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# Nurse to Nurse Support Associated with Decreased Compassion Fatigue

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Aims

1. Determine factors associated with compassion and compassion fatigue measured with the professional quality of life (ProQOL) survey across clinical settings at the VA Portland Health Care System (VAPORHCS).
2. Involve RNs in data collection.
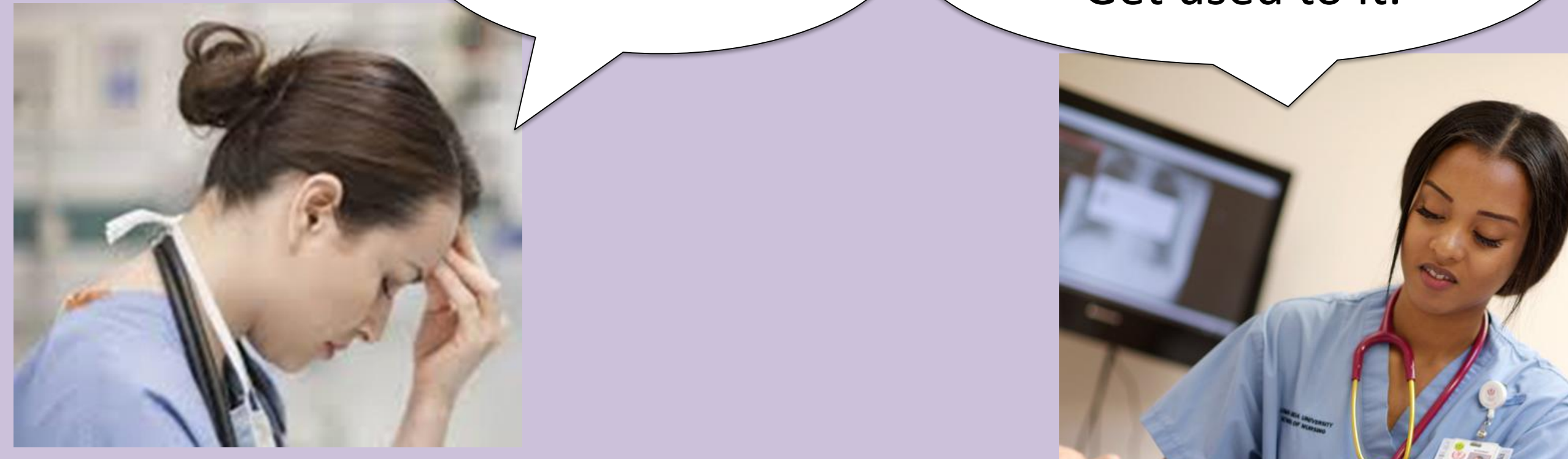
Background

- Care-giver well-being, the fourth of the Quadruple Aim, is positively associated with patient outcomes and with a healthy work environment[1,2,3].
- Workplace stress can negatively impact patient care & cause nurses to leave the profession[4,5,6].
- Both compassion fatigue, arising when nurses become preoccupied with trauma experienced by the patient, and work-related stress from other causes can negatively affect RN well-being[5,7,8].
- Based on the 2018 VA Nurse Engagement Survey results, hospital staff feel that workplace relationships could be improved.

Methods

- A nurse champion in each setting collected anonymous baseline survey data by explaining the project at a unit meeting, leaving an envelope of blank surveys and an envelope for completed surveys. Union approval of the survey was obtained.
- The Professional Quality of Life (ProQOL) survey [9,10]:
  - 10 questions on Compassion (a 5-pt scale, never to very often) with higher scores indicating higher compassion.
  - 11 questions that measure compassion fatigue, with higher scores indicating compassion fatigue.
  - A score of "net compassion" was calculated by subtracting compassion fatigue from compassion. Higher scores reflect higher compassion & lower compassion fatigue.
- Additional questions (a 5-pt scale, never to always)
  - During stressful situations, nurses on my unit offer support and help. (RN to RN support)
  - How often do you feel work-related stress on your unit? (Work-place stress)
  - In general, I am satisfied with my job as a nurse on this unit.
  - In general, I have a feeling of being cared for by my nursing colleagues on this unit. (Feel cared for)
- Data was recorded in REDCap database.
- Regression analysis was conducted in Stata to determine factors associated with compassion & compassion fatigue. Factors among units were compared using ANOVA.
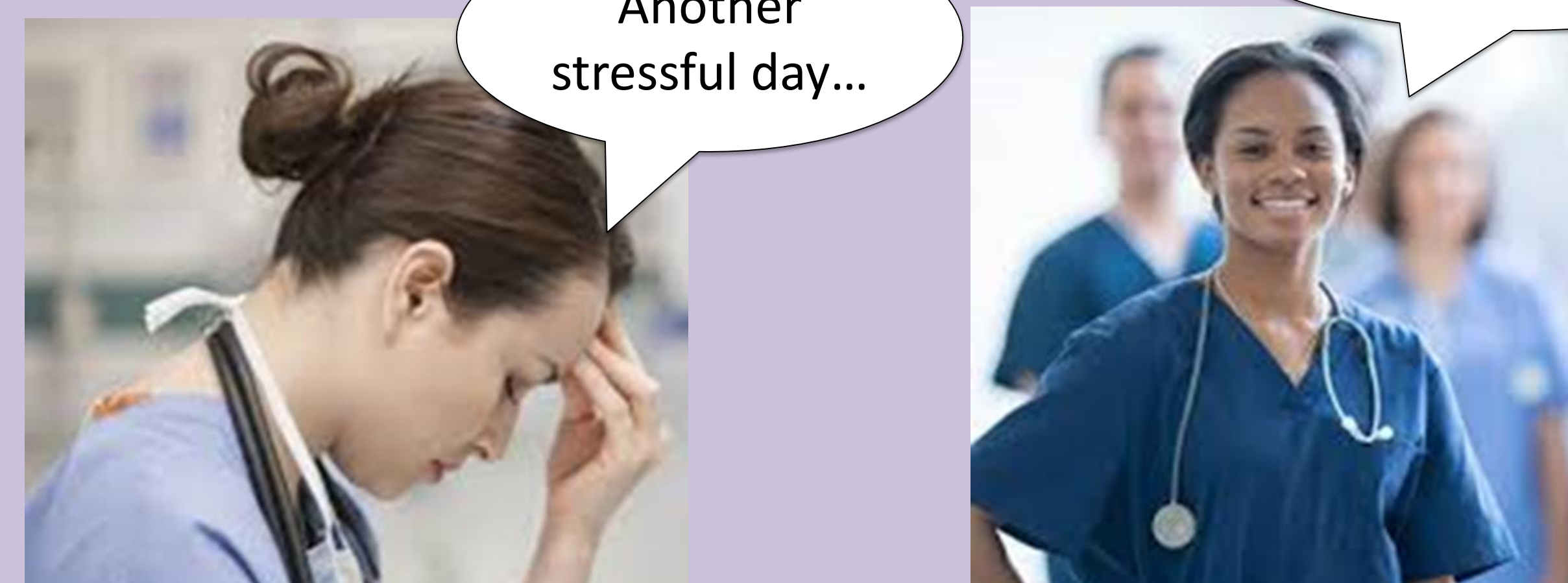
Results

- 14 units—8 acute in-patient, 3 out-patient, long-term care, emergency, & critical care—returned a total of 252 surveys.
- Compassion scores were not statistically different across units.
- Compassion fatigue, & "net compassion" did statistically differ among some units (P<.05).
- Analyzing all units together, RN to RN support & work-place stress explained 30.3% of the variance in compassion fatigue. Feeling cared for by colleagues & work-place stress explained 32.3% of the variance in compassion fatigue. RN to RN support & work-place stress explained 32.3% of the variance in "net compassion". Feeling cared for by colleagues & work-place stress explained 38.8% of the variance in "net compassion". A 1-point increase in feeling cared for was associated with a 4.8-point increase in "net compassion". A 1-unit increase in work-place stress was associated with a 6.2-point decrease in "net compassion".

Table 1. Multiple regression to determine if RN to RN support or feeling cared for by colleagues, along with work-place stress, predict compassion fatigue or net compassion. SE, Standard error.

Outcome Variables	Predictor Variables	Beta ± SE	P-value	95% Confidence Interval	R2	Adj R2
Compassion Fatigue	Full model		<0.001		.309	.303
	RN-RN support	-1.28 ± .52	<0.015	-2.31 to -.26		
	Work-place stress	4.62 ± .49	<0.001	3.64 to 5.60		
Compassion Fatigue	Full model		<0.001		.329	.323
	Feeling cared for	-1.92 ± .52	<0.001	-2.94 to -0.89		
	Work-place stress	4.29 ± .50	<0.001	3.29 to 5.28		
Net Compassion	Full model		<0.001		.353	.348
	RN-RN support	3.64 ± .79	<0.001	2.09 to 5.19		
	Work-place stress	-6.90 ± .74	<0.001	-8.38 to -5.43		
Net Compassion	Full model		<0.001		.393	.388
	Feeling cared for	4.84 ± .77	<0.001	3.31 to 6.36		
	Work-place stress	-6.15 ± .74	<0.001	-7.62 to -4.68		

Conclusions

- Units with high RN-RN support or where nurses feel cared-for, had significantly lower compassion fatigue, & a greater net sum of compassion minus compassion fatigue, even with frequent work-related stress. RNs were interested in this data collection.