—whether through loans or early withdrawals—to support your kids or parents. Dipping into your nest egg sacrifices the potential for tax-deferred growth. That could eventually force you to depend on your children for financial support in retirement.

Prep for college costs. If you aren't already saving for college, you may want to consider starting. The College Board puts the average cost (tuition, fees, and room and board) for a 4-year, in-state public college at \$22,180 for the 2020–2021 tuition year, and \$50,770 for a 4-year private college. While there are several ways to save for college—such as opening a custodial account (Uniform Gifts to Minors Act [UGMA]/Uniform Transfers to Minors Act [UTMA] account), a Coverdell Education Savings Account (ESA), or even setting money aside in a taxable account—the potential advantages of a 529 savings plan may help you save for your child's education. 529 college savings plans are flexible, tax-advantaged accounts designed specifically for education savings. You can take withdrawals from a 529 plan to pay for qualified education expenses at the elementary through high school levels, or for college-level and beyond. To help boost college savings, encourage the gift of education by asking grandparents and those close to you to redirect money spent on toys and other gifts to your child's 529 savings plan account. Also keep an open mind about college choices. "Look for colleges that offer competitive programs that meet your child's needs with a price tag that works for your sandwich finances," says Dowd. It can be helpful to consider the level of financial support you may be able to provide and what level of college costs make sense for your family. Addressing that question early as a family can reduce stress in the future.

Save on health care. If you are enrolled in a high-deductible health plan and meet eligibility requirements, you can contribute to a health savings account (HSA). HSAs let you save pre-tax, and withdraw principal and earnings free from federal taxes for qualified medical expenses. In addition, any money you don't use, you can save and invest for the future, including for health care in retirement. The 2020 IRS contribution limits for health savings accounts (HSAs) are \$3,550 for individual coverage and \$7,100 for family coverage. For 2021, the limits increase to \$3,600 for individual coverage and \$7,200 for family coverage. If you're 55 or older during the tax year, you may be able to make a catch-up contribution, up to \$1,000 per year. Your spouse, if age 55 or older, could also make a catch-up contribution, but will need to open their own HSA. Your employer may also offer a health care flexible spending account (FSA), which is another tax-advantaged account that lets you pay for eligible out-of-pocket health expenses with pre-tax dollars. The 2021 annual contribution limit for FSAs is \$2,750. A health savings account (HSA) and a health care flexible spending account (health care FSA) are both ways to pay for health care. Contributions to both are free from federal income tax and they can both be used to save and pay for qualified medical expenses. With an HSA, you keep the money you don't use from year to year, and it's always yours even if you change employers or move to a different state. Generally, a health care FSA is use-it-or-lose-it, so any unspent money goes away at the end of the year.

Protect more

Make sure you and your parents have adequate health care insurance now, and for your retirement. Remember, Medicare does not cover everything. According to the Fidelity Retiree Health Care Cost Estimate, an average retired couple age 65 in 2020 may need approximately \$295,000 saved (after tax) to cover health care expenses in retirement. For example, long-term care is not covered by Medicare, and can be pricey. The average annual cost for a private nursing home room is \$105,852, and assisted living facilities average \$51,600.⁴ Do you and your parents need long-term care insurance? The answer depends on your age, the cost of coverage, how long you might need coverage, and the types of benefits you want. So carve out the time to weigh your options. Finally, with the needs of multiple generations on your shoulders, protecting your family from the risk of your disability or death may be more important than ever. Disability and life insurance can help make sure that your loved ones are cared for in the event that you are unable to work.

Read Viewpoints on Fidelity.com: [What you should know about life insurance](#)

Stay flexible

There is no escaping the reality that managing the competing financial priorities of children, parents, and yourself can be stressful. So take control by planning more diligently, saving more carefully, and keeping your retirement saving a top priority. For all concerned, that may mean adjusting expectations—from when you retire to where your kids go to college to how your aging parents spend their golden years. But that's what families do. You're all in this "sandwich" together.

The Pandemic One-Year Later

by Evelyn Ntomy, RN, BSN, CCM

The coronavirus pandemic declared by the World Health Organization, ushered in loss and disruption in our daily lives. Nothing feels like it will ever be the same again according to a newsletter published by The New York Times.

LOSS IN AMERICA - One in three Americans know someone who died from the virus or have coped with sudden pain and immeasurable sorrow. According to the newsletter article, certain norms of our lives have changed especially in certain areas like sports. It took three days for nearly every sport event to shut down leaving arenas, courts and rings filled only with memories and echoes of screaming fans. As if losing the excitement from sports was not enough, leisurely travel in the form of tourism came to a screeching halt. Immediately after the W.H.O declared a pandemic, borders were closed and ground travel ceased. It all seemed surreal for most people and for those in denial of events it was a rude awakening.

REALITY CHECK - In fact, reality sunk in when shelves became empty, people begun to wear masks on buses and emails announcing office closures became common events. We all realized that our lives were about to change and for a moment in time it felt like we were "all in this together." Truth be told, the upheaval brought on by the coronavirus has defined many American teens and their activities. Through words, images and videos on social media, teens across the United States show us everyday how they have met Life's challenges in the midst of an historic pandemic.

NEW YORK CITY – The "City That Never Sleeps" experienced its greatest effect on Her cultural landscape. Despite the negative impact from the virus including lost revenue, pain, sickness, uncertainty and death, great art will be made and inspired from this era.

As we look back on 2020, according to Huff Post, the coronavirus has altered nearly every facet of our lives. Such areas impacted include the way we work, learn, parent, eat, socialize etc. Due to the many changes brought about by the pandemic, we have been forced to reflect on life before Covid-19. We find ourselves longing for simple moments, interactions and experiences we never gave thought to before.

We are reminded of how sitting on a plane for hours munching on complimentary snacks and watching movies that you never saw in theaters as pleasures from the past.. We are also reminded that events such as attending kids' parties, smiling at people on the sidewalks and the feeling one gets right when a concert begins are things we took for granted. The normal things we did like waiting in car lines to pick up the kids from school, or just the sensory experience one gets walking into a movie theater make us wonder when all this will end. The act of now giving hugs without thinking twice has now caused fear of possibly being infected with coronavirus. Even doing the wave and standing with excitement at a baseball game all remind us of how our world has changed. Truthfully, things we took for granted have become priceless.

The thought of these life-changing events we think would bring more unity and faith in humanity surprisingly have become politicized - - especially when many have lost so much. We can only hope that people will do the right thing and normalcy will be regained. Since the vaccination roll-out in December 2020 across the nation and the downward trend of the virus across many states, there's a glimmer of hope of regaining the past.

<https://messaging-custom-newsletters.nytimes.com/>; March 11, 2021.

<https://www.huffpost.com/entry/things-we-took-for-granted-covid-pandemic>; December 31, 2020

Research Opportunities



HEALTHCARE & RESEARCH
Research Participants Needed

- ✓ Are you a Ghanaian 18 years or older?
- ✓ Are you a stroke survivor?
- ✓ Did you or your family care for a stroke patient?

If you answered "Yes" to two of the questions, then you qualify for this research.

Call Angela Adjetey Appiah at 914-266-0803 to join and or for further information

Let's help our communities, let's contribute to the health research for better

Your participation is voluntary. Your answers will remain confidential and reported in summary form so that nothing you say can identify you.

 Kingdom Radio GNF 94.9Fm 

Your information will be confidential.

Breast & Cervical Cancer and HPV Awareness

Interested in learning more about breast, cervical health, HPV, and cancer?

YOU ARE INVITED

Participate in a quality improvement project to educate and follow-up about breast, cervical cancer and HPV among Women of African Descendants in our community.

To participate / register/ or for presentation to your group
Contact Angela Adjetey Appiah @ 914-266-0803 or email adjetey.appiah@gmail.com

BRING OUR FAMILY AND FRIENDS



Protect yourself and us | More Knowledge, Better Health



Cervical Cancer Awareness & Prevention

- Are you a Ghanaian and or a Ghanaian- American
- Do you live in the Bronx?
- Are you 18 or older
- Are you willing to participate in an hour interaction

You qualify to participate in this study.

Your participation is voluntary and the interview is confidential

Your participation would help with gaining an understanding of what goes into Ghanaian Americans planning for cervical cancer prevention.

FREE
Reusable insulated shopping bag

To participate contact
Angela Adjetey Appiah MSN, MPH, MA, COA, R.N., FAACM,
at 914-266-0803 or email at aadjetey@pace.edu

The Recommendations of US Healthcare Workers Who Have Completed Covid-19 Vaccination

by Dr. Leonard Sowah, Internal Medicine Physician in Baltimore, MD

This post is my attempt to bring the vaccine experience to a larger audience. To do this I polled about 500 vaccine recipients over about 24 days. A prior survey that I conducted suggested that many individuals were taking a wait-and-see attitude with Covid-19 vaccinations. This is not surprising to me; in my experience every community has individuals who like to take their time to adopt new ideas. The fact that our current vaccines use a new technology may be aggravating this situation. Some of us may feel frustrated by these late adopters, or laggards, as some are known to call such individuals. To help these groups we need to learn to exercise some patience. For some of these persons, the answer to the question; “would those who have received the Covid-19 vaccine recommend it?” may be useful.

How New Innovative Ideas Change Societies

New ideas always take time to be adopted. In most societies about 1 in 7 of the population will fall into the wait-and-see group. These individuals like traditions and are very wary of any change or new ideas. Such late adopters are more likely to respond to friends and close family. They have a strong need for asserting their autonomy. A friendly gentle attitude is the best way to help them in their decisions. Late adopters are really looking for data and they will slowly look through the data to make their decision eventually. They may also respond to someone who has received the vaccine recommending it to them.

In these times with so much misinformation we should not confuse late adopters with conspiracy theorists and anti-vaxxers. These two groups are entirely different groups. At this time, I have no specific suggestions on how to handle conspiracy theorists and anti-vaxxers directly. I do however suggest countering their misinformation with good, clear and well-researched information without engaging them. These groups (those spreading misinformation) should not be your target; your target is the population they seek to misinform.

My Polling Population

This post is mainly to provide more data for our late adopters to help them make their minds. Many states in the US and many other countries have started to roll out their vaccine programs. Over 3 weeks from 1/17/2021 to 2/9/2021 we collected information from recent Covid-19 vaccine recipients. This information was collected using an anonymous online poll on SurveyMonkey. The link was shared widely on social media using WhatsApp and Facebook. Overall, 516 individuals completed the survey. The survey was primarily for individuals who had completed the two doses of the available vaccines. There were 17 respondents who only had dates for the first dose; they were excluded from the analysis. The total analyzable sample is therefore 499.

Demographics and Professional Background of The Polled Population

The respondents were all healthcare workers ages 18 – 74 years. One hundred and eighty-five individuals (37.1% of all respondents) were in the 35 – 44 years age group. Almost all respondents (94.6%) were female, and on average were younger. Male respondents, who form only 5.4% of our audience were on average older. Individuals above age 55 years made up 22.2% of all male respondents compared with 14.5% among females. The sample was mostly white (about 80.3%) with 6.6% self-reporting Asian heritage, 6.4% African American and 5.2% Hispanic or Latino.

Most of those who responded worked in hospitals or similar acute care settings (52.9%). Ambulatory care workers made up 38.1% and nursing homes and other long-term care facilities contributed 7.2%. This social media sample was very much US-biased; 494 (99%) US residents with 3 individuals resident in Canada and one each from Israel and the UK.

Most of the respondents in this survey were nurses, 218 (43.7%) of all respondents. There were 126 (25%) physicians, 44 (8.8%) nurse practitioners and 14 (2.8%) physician assistants. Other healthcare workers with good representation included 16 social workers or counselors, 12 certified nursing assistants, 10 radiology technicians and 8 physical therapist and 7 respiratory therapists. In this sample all the nurses self-identified as female. Among the physicians who responded and provided information on gender 109 (87.2%) self-identified as female and 16 (12.8%) as male. This sample is thus gender skewed towards females which is the norm among healthcare workers in the US and many other developed nations.

The Vaccines and Experience

Our respondents reported vaccine first doses as early as August 19th, 2020, suggesting a few individuals may have received vaccines in the phase 3 clinical trials. Majority of individuals however got their first doses between December 12th, 2020 and January 22nd, 2021. With the exception of 2 individuals who got their second dose in September 2020, most had their second doses from December 30th, 2020 to February 8th, 2021.

The interval between doses ranged from 17 – 50 days. There were a few individuals whose dates suggested dosing intervals of 10 – 14 days. It is unclear if these individuals were dosed that closely together or if these were errors in data entry. On closer look though, all of these were individuals who got the Pfizer vaccine which is recommended for a 21-day interval. Most of the respondents received the Pfizer vaccine 308 (61.7%) and 189 (37.9%) got the Moderna vaccine. Only one individual reported receiving the AstraZeneca vaccine.

Eighty percent of respondents reported some form of reaction to the vaccine. Those who received the Moderna vaccine were 2.6 times as likely to report a reaction compared to those who got the Pfizer vaccine. This difference was significant with a p-value < 0.001. Females were more likely to report reactions compared to males 80% of females, compared to 74% of males). This difference was not significant, however. Participants 55 years and above were also less likely to report a reaction 71.6% compared to 81.2% in younger respondents. This difference did approach statistical significance with a p-value of 0.06. Two out of three of respondents reported that the intensity of their reactions was greater with the second dose as compared to the first. Only 40 respondents 8.1% believed the 1st dose had a more intense reaction, 24% judged the reaction to be similar between the 2 doses.

What Interventions Did Those Who Had Reactions Get?

For both vaccine doses, 362 (72.5%) of individuals said they needed to have some medication or treatment for their reactions. Ninety-six percent of these respondents reported taking over the counter (OTC) medications like Tylenol or Motrin. One female in the 35 – 44 year age group reported going into hospital for enlarged lymph nodes in the neck and armpit. Twenty-one 4.2% of individuals reported requiring care in an emergency department (ED) or urgent care for vaccine related reactions. Below are the categories of complaints for which our respondents received ED or urgent care evaluation. Similar reports are considered together.

The Reactions Reported by Those Who Sought Medical Attention

Nature of reaction reported	Frequency
Slow heartbeat (Bradycardia)	2
Rapid heartbeat (Tachycardia)	5
Some form of allergic reaction	4
Cellulitis	2
Shoulder bursitis	2
Migraines	1
Lymph node swelling	1
Lightheadedness	2
Acute Appendicitis	1
Worsening or pre-existing back pain	1
Multiple Symptoms	1
Hypertensive crisis	1

These reports do not suggest these were due to the vaccine received. This poll is not capable of making that judgement. If respondents reported multiple symptoms or concerns the one most likely to determine need for medical attention was chosen.

Conclusions of Our Healthcare Worker Vaccine Recipients and Other Recommendations

Out of the 499 healthcare workers who have received both doses of the COVID-19 vaccine, 478 (96.0%) will recommend the vaccine to friends and family. Only 12 (2.4%) of these prior vaccine recipients will not recommend the vaccine to friends and family. It is not clear why these 12 would not recommend the vaccine. Among these 12 though, 4 (33.3%) reported reactions that required medical attention. One of these reported no reactions at all and majority 7 (58.3%) only needed OTC medications for their complaints.

Unedited Responses of Those Who Were Unsure Whether to Recommend Vaccine or Not

1st but maybe not the 2nd
Everyone is different and I don't push controversial views
High risk only
I will not encourage or discourage
It's everyone's self decision
Maybe. It is pretty rough
Wouldn't want to say either way. I felt horrible probably should have went to hospital but didn't
depends on their situation

Based on these responses it appears healthcare workers who responded to our survey favored recommending vaccination to friends and family. Only 2.4% will not recommend the vaccination with the available Covid-19 vaccines. Overall, 8 out of 10 individuals had some reaction to vaccination but most where reactions expected from vaccination. Most individuals either did not need medications or just took OTC medications. Older individuals in this sample i.e., those aged 55 years and above were less likely to report reactions. This difference was not really significant. If you are yet to get the vaccines this is the combined voices of those who have already been vaccinated. Overall, this suggests that these vaccines are safe. Vaccine reactions were common, but this is expected. The reactions were mostly discomfort that responded to OTC medications. Only 4 out of 100 participants reported requiring some medical attention. It is therefore not a surprise that 96% of all those who responded to the survey will recommend vaccination to family and friends. I have also received the Covid-19 vaccination and will recommend it for my friends and family. So please take account of these experiences of these almost 500 individuals and make your decision.

References

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Executive's Corner

Nurses must first know the signs of burnout in order to prevent it. Nursing burnout can surface in a variety of ways but is frequently related to a handful of symptoms, including fatigue, dreading going to work, feeling under-appreciated, and feeling constantly overworked. According to the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), "burnout," can take a physical and mental toll on nurses, first responders, physicians, and other professionals who provide patient care or work in emergency situations.

A survey conducted by the National Academy of Medicine (NAM) reports that at least 50% of nurses report serious symptoms of burnout, including emotional exhaustion, cynicism, and low sense of professional accomplishment. These symptoms if left untreated, can have the effects of nurse burnout which may lead to poor job performance, medical mistakes on the job, high turnover rates, and even suicide. So now that we know what nurse burnout is, how can we notice it, to prevent it?

I sat down with Ms. Akua Asante, a clinical nurse educator with about 20 years of experience who works in the ICU and also is the wellness coach in UMASS medical center here in Massachusetts. Akua states she mentors about 200 nurses a month due to burnout. Most of the time, burnout affects nurses when our job physically and mentally demands too much of us for too long. Akua agreed that burnout can occur when nurses are overworked and experience constant high-stress situations, long shifts, seeing too many patients die, then having to wash the bodies and take them to the hospital morgue, and having to assist patients and families with emotional support.

Managers and the leadership in the hospitals, clinics and the various healthcare facilities should be able to quickly identify these burn out traits to support staff. This in reality does not happen very often, and when it occurs, does so slowly. When nurses are feeling overworked, physically and mentally exhausted, and not appreciated, it diminishes staff morale and can result in resignations and instability in the workplace, which can have a ripple effect on all the other staff, not only nurses.

How to Prevent Burnout

1. Therapy or Assistance Programs.

When possible, nurses should take advantage of any therapeutic or counseling services offered by their institutions. These services are found outside of work. Most companies offer free Employee Assistance Programs which help mental health.

2. Develop Strong Interpersonal Relationships

As a nurse educator, Akua suggests that close relationships inside the workplace and at home play a crucial role in battling nurse burnout. Having someone to talk to about emotional distress and the balance of personal and professional pressures helps nurses deal with high-stress situations. It is also important that nurses find someone outside of work to listen just for the emotional support.

3. Set Boundaries between Work and Personal Life

While it's easier said than done, Akua stated that when the nurse's *shift* ends to leave any thoughts, feelings and grievances about work there, and focus their time spent at home with family, friends and doing activities that they enjoy. Be present and mindful.

4. Get Enough Sleep

Most of us know the value of sleep, but we cannot overstate its importance for nursing professionals trying to avoid burnout. Even if nurses need to significantly adjust their sleeping schedule, experts recommend that nurses fit in at least eight hours of sleep each day or night, depending on their schedule. Enough sleep can improve alertness, concentration, stamina, mood, and motivation.

5. Care for Physical and Mental Health

Multiple experts stress the importance of maintaining a regular exercise routine coupled with a well-balanced diet. *The American Health and Wellness Society* suggests that nurses should exercise for at least 30 minutes a day, including walks during breaks at work and a scheduled workout time after shifts. "Making time for this physical break will help your body feel rejuvenated and give your mind a mental break from the work at hand," Nurses should take time off when needed. "If you feel like you're at the point of burnout and you can't take any time off, consider calling in sick," suggests Akua. "Being sick shouldn't only mean physical symptoms such as a headache, cough or fever. Not feeling well mentally should also constitute a sick day."

In conclusion, nurse burnout was a present problem even before the SARS-COV-2 pandemic. It is obviously worsening. We should take precautions to prevent this with the recommendations above. There are also multiple resources available to nurses. It may be easy for some nurses to identify burnout, but the challenge is how to access the resources or utilize it.

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