

## ALSN Continues the Conversation

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### ALSN Continues the Conversation Guide

Melnyk, B. M., Hsieh, A. P., Tan, A., Teall, A. M., Weberg, D., Jun, J., Gawlik, K., & Hoying, J. (2022). [Associations among nurses' mental/physical health, lifestyle behaviors, shift length, and workplace wellness support during COVID-19: Important implications for health care systems.](https://doi.org/10.1097/NAQ.0000000000000000) *Nursing Administration Quarterly*, 46(1), 5–18. <https://doi.org/10.1097/NAQ.0000000000000000>

#### Abstract

Work cultures supportive of wellness and shorter shift length have been associated with better mental/physical health outcomes in nurses, but how the coronavirus disease-19 (COVID-19) pandemic impacted such outcomes is not known. This study's aims were to (1) describe the mental/physical health, well-being, and healthy lifestyle behaviors of nurses during the pandemic; (2) explore the pandemic's impact on their health and healthy lifestyle behaviors; and (3) determine the associations of perceived workplace wellness support and shift length with nurses' health, well-being, and healthy lifestyle behaviors. A cross-sectional descriptive design was used with 264 nurses associated with Trusted Health. Nurses completed a survey containing valid and reliable scales measuring depression, anxiety, burnout and quality of life, perceived wellness culture, and healthy lifestyle behaviors. Results indicated that more than 50% of nurses had worsening mental/physical health relating to the pandemic. Compared with nurses whose workplaces provided little/no wellness support, nurses with workplaces that supported their wellness were 3 to 9 times as likely to have better mental/physical health, no/little stress, no burnout, and high quality of life. Nurses who worked longer shifts had poorer health outcomes. These findings indicate that workplace wellness support and shorter shifts positively impacted nurse mental/physical health and professional quality of life amidst the pandemic.

#### Discussion Questions:

Findings reported by the authors in this study indicate travel nurses who perceived their work environment to be one that supports personal wellness had better physical and mental health and engaged more in healthy lifestyle behaviors than those who did not perceive the same level of support. These findings are important for healthcare organizations, systems, and nurse leaders as the focus continues to be on supporting the well-being of their clinicians.

1. The authors list several individual-focused, evidence-based programs designed to enhance individual health and well-being that should easily be adopted by health care systems such as mindfulness, health coaching, gratitude practice, and cognitive-behavioral therapy/skills. Within your own organizations, what programs are readily available to nurses to improve their physical/mental health. In your opinion, are these programs meeting the needs of your employees, why or why not?
2. Two recent publications by the National Academy of Medicine; *Taking Action Against Clinician Burnout: A Systems Approach to Professional Well-Being* (2019), and *The Future of Nursing 2020-2030: Charting a Path to Achieve Health Equity*; note that while strengthening individual factors may help mediate individual outcomes (clinician burnout vs. professional well-being), factors in the work environment, including the external environment, the healthcare organization, and frontline care delivery, influence each other and work system-related factors that can contribute to burnout and professional well-being. While individual factors can be strengthened, they can also become exhausted over time. What work-system-related factors in your organization are impacting clinician well-being? How might/can these work systems be improved to reduce the negative impact on nurses' well-being within your organization?