Oral Defense Announcement
University of Missouri – St. Louis Graduate School

An oral examination in defense of the dissertation for the degree
Doctor of Nursing Practice with an emphasis in Family Nurse Practitioner

Julie Ingle

B.S. Public Health Education, August, 2016, Southern Illinois University of Edwardsville
B.S. in Nursing, August, 2017, Goldfarb School of Nursing at Barnes-Jewish College

Mental Health Concerns of Frontline Registered Nurses Associated with the COVID-19 Pandemic

Date: July 7, 2021
Time: 10:30am-11:05am
Place: Remote

Abstract
COVID-19 caused local healthcare facilities to admit patients diagnosed with the COVID-19 virus at increasing rates, critically overloading healthcare system resources. Caregiver-related stress associated with the COVID-19 pandemic placed frontline registered nurses (RNs) at risk for mental health consequences (Havlioglu & Demir, 2020; Shechter et al., 2020). This quality improvement project used a descriptive design to administer a collection of validated instruments assessing anxiety, depression, posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD), and demographics. A purposive sample of RNs were recruited from the COVID-19 units in a local hospital, and the survey was distributed via email. During the implementation period (April 4, 2021-May 15, 2021), 56 RNs began the survey with 47 fully completing and nine partially completing the survey. Participants self-reported symptoms consistent with anxiety (n=19/56, 33.9%) and depression (n=21/56, 37.5%). PTSD was marked as a concern for RNs scoring greater than 33 on the IES-R (McCabe, 2019; Nie et al., 2020); 25% of RNs (n=14/56) met this criterion. Of all participants, 53.5% (n=30/56) self-reported substance use to cope with the stress related to the pandemic. RNs admitted to thoughts of self-harm (n=5/56, 8.9%), and four of those RNs with thoughts of self-harm admit to substance use. This project revealed frontline RNs are at risk for mental health issues with inadequate resources to manage potential issues. Expansion of employee assistance programs are essential to follow up on Centers for Disease Control and Prevention [CDC] recommendations and data uncovered in this project.

Defense of Dissertation Committee
Louise Miller Ph.D., RN Co-Chairperson
Laura Kuensting DNP, APRN, PCNS-BC, CPNP, CPEN, Co-Chairperson
Keri Jupka MPH, Committee Member