EVALUATING THE LEVEL OF PERSONAL RESILIENCE AMONG HEALTHCARE WORKERS AT KCRH, KIRINYAGA COUNTY, IN KENYA.

MUIGA M., NDANU J., NJOROGE M.

United States International University, KENYA
Correspondence: mmuiga@kyu.ac.ke

Abstract

Personal resilience, a multifaceted concept encompassing determination, endurance, adaptability, and recuperability, is crucial for healthcare workers who frequently encounter high-stress and traumatic events. Resilience enables individuals to not only endure but also thrive in adversity, protecting against burnout and fostering psychological well-being. This study investigates the level of personal resilience among healthcare workers at Kerugoya County Referral Hospital (KCRH) in Kirinyaga County, Kenya, focusing on vicarious trauma and its effects. A descriptive research design was employed, involving a sample of 149 healthcare workers at KCRH. Data was collected using the Adult Personal Resilience Questionnaire (APRQ). There was moderate vicarious trauma levels (score of 33.3) and substantial resilience across four dimensions: determination (4.42), endurance (4.18), adaptability (4.06), and recuperability (3.93). Healthcare workers at KCRH exhibited substantial resilience across all dimensions, with determination and endurance scoring the highest. Thus, despite facing significant challenges, including high stress levels and exposure to traumatic events, the workers demonstrated strong determination, perseverance, adaptability, and ability to recover from setbacks. However, the moderate level of vicarious trauma highlights the need for targeted support and interventions to mitigate its impact. These findings underscore the importance of personal resilience in helping healthcare workers manage the demands of their profession. High resilience levels suggest that these workers possess the capacity to navigate adversities effectively, but the presence of moderate vicarious trauma indicates a need for enhanced support systems. There is need for Hospital administrators and policymakers to prioritize initiatives aimed at building resilience among healthcare workers. This can include implementing tailored training programs, providing robust mental health support, and fostering a supportive work environment. Further research is recommended to explore specific strategies and interventions that can effectively enhance resilience and well-being in diverse healthcare settings.

Keywords: Personal resilience, healthcare workers, determination, endurance, adaptability, recuperability.

Background to the Study

Personal resilience is being examined as a multifaceted concept that encompasses the capacity to effectively cope with stress and adversity. It is influenced by a range of factors, including determination, endurance, and adaptability [1]. In this study, personal resilience is used to refer to a multidimensional concept encompassing determination, endurance, adaptability, and recuperability.

Personal resilience has emerged as a pivotal element within the healthcare domain, demonstrating its capacity not only to shield individuals from the adverse effects of trauma but also to foster posttraumatic growth [2]. However, despite this acknowledgment, documented research findings suggest that different categories of healthcare workers exhibit varying responses to traumatic experiences [3]. Resilience besides transcending endurance of adversity; embodies the ability to adapt, rebound, and flourish amidst challenges [3]. This attribute is particularly vital for healthcare professionals who regularly navigate high-stress environments, grapple with emotional strain, and manage demanding workloads [4]. Moreover, resilience acts as a protective shield against burnout and compassion fatigue, facilitating preservation of psychological well-being, the commitment to patient care, and ability to navigate the complexities healthcare landscape.

In their research, West et al 2020 [5] outlined the various dimensions of personal resilience, shedding light on its multifaceted nature. Accordingly, endurance refers to an individual's ability to persevere through difficult situations without succumbing to defeat while determination embodies one's resolve and persistence in striving to achieve set goals, even in the face of adversity. On the other hand, adaptability reflects capacity to be resourceful and

flexible to effectively navigate challenging environments and adjust to diverse circumstances while recuperability underscores an individual's aptitude for bouncing back and recovering from setbacks, injuries, or hardships. These dimensions collectively provide a comprehensive understanding of personal resilience, emphasizing its importance in successfully coping with life's trials and tribulations.

The impact of personal resilience among healthcare workers, as highlighted by Nyagaya 2015 [6], is multifaceted and profound. Thus, resilience serves as a vital defense mechanism against burnout and compassion fatigue, preserving the mental and emotional well-being of healthcare professionals amid the demanding nature of their work. Secondly, it correlates with enhanced job performance and satisfaction, empowering healthcare workers to effectively navigate challenges and deliver superior care to patients. Furthermore, as emphasized by Zakeri et al 2021 [7] personal resilience contributes to organizational resilience by fostering collaboration, communication, and support within healthcare systems. By prioritizing initiatives aimed at building resilience, healthcare organizations can cultivate a resilient workforce capable of enduring crises and providing uninterrupted, compassionate care to those in need.

Despite the multifaceted and compelling rationale for evaluating the level of personal resilience among healthcare workers, there remains a gap in understanding the specific mechanisms and strategies necessary for effectively identifying and addressing resilience-related challenges within healthcare settings. Although there is need to quantify resilience levels, there is a lack of a comprehensive frameworks or standardized methodologies for conducting such evaluations consistently across diverse healthcare contexts [8].

Statement of the Problem

This study sought to evaluate the level of personal resilience among healthcare workers at KCRH, Kirinyaga County, Kenya. Thus, in their role in providing essential services, they often face numerous challenges, including high stress levels, heavy workloads, and exposure to

8

traumatic events. Thus, while personal resilience is recognized as a key factor in mitigating the negative impacts of these challenges, there is limited understanding of the specific resilience levels among healthcare workers in Kenya as is the case elsewhere. Furthermore, there is lack of tailored interventions and support systems in place to effectively promote and sustain resilience within this population. This study therefore sought to address this gap by systematically assessing the level of personal resilience among healthcare workers at KCRH, identifying potential factors influencing resilience levels, and exploring strategies to enhance resilience and well-being in this context.

Literature Review

Personal resilience among Healthcare Workers

That healthcare workers are integral to the functioning of medical systems, yet their well-being can be severely tested during public health crises [9] advocates for an integrative resilience approach, which acknowledges the importance of individual, educational, and organizational factors in fostering resilience among healthcare professionals. Thus, there is need for tailored interventions in medical education and supportive protocols within healthcare institutions to promote resilience. Additionally, there is need to assess the effectiveness of psychological interventions in improving mental health outcomes for healthcare workers, underscoring the value of such strategies [10]. Together, these studies highlight the necessity for comprehensive resilience-enhancing strategies in healthcare settings, offering invaluable insights for educators, institutions, and policymakers to safeguard the well-being of healthcare professionals, especially during times of public health emergencies.

Baskin and Barleltt 2021 [11] observed that despite increased stress and burnout levels, USA healthcare workers exhibited significant resilience during the COVID-19 pandemic, attributed to factors like strong professional identity [12], effective coping strategies, robust social support, and organizational backing. The authors using a meta-analysis observed only 28.8% prevalence

of low resilience among healthcare workers. These studies emphasize the importance of addressing resilience-enhancing factors to support healthcare workers' well-being, particularly during crises.

Although Doctors in the USA face significant challenges, including long work hours exceeding the national average, heavy workloads, emotional strain from difficult patients, and stress from making life or death decisions, there was a positive association between resilience, self-compassion, mindfulness, and a sense of meaning in life among doctors, with higher resilience linked to lower burnout levels [13]. There was high rates of burnout, anxiety, and moral distress among doctors.

Rushton et al 2019 [14] highlighted the critical importance of personal resilience among nurses, given the inherently high-stress nature of their profession. Lin et al [15] defined resilience as the ability to navigate adversity and maintain well-being and that this is shaped by individual factors like optimism, self-efficacy, and emotion regulation [15]. Nurses with higher resilience levels show improved job satisfaction, decreased burnout, and longer careers, emphasizing the need to support and cultivate resilience within the nursing workforce.

Research Methodology

Data was collected from healthcare workers at Kerugoya County Referral Hospital (KCRH) in Kirinyaga County, Kenya. Participants included a diverse group of healthcare professionals among them doctors, nurses, clinical officers, laboratory technicians, pharmacists, and other support staff. A total of 149 healthcare workers participated in the study. The study employed a descriptive research design to evaluate the levels of personal resilience among the healthcare workers. A stratified random sampling method was used to ensure that all categories of healthcare workers at KCRH were represented proportionately in the sample. The workers were first categorized into different strata based on their job roles. From each stratum, a random sample was drawn to make up the total sample size of 149 participants. To ensure reliability and

validity of data, the study used established and standardized measurement tools. The Vicarious Trauma Scale (VTS) was used to measure the levels of vicarious trauma among participants. The Adult Personal Resilience Questionnaire (APRQ), a 20-item self-administered questionnaire, was used to measure personal resilience across four dimensions: determination, endurance, adaptability, and recuperability. Both tools have been validated in previous studies and are widely used in resilience research. Data was analysed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 27 and summarized using descriptive statistics, including frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations. Results were presented in summary tables to provide a clear and concise presentation of findings. Data was presented in a manner that highlighted the key findings and facilitated an understanding of the overall resilience levels within the healthcare workforce at KCRH. Ethical approval for the study was obtained from the relevant institutional review board. The study was conducted in accordance with ethical standards to protect the rights and well-being of participants. All participants were informed about the purpose of the study and of their respective roles in their study. Written informed consent was obtained from each participant prior to their involvement in the study. Confidentiality and anonymity of the participants were strictly safeguarded. Personal identifiers were removed from the data to ensure that individual responses could not be traced back to any participant. Participation in the study was entirely voluntary, and participants were free to withdraw from the study at any point without any consequences.

Results

Level of personal resilience among healthcare workers in Kerugoya County Referral Hospital, Kirinyaga County, Kenya

The purpose of the study was to evaluate the level of personal resilience among healthcare workers at Kerugoya County Referral Hospital (KCRH) in Kirinyaga County, Kenya. using the Adult Personal Resilience Questionnaire (APRQ), the study assessed four dimensions of

personal resilience: Determination, Endurance, Adaptability, and Recuperability. Results showed high levels of resilience across all dimensions. In the Determination dimension, the average score was 4.42, with 57.1% of respondents strongly agreeing on setting and achieving goals. Endurance scored 4.18, with 50.3% affirming their ability to withstand hardships. Adaptability had a score of 4.06, highlighting the healthcare workers' ability to navigate challenges and adapt to diverse circumstances. Finally, Recuperability scored 3.93, showing significant agreement on the ability to recover from setbacks and adversity. These results demonstrate that healthcare workers at KCRH possess robust resilience, which is crucial for managing the high-stress environments and emotional strains typical in healthcare settings. Table 1 below shows data on personal resilience as observed in the study

Table 4. 8: Personal Resilience Descriptive Statistics

Dimension	Statement	Strongly Disagree 1	Disagree 2	Neutral 3	Agree 4	Strongly Agree 5	Score (1-5)
Determination	Once I set a goal, I am determined to achieve it	(0)0.0%	(4)2.7%	(5)3.4%	(53)36.7%	(84)57.1%	4.48
	I persevere at the things I decide, despite difficulties	(0)0.0%	(4)2.7%	(6)4.1%	(52)35.4%	(85)57.8%	4.48
	Being determined is an important part of my character	(0)0.0%	(1)0.7%	(12)8.2%	(59)40.1%	(75)51.0%	4.44
	I keep trying for the things I want until I reach them	(1)0.7%	(1)0.7%	(14)9.5%	(48)32.7%	(83)56.5%	4.41
	It is in my nature to be persevering	(2)1.4%	(5)3.4%	(14)9.5%	(54)36.7%	(71)48.3%	4.29
Average score							**4.42**

Endurance	I am able to live through difficult times	(0)0.0%	(3)2.0%	(19)12.9%	(73)49.7%	(52)35.4%	4.21
	I can withstand difficult situations	(1)0.7%	(3)2.0%	(20)13.6%	(63)42.9%	(60)40.8%	4.19
	I can endure the problems that life brings	(0)0.0%	(4)2.7%	(22)15.0%	(62)42.9%	(58)39.5%	4.18
	I can survive even the hardest of times	(0)0.7%	(3)2.0%	(24)16.3%	(63)42.2%	(57)38.8%	4.16
	I can endure even when I am attacked	(0)0.0%	(6)4.1%	(23)15.6%	(75)51.0%	(43)29.3%	4.14
Average score							**4.42**
Adaptability	I have the ability to adapt to difficult situations	(3)2.0%	(8)5.4%	(18)12.2%	(61)41.5%	(57)38.8%	4.10
	I can change to fit into many kinds of circumstances	(2)1.4%	(9)6.1%	(20)13.6%	(67)45.6%	(49)33.3%	4.10
	I can find ways to adapt to unexpected conditions	0)0.0	(4)2.7%	(28)19.0%	(59)40.1%	(56)38.1%	4.05
	I am well able to adjust to problems that confront me	(2)1.4%	(4)2.7%	(27)18.4%	(65)44.2%	(49)33.3%	4.05
	I am very flexible when my environment changes	(0)0.0%	(0)0.0%	(33)22.4%	(66)44.9%	(48)32.7%	4.03
Average score							**4.06**
Recuperability	I recuperate even from things that hit me hard	(1)0.7%	(6)4.1%	(27)18.4%	(74)50.3%	(39)26.5%	4.00
	I recover from any misfortune that happens to me	(3)2.0%	(6)4.1%	(25)17.0%	(71)48.3%	(42)28.6%	3.98

	I am able to bounce back from any kind of adversity	(3)2.0%	(8)5.4%	(27)18.4%	(63)42.9%	(46)31.3%	3.97
	I always resume my life regardless of the type of setback	(3)2.0%	(7)4.1%	(32)21.8%	(53)36.1%	(53)36.1%	3.96
	I can recover from any type of problem	(6)4.1%	(17)11.6%	(35)23.8%	(35)23.8%	(54)36.7%	3.78
Average score							**3.938**

Summary

The study assessed personal resilience levels among healthcare workers at Kerugoya County Referral Hospital in Kirinyaga County, Kenya. Using a five-point Likert scale, the study evaluated four dimensions of resilience: Determination, Endurance, Adaptability, and Recuperability, with scores below 3.00 indicating insufficient resilience (16). There was high resilience across all dimensions, with scores of 4.42 in Determination, 4.18 in Endurance, 4.06 in Adaptability, and 3.93 in Recuperability, indicating sufficient resilience in these areas. In the Determination dimension, 57.1% strongly agreed on setting and achieving goals, while 57.8% showed perseverance through difficulties. Endurance dimension results showed that 50.3% could withstand hardships. Adaptability scores indicated that 41.5% could navigate challenging situations. Ability to recover from setbacks was significant. Notably, resilience alone might be insufficient for critical care nurses facing moral distress, underscoring the need for additional support systems. Overall, the study underscores high resilience levels among healthcare workers at KCHR, while also pointing out the importance of comprehensive support to address specific challenges.

Conclusion

The overall findings indicate that healthcare workers at KCRH exhibit substantial resilience, with an overall mean score of 4.15 across all dimensions. Specifically, the resilience dimensions

showed high levels, with Determination scoring an average of 4.42, Endurance 4.18, Adaptability 4.06, and Recuperability 3.93. These findings demonstrate the healthcare workers' robust capacity to set and achieve goals, persevere through challenges, adapt to challenging circumstances, and recover from setbacks. The study highlights the critical role of personal resilience as a protective factor against the highly stressful environments typical in healthcare settings. The high resilience levels observed suggest that these healthcare workers are well-equipped to manage the emotional and physical demands of their roles. However, the study also emphasizes the importance of ongoing support systems and interventions to further enhance resilience and address any underlying vulnerabilities. Thus, enhancing personal resilience among healthcare workers is critical to improving their well-being and, by extension, the quality of patient care they provide.

Recommendations

There is need for Kerugoya County Referral Hospital (KCRH) to implement resilience training programs, provide mental health support, foster a supportive work environment, enhance work-life balance, conduct regular assessments, develop crisis intervention strategies, promote professional development, and strengthen organizational policies. These measures would bolster healthcare workers' resilience, ensuring their well-being and improving patient care quality at the hospital.

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