

1 Experiences of Nurses in Handling Residents in 2 Nursing Homes in Iloilo

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ABSTRACT

Aims: This study aimed to explore the lived experiences of nurses working in nursing homes in Iloilo, focusing on how they deliver compassionate, person-centered care while addressing residents' physical, emotional, and psychosocial needs despite existing challenges.

Study design: Descriptive qualitative research design.

Place and Duration of Study: Selected nursing homes in Iloilo, Philippines.

Methodology: Data were collected through semi-structured interviews with eight (8) registered nurses selected via purposive sampling. All participants had direct experience in providing care to nursing home residents. Ethical clearance was secured prior to data collection. The data were analyzed using thematic analysis to identify key patterns and themes in the participants' experiences.

Results: Eight (8) participants were included in the study. Findings revealed that nursing home practice is physically demanding yet emotionally meaningful. Nurses provide compassionate, patient-centered care to residents with chronic illnesses, dementia, and long-term dependency despite cultural stigma, staffing shortages, heavy workloads, and limited resources. They employ therapeutic communication, reorientation, interdisciplinary collaboration, and engagement activities to meet residents' needs. Resilience, adaptability, and understanding serve as protective factors, with compassion and patience central to treating residents like family. However, challenges such as emotional exhaustion and staffing limitations persist.

Conclusion: Despite systemic constraints, nurses in nursing homes in Iloilo demonstrate strong resilience and compassion in delivering holistic, person-centered care. Strengthening staffing, leadership support, resilience programs, and culturally responsive strategies is essential to enhance nurse well-being and improve the quality of elder care.

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Keywords: Nursing Homes, Person-Centered Care, Compassion, Resilience

16 1. INTRODUCTION

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18 Nurses are critical in providing high-quality healthcare and improving patient outcomes
19 through their adherence to evidence-based practice in their professional roles as leaders,
20 teachers, collaborators, and communicators (Ham-Baloyi, 2022). The nursing role involves
21 patient care through the administration of medications and treatments, the development and
22 implementation of care plans, and communication with patients, families, and other members
23 of the healthcare team. They help to provide a safe home for residents, provide expertise in
24 geriatric care, and perform expert medical care (Corbitt, 2024). They inform the family of the
25 work they are doing, provide emotional support, and assist the other medical staff in
26 providing a higher level of care to residents (Tuininga, 2024).

27 Nursing homes offer a variety of health and personal care services. They provide more
28 medical attention than many other care facilities. Services include full-time supervision, help
29 with daily needs, and special care for seniors. They also offer treatments such as physical,
30 occupational, and speech therapy (Godalle, 2023). Furthermore, flourishing in nursing
31 homes depends on several elements and is strongly connected to how residents engage
32 with their environment. A supportive environment that enhances feelings of connection and
33 well-being can create a sense of comfort and potentially lessen some of the adverse impacts
34 frequently linked to aging and decline (Baxter, Corneliussen, et al., 2021).

35 Although numerous nursing homes abroad are sophisticated and properly maintained, those
36 in competitive and regulated settings find it challenging to deliver quality care to a fragile
37 population, as highlighted by Yang et al (2021). Additionally, as the global population ages,
38 nursing homes face growing demands to deliver high-quality, individualized care to residents
39 with complex needs. Despite progress in implementation science, a gap remains between
40 theory and practice. In many nursing homes, putting evidence-based practices into action
41 remains difficult, especially for nurses who are primarily trained through hands-on, practical
42 experience (Schoof et al., 2025).

43 Geriatric nurses in the Philippines face challenges shaped by the nation's culture and
44 healthcare system. Providing care for the elderly in an institution is frequently misinterpreted
45 or looked down upon, as numerous Filipinos hold the belief that senior relatives ought to be
46 cared for at home (Mutual & Mutual, 2025). This cultural pressure, together with limited staff
47 and resources, makes nursing homework demanding. Nurses face workloads, difficult
48 decisions, and the emotional burden of caring for lonely residents, yet they still strive to
49 provide compassionate and dignified care. Aspects like extended hours, minimal staffing,
50 high demands, time constraints, lack of support, poor leadership, and job insecurity
51 contribute to burnout (Dall'Ora et al., 2020).

52 In accordance with the Sustainable Development Goals, Good Health and Well-Being aims
53 to guarantee healthy lives and encourage well-being for individuals of all ages. The
54 Experiences of nurses in handling residents in nursing homes support the goal by
55 addressing the quality and accessibility of care for the elderly. Nurses, technicians, and
56 nursing aides play an important role in delivering direct patient care and educating
57 individuals about disease prevention, making them essential in promoting health and
58 preventing illnesses, aiding in goals related to infant mortality, maternal health, and disease
59 management (Taminato et al., 2023).

60 Some studies focus only on the well-being of elderly patients in nursing homes; they often
61 overlook the essential role of home care nurses, including their personal experiences,
62 challenges in caring for residents with health issues, and the significance they place on their
63 work. Few studies focus specifically on how working with elderly patients impacts nurses

64 emotionally and professionally. Addressing this gap is important, as a deeper understanding
65 of these experiences can improve care for older adults. Additionally, limited research has
66 been conducted in Iloilo on nurses' experiences in nursing homes. Moreover, no established
67 policy sets baseline data staffing levels for long-term care facilities, including nursing homes,
68 to ensure safe and quality care for residents. Implementing such policies could help reduce
69 excessive workloads, improve working conditions, and minimize staff turnover. Therefore,
70 this study aims to explore and understand the experiences of nurses in handling residents'
71 needs in Iloilo Nursing Home.

72 **2. METHODOLOGY**

73 **2.1 RESEARCH DESIGN**

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77 This study employed a descriptive qualitative research design to explore and understand the
78 experiences of nurses in handling residents in nursing homes. A qualitative descriptive
79 approach is widely used in nursing and healthcare research as it provides a comprehensive
80 understanding of specific phenomena in their natural context (Doyle et al., 2019). This design
81 is appropriate for studies that aim to generate insights into areas that are not yet well
82 understood, focusing on describing participants' experiences rather than explaining them
83 through theoretical frameworks (Ayton, 2023). Furthermore, this approach allows researchers
84 to gather rich, detailed information based on participants' perspectives, enabling them to
85 remain close to the data and gain a clear understanding of the phenomenon (Villamin et al.,
86 2024). In this study, the design facilitated an in-depth exploration of how nurses respond to
87 the vulnerabilities of residents, particularly within the cultural and institutional context of
88 nursing homes in Iloilo, Philippines.

89 **2.2 Participants of the Study**

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92 The participants of this study were registered nurses working in nursing homes in Iloilo. They
93 were selected because of their direct involvement in the daily care and management of elderly
94 residents. The study aimed to explore their lived experiences, including how they perceive,
95 respond to, and cope with the physical, emotional, social, and spiritual needs of geriatric
96 residents. Purposive sampling was utilized to select participants based on specific
97 characteristics relevant to the study (Crossman, 2020). The inclusion criteria were as follows:
98 (1) registered nurses currently working in nursing homes in Iloilo, (2) direct involvement in
99 providing daily care for residents, and (3) at least one (1) year of work experience in a nursing
100 home setting to ensure adequate exposure and the ability to describe their experiences clearly
101 (Ercan-Şahin & Öner, 2025). Nurses who refused to participate or were unable to provide
102 informed consent were excluded from the study. The minimum number of participants required
103 was six (6), as suggested for qualitative research (Creswell, 2009). However, the final number
104 of participants was determined through data saturation, which occurs when no new themes or
105 insights emerge from the data (Hennink & Kaiser, 2022).

106 **2.3 Research Instrument**

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109 The research instrument used in this study was a semi-structured interview guide designed to
110 explore the experiences of nurses in nursing homes. This type of instrument allows flexibility
111 while ensuring that essential topics are covered. The interview guide consisted of two parts.
112 Part I gathered demographic information such as name, age, address, and sex. Part II
113 included one main open-ended question supported by several probing questions to elicit
114 deeper responses. The primary question asked was: "Can you describe your experiences as
115 a nurse in a nursing home, particularly in caring for residents with memory-related disorders,

116 chronic illnesses, or physical limitations?” Probing questions focused on areas such as
117 motivations for working in a nursing home, strategies in addressing residents’ emotional
118 needs, workload management, interpersonal relationships, coping mechanisms, and
119 professional development. This structure enabled participants to share their experiences
120 freely and in detail.

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122 **2.4 Data Gathering Procedure**

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124 Data were collected through semi-structured face-to-face interviews, allowing for an in-depth
125 exploration of participants’ experiences while maintaining consistency in questioning. The
126 interview questions were carefully prepared based on the study objectives and reviewed for
127 clarity and relevance. Each interview was conducted in a private and comfortable setting,
128 depending on participants’ availability and existing health protocols. With the participants’
129 consent, all interviews were audio-recorded and later transcribed verbatim for analysis. Before
130 conducting the interviews, the researcher explained the purpose of the study and obtained
131 informed consent from each participant. Ethical principles such as voluntary participation,
132 confidentiality, and the right to withdraw at any time were strictly observed. All collected data
133 were securely stored to ensure participants’ privacy.

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135 **2.5 Data Analysis Procedure**

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137 The data gathered were analyzed using thematic analysis based on the six-step framework
138 developed by Braun and Clarke (2006). This method is widely used in qualitative research to
139 identify, analyze, and interpret patterns or themes within the data. The process involved the
140 following steps: (1) familiarization with the data through repeated reading of transcripts, (2)
141 generating initial codes by labeling significant data segments, (3) searching for themes by
142 grouping related codes, (4) reviewing themes to ensure accuracy and coherence, (5) defining
143 and naming themes to capture their essence, and (6) writing the report by presenting a clear
144 narrative supported by participants’ responses. This approach allowed for a comprehensive
145 understanding of the nurses’ experiences and perspectives.

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147 **2.6 Rigor and Trustworthiness**

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149 To ensure the quality of the study, the researchers applied Lincoln and Guba’s (1985) criteria,
150 including credibility, transferability, dependability, confirmability, and authenticity. Credibility
151 was established through techniques such as triangulation and member checking, where
152 participants reviewed their responses to ensure accuracy. Transferability was ensured by
153 providing detailed descriptions of the study context and participants. Dependability was
154 achieved by maintaining consistent procedures and proper documentation throughout the
155 research process. Confirmability was ensured through reflexive journaling and maintaining
156 records to minimize researcher bias. Authenticity was established by presenting participants’
157 experiences accurately and allowing them to verify their responses.

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159 **2.7 Ethical Considerations**

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161 This study adhered to ethical principles and was conducted in accordance with the guidelines
162 of the Iloilo Doctors’ College Institutional Research Ethics Committee (IDIREC). Approval was
163 obtained prior to data collection to ensure the protection of participants’ rights and welfare.
164 Participants were informed about the purpose, procedures, risks, and benefits of the study,
165 and informed consent was obtained prior to participation. Participation was voluntary, and
166 participants were free to withdraw at any time without consequences. Confidentiality and
167 privacy were strictly maintained by using pseudonyms and removing identifying information
168 from the data. No monetary incentives were provided. All collected data were securely stored

169 and disposed of properly after the study. The researchers ensured transparency, integrity, and
 170 objectivity throughout the research process. The findings were disseminated through
 171 appropriate academic channels to contribute to nursing practice and research.

172

173 **3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

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175 **3.1 Profile of the Participants**

176 The eight (8) participants who took part in this study were registered nurses currently working
 177 in selected nursing homes in Iloilo City. All participants had direct experience with a minimum
 178 one (1) year of experience in handling and providing care to residents in nursing home
 179 settings. To safeguard the participants' identities and to ensure confidentiality. They were
 180 assigned pseudonyms identified as P1, P2, P3, P4, P5, P6, P7, P8. Their experiences in
 181 handling residents in nursing homes are summarized below.

182 **Table 1.**

183 *Profile of Participants*

Participant	Sex	Years of Experience
P1	F	3 years
P2	F	3 years
P3	F	2 years
P4	M	8 years
P5	M	5 years
P6	M	10 years

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185 **3.2 Theme 1: Care Under Strain**

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187 The participants identified caregiving in nursing homes as physically exhausting, emotionally
 188 draining, and highly demanding. Behavioral challenges among residents, such as agitation,
 189 aggression, and mood unpredictability, significantly contribute to the strain experienced by
 190 nurses. They emphasized that managing such behaviors requires patience, proper timing, and
 191 emotional control, which often leads to fatigue and stress. In addition, communication barriers,
 192 staffing shortages, and lack of proper facilities further intensify these challenges. These factors
 193 affect not only the quality of care but also the well-being of nurses. "Combative man siya...
 194 dapat timingan mo ang iya nga mood... kapoy gid ya... sakit lawas mo."

195 [He was combative... you had to time it according to his mood... it was really exhausting...
 196 your body would really hurt.] "Ikaw lang isa ang ga duty nga nurse sa 12 nga residents... nd
 197 mo ka mag dungan." [You are the only nurse on duty for 12 residents... you cannot do tasks
 198 at the same time.]

199

200 3.3 Theme 2: Therapeutic Companionship

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202 The participants highlighted that companionship plays an essential role in nursing care, as
203 they build emotional connections with elderly residents through compassion, patience, and
204 empathy. Nurses described caregiving as rewarding, especially when residents express
205 gratitude. They often treat residents like family members, which strengthens trust and
206 emotional bonds. Consistent interaction, patience, and understanding of residents' behaviors
207 are necessary to maintain these relationships. Additionally, recreational and social activities
208 are used to promote engagement and reduce loneliness. "Rewarding para sa akon ang smile
209 nila kag thank you... gina consider namon sila nga family."

210 [Seeing their smiles and hearing their thank you is rewarding for me... we consider them as
211 family.] "Gina connect namon adlaw adlaw para makwa namon iya salig."

212 [We connect with them every day so that we can gain their trust.]

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214 3.4 Theme 3: Compassionate Communication

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216 The participants emphasized the importance of using compassionate and therapeutic
217 communication when caring for elderly residents, especially those with cognitive impairment.
218 They explained that simple language, repetition, and nonverbal cues are necessary to ensure
219 understanding and cooperation. Nurses also use reorientation techniques to help residents
220 remain aware of time, place, and situation. Instead of confronting negative behaviors, they
221 gently redirect residents to calming activities. These approaches help maintain dignity and
222 create a supportive environment. "Tubang dapat hambalin mo... dapat iexplain mo gid tanan
223 asta ma intindihan ya." [You have to face them and explain everything until they understand.]
224 "Gina ubra namon sa ila is i-reorient sila sa time or day kag year." [What we do is reorient
225 them to the time, day, and year.]

226

227 3.5 Theme 4: The Reward of Compassion

228 The participants described nursing in nursing homes as a source of personal fulfillment and
229 emotional reward. Despite the challenges, they expressed happiness and satisfaction in their
230 work, especially when residents show appreciation. Caring for the elderly gives them a sense
231 of purpose and reinforces their commitment to serve others. They also view their experiences
232 as valuable for personal and professional growth. "Lain gid ya kung gaubra ka nga happy ka
233 pagsulod kag pag gwa... may fulfillment ka ya." [It feels different when you are happy when
234 you go in and still happy when you go out... you feel fulfilled.] "Kanami sa pamasalamat...
235 nami sa feeling nga may mahatag." [Gratitude feels good... it feels nice to be able to give
236 something.]

237

238 4. CONCLUSION

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240 Based on the findings of this study, the following conclusions are drawn:

- 241 1. **Personalized and Holistic Care Approaches.** Nurses working in nursing homes in
242 Iloilo employ personalized and adaptable strategies to meet the physical, emotional,
243 and psychosocial needs of residents. Their practice in addressing varying degrees of
244 vulnerability is guided by person-centered care (PCC), therapeutic communication,
245 behavioral management, and safety-focused interventions. Nursing care in these

246 settings extends beyond routine clinical tasks, requiring patience, constant adjustment
247 to changing conditions, attentive monitoring, and focused engagement with residents.
248 2. **Balancing Professional Dedication and Emotional Burden.** Nurses experience a
249 dynamic balance between professional commitment and emotional challenges. While
250 providing care, they form attachments with residents, demonstrate compassion, and
251 derive fulfillment from their work. At the same time, they face emotional fatigue
252 resulting from residents' cognitive decline, behavioral issues, limited family
253 involvement, and end-of-life care. These experiences strengthen nurses' ethical
254 awareness, particularly in decision-making and in safeguarding the dignity of older
255 adults. This underscores the relational and ethically complex nature of nursing home
256 care.

257 3. **Systemic and Institutional Challenges.** Many of the difficulties encountered by
258 nurses stem from systemic and institutional constraints, including staff shortages,
259 heavy workloads, inadequate facilities, and the complex care needs of residents with
260 chronic illnesses or memory disorders. Such conditions contribute to physical and
261 emotional strain. Despite these challenges, nurses demonstrate resilience, flexibility,
262 and sustained dedication, ensuring that high-quality geriatric care continues in long-
263 term care settings.

264 Overall, this study highlights that the work of nurses in nursing homes is both demanding and
265 intentional, characterized by compassion, adaptability, and persistence in navigating systemic
266 constraints while maintaining the dignity, well-being, and quality of life of residents.

280 **COMPETING INTERESTS**

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282 Authors have declared that no competing interests exist.
283

288 **CONSENT**

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291 All authors declare that written informed consent was obtained from all participants prior to
292 data collection. Participants were informed about the purpose of the study, their voluntary

293 participation, and their right to withdraw at any time without penalty. A copy of the written
294 consent is available for review by the Editorial Office upon request.

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296 **ETHICAL APPROVAL**

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298 Permission to conduct the study was obtained from the Iloilo Doctors' College Institutional
299 Research Ethics Committee (IDIREC) prior to data collection (Approval Code: IDIREC-
300 2025.OI_208), ensuring that the research complied with ethical standards for studies involving
301 human participants.

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303 **DISCLAIMER (ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE)**

304

305 Author(s) hereby declare that generative Artificial Intelligence (AI) technologies, including
306 ChatGPT, was used during the writing or editing of this manuscript especially for consultation
307 and for understanding complex and unfamiliar concepts.

308

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