B1-15: Nurses Intent to Respond to Calls for Emergency Service During Hurricane Ike

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Abstract:
Introduction: Most natural disasters occur with little warning to the regions that are affected. In 2008 the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) declared 75 disasters in the United States. Eighteen of these declared disasters were a direct result of hurricanes. Natural disasters inevitably inflict human suffering and nurses are expected to respond and provide services during these times. Researchers have shown that even though nurses feel responsible to respond, 60% of nurses in the study report they are unavailable to respond to disasters (Morse & Merrill, 2001). Little is known regarding the experiences and concerns of nurses who are called upon and respond to a disaster and yet are themselves affected by the disaster. The purpose of this study is to more clearly describe the experience of nurses as they decided to respond during Hurricane Ike and their work experiences during the disaster itself. This study is most timely as it is conducted in the aftermath of Hurricane Ike, when remembered experiences are most vivid. The research question is: What are the lived experiences of nurses who worked during Hurricane Ike in an affected facility? This study will address gaps in the current literature related to preparedness for natural disasters and create the groundwork for future studies.

Method(s): A Husserlian phenomenological approach is used to uncover the meanings of these experiences as perceived through the eyes of nurses. Purposeful snowball sampling design is used to identify 15 RNs who responded to work during Hurricane Ike. Data collection included unstructured open ended face to face interview questions. Data analysis is guided by Colaizzi’s (1978) methodology. The rigor of trustworthiness follows the criteria of Lincoln and Guba (1985).

Results: Initial thematic findings include “broken promises” and "not knowing". Supportive narrative will be presented.
Discussion & Conclusions: Thematic findings may be used to inform the development of future policies that address nurses’ concerns and staffing guidelines along with enhancement of educational programs. Uncovering the concerns of nurses who worked during Hurricane Ike may improve nurse response and patient outcomes.

Abstract History:
This abstract has not been presented or accepted for presentation in whole or in part at the SNRS or other scientific meeting.

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