Use of Mindfulness Techniques In Mitigating Compassion Fatigue Among Critical Care Nurses

JOHNS HOPKINS
SCHOOL *of* NURSING

Participants were recruited electronically via stratified, voluntary response sampling\

Introduction

Compassion fatigue is a complex phenomenon emerging from prolonged exposure to physical, emotional, and psychological stress. Burnout, secondary trauma, and compassion satisfaction play a vital role in the development of compassion fatigue.
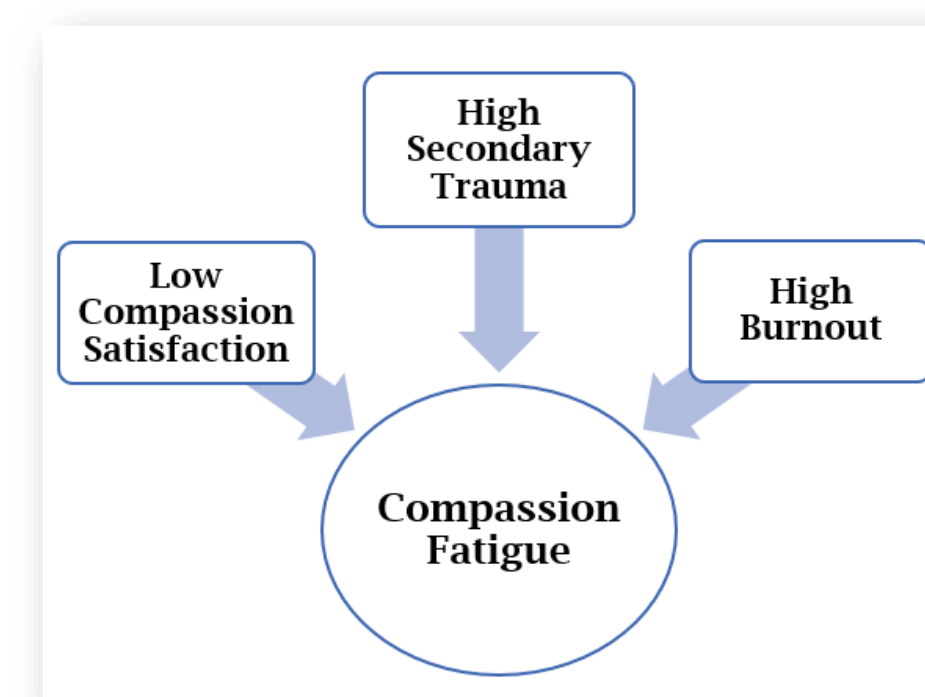
Compassion fatigue is a significant threat to clinician wellbeing and patient safety. Amid the 2020 COVID-19 outbreak, critical care nurses face unique challenges which place them at an even greater risk of developing compassion fatigue.
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Objectives

Purpose: The purpose of this quality improvement project was to implement an evidence-based, multi-modal mindfulness program to mitigate the effects of compassion fatigue in critical care nurses.

Aim 1: Implement and assess the effectiveness of a multi-modal, evidence-based mindfulness program in mitigating compassion fatigue in critical care nurses by measuring the Professional Quality of Life Scale (ProQOL-5) at 0 and 10 weeks.

Aim 2: Evaluate participants' perceived benefit of mindfulness practice with the use of a 4-point Likert scale to be administered at 10 weeks via Qualtrics
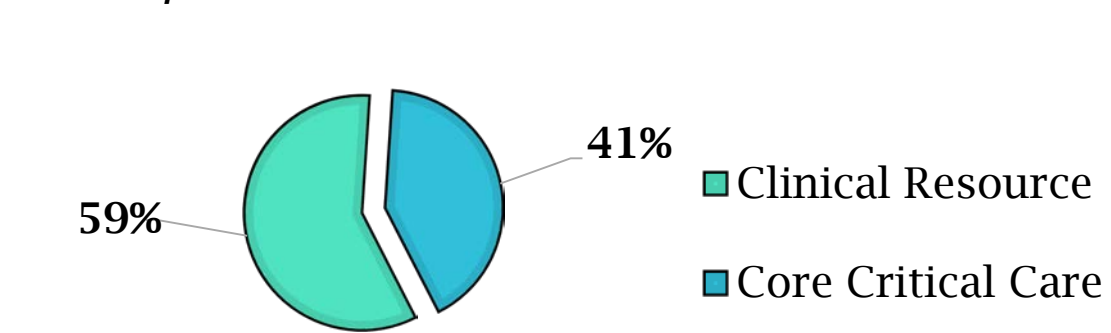
Methods

Six Sigma methodology was chosen to guide evidence translation through the process of 'define, measure, analyze, improve, and control'.
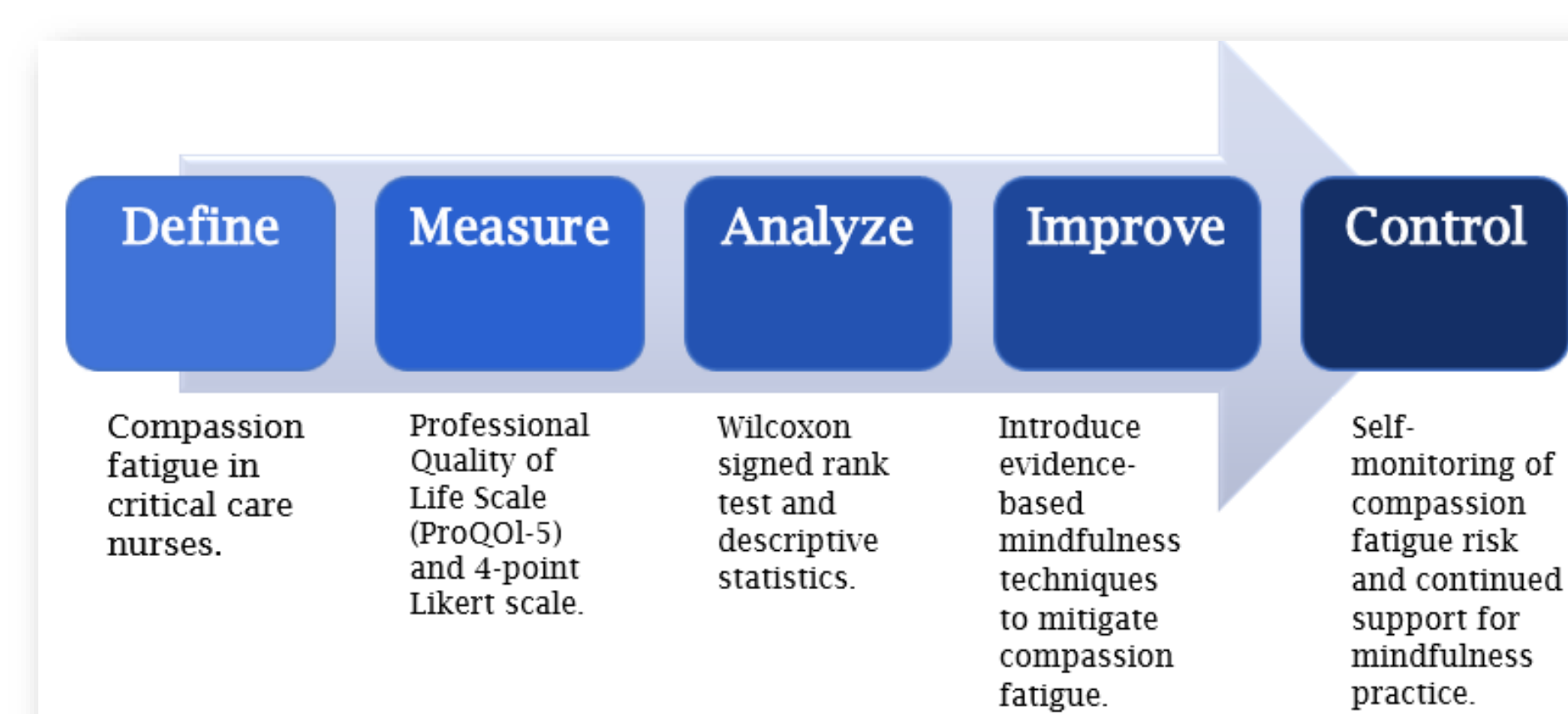

Methods

A pre/post-intervention design was chosen for the project. The project took place in a mixed critical care unit of a Magnet-designated hospital located in Midwestern United States. Participants were recruited electronically by stratified, voluntary response sampling.

Sample Characteristics: Unit — Sample Characteristics: Years of Critical Care Experience
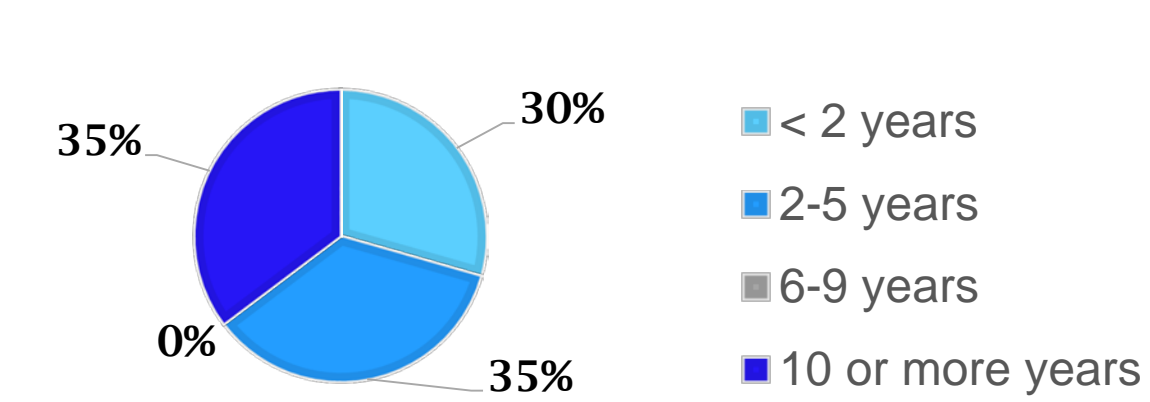
Evidence-Based Intervention:
This project utilized the electronic application of Headspace (Headspace, 2020) to help achieve the aims. A variety of guided meditations and mindfulness strategies were available through the application at no cost through 12/31/20.. Select audio recordings of brief mindfulness exercises were also accessible by staff in break and respite rooms.

Evaluation:
1. The Professional Quality of Life Scale (ProQOL-5) was measured pre- and post-intervention at 0 and 10 weeks via Qualtrics.
2. Nurses' perceived benefit of mindfulness practice was measured at 10 weeks using a 4-point Likert scale via Qualtrics.

Statistical Analysis:
1. The Wilcoxon singed-rank test was used to evaluate change in ProQOL-5 sores
2. The Mann-Whitney U test was used to assess the distribution of ProQOL-5 scores between units as well as across categories of mindfulness use.
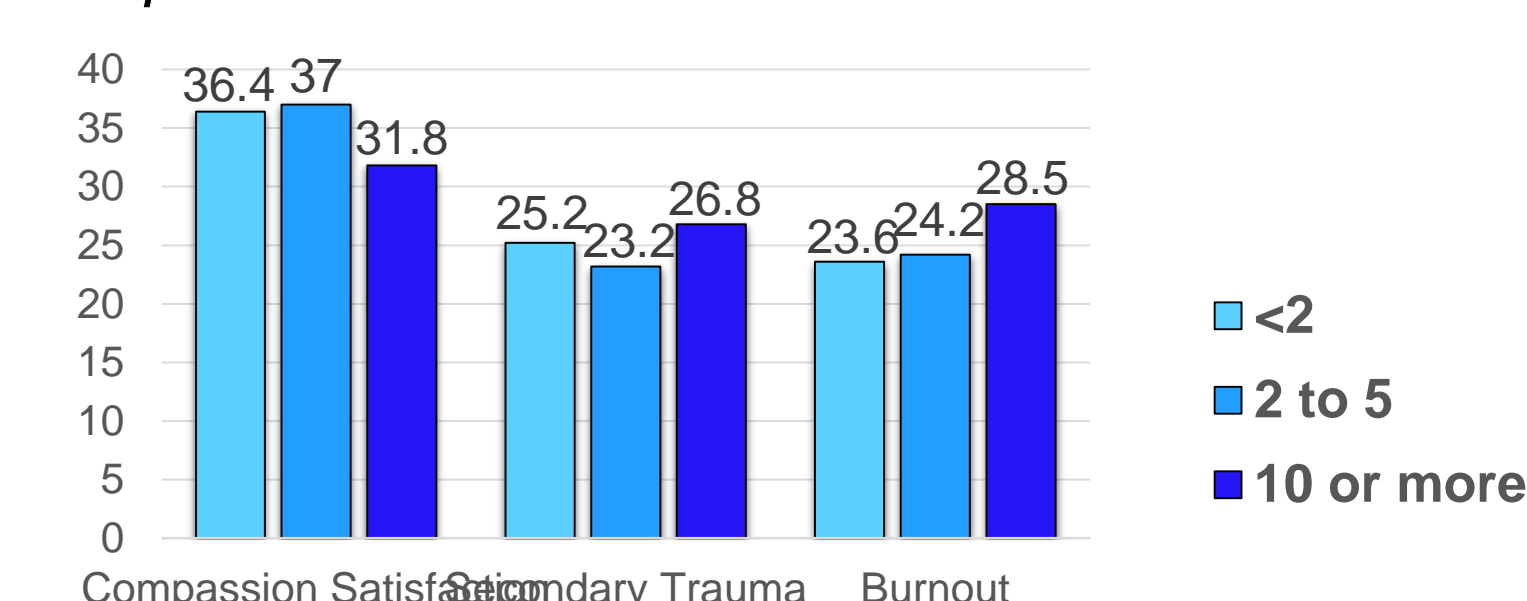
Results

1. Participants demonstrated moderate levels of secondary trauma (73.2%) and burnout (78.2%)
2. Nurses who floated to critical care exhibited lower compassion satisfaction (p= .002) and higher secondary trauma (p= .05) compared to core critical care nurses.
3. Critical care nurses with > 10 years experience exhibited the lowest compassion satisfaction, highest secondary trauma, and highest burnout of experience groups.
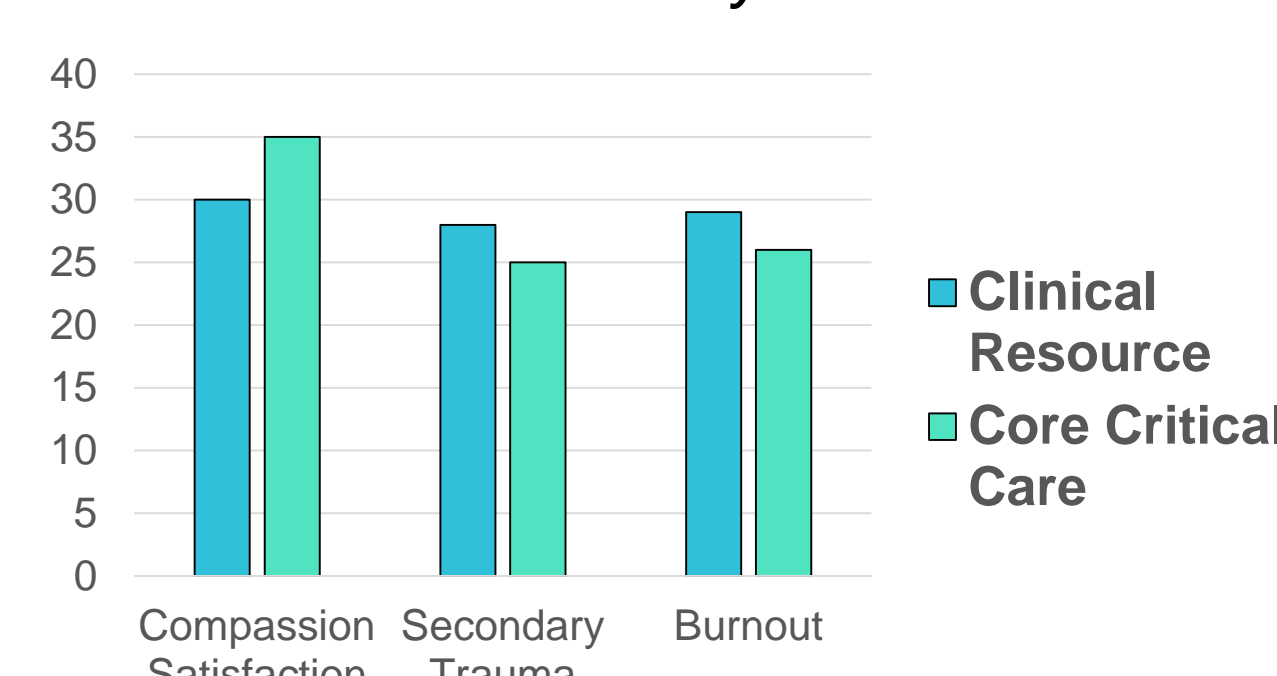
Existing literature has observed similar results in which secondary trauma and compassion satisfaction were influenced by unit (Al Barmawi et al, 2019; Wijdenes, Baget, and Sheppard, 2019). In contrast to existing literature, this project identified lower compassion satisfaction and higher secondary trauma among nurses with ten or more years of critical care experience when compared to less experienced nurses (Al-Majid et al., 2018; Conversano et al, 2020; Copeland and Henry, 2018).
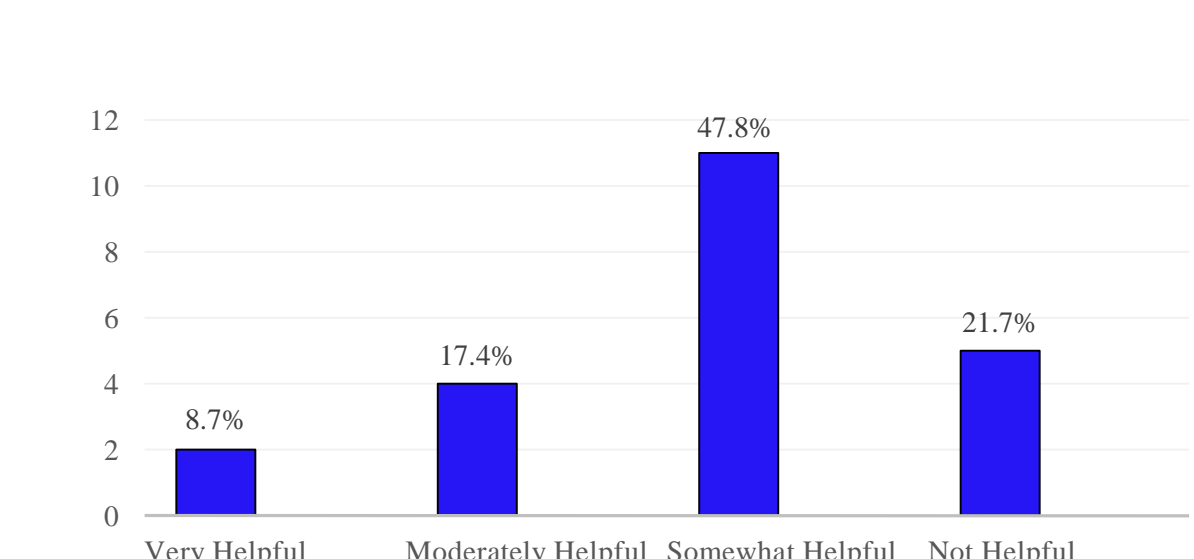
Results

Aim 1 Findings:
1. At 10 weeks, compassion satisfaction increased (32), burnout decreased (27), and secondary trauma was unchanged (27) though statistical significance was not reached.
2. Components of compassion satisfaction and burnout improved, including: *'I feel trapped by my job', 'I feel overwhelmed because my workload seems endless', 'I am happy', and 'I believe I can make a difference through my work'.*

Aim 2 Findings:
1. Regular use of mindfulness techniques was reported by 48% of participants.
2. More than 78% of participants found mindfulness-based practice to be helpful.

Nurses' Perceived Benefit of Mindfulness

Conclusions

Current literature on mindfulness practice to mitigate compassion fatigue in critical care nurses amidst COVID-19 is limited and the long-term impact that COVID-19 will have on these nurses is still unknown. The results of this quality improvement project suggest that
1. Nurses with > 10 years experience critical care experience and those who float to CCU may be at greater risk for developing compassion fatigue.
2. Mindfulness techniques may be usefully for critical care nurses in mitigating components of compassion fatigue.

Future considerations for practice **include e**valuating the factors contributing to secondary trauma and compassion fatigue in nurses who float to critical care and assessing the lived experiences of nurses during COVID-19 who have more than 10 years of critical care experience.

Acknowledgements

Scan for List of References: