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Original Article

A CROSS-SECTIONAL STUDY ON PATIENTS AND HEALTH FACILITY CHALLENGES FACED BY FRONTLINE NURSE MANAGERS DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC AT KAWEMPE NATIONAL REFERRAL HOSPITAL, KAMPALA DISTRICT.

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Abstract.

Background.

Healthcare workers' health, well-being, and safety are paramount to a functioning healthcare system and to ensuring patient safety. Consequently, it is necessary to mitigate risks on multiple levels. This study determined the challenges faced by frontline nurse managers during the COVID-19 pandemic at Kawempe National Referral Hospital, Kampala District.

Methodology.

A descriptive cross-sectional study design and quantitative data collection method was used, 30 respondents were selected using convenience sampling procedure. Data was collected using questionnaires. Data was analyzed using excel data base and the results were presented inform of figures and tables.

Results

20 (66.7%) of the respondents were Midwives, and 18 (60%) of the respondents had 5 years or more of experience. 21 (70%) reported poor health-seeking behavior of patients due to fear of COVID-19 infection from hospitals, 30 (100%) reported patients' failure to adhere to recommendations, and 30 (100%) reported lack of appreciation from patients and community members. Facility-related challenges included; 30 (100%) of participants reported, increased exposure to highly contagious, life-threatening infections, 18 (60%) reported a lack of support, supervision, and monitoring, 30 (100%) reported a lack of resources such as oxygen, 30 (100%) reported lack of equipment such as beds to handle the number of patients and 25 (83.3%) reported excessive job demands as well as heavy workload.

Conclusion.

The established patients and health facility-related challenges included; poor health-seeking behavior of patients due to fear of covid 19 infection from hospitals, lack of appreciation from patients and community members, increased exposure to highly contagious, life-threatening infections, and lack of support, supervision, and monitoring.

Recommendations.

The administration of Kawempe National Referral Hospital should endeavor to provide all the required resources, such as beds, PPE, and equipment, to ensure the provision of high-quality, efficient services.

Keywords: Patients and Health facility-related challenges, Frontline nurse managers, COVID-19 pandemic, Kawempe National Referral Hospital.

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Background.

According to the available Ministry of Health (2022) statistics, a total of 160,146 people have been infected with

Covid 19 in Uganda since the first case was reported and 3,465 coronavirus-related deaths have been reported in the country since the pandemic began while currently, a total of 990 new infections were reported each day in Uganda



(MoH, 2022). Suffice it to say that COVID-19 overwhelmed Uganda's healthcare system, and to date, the capacity of intensive care unit (ICU) beds reached beyond its limits early on in the pandemic (Nguyen, Drew, and Joshi, 2020). Moreover, Ugandan hospitals were little prepared for the pandemic, with the most prominent example of staff shortages, and shortages in resources such as oxygen, ICU beds, and PPE among others (Mboowa et al, 2021) The crisis also showed how the pre-existing lack of qualified personnel, especially nursing staff, had serious effects in this emergency (Mboowa et al, 2021).

Healthcare workers' health, well-being, and safety are paramount to a functioning healthcare system and to ensuring patient safety (Sorbello, El-Boghdady, and Di Giacinto, 2020). Consequently, it is necessary to mitigate risks on multiple levels – especially by identifying the challenges frontline nurse managers face as well as what could be done to alleviate these challenges. At Kawempe National Referral Hospital, no study had been carried out to identify the challenges faced by frontline nurse managers during the COVID-19 pandemic, hence the need to carry out this study. This study determined the challenges faced by frontline nurse managers during the COVID-19 pandemic at Kawempe National Referral Hospital, Kampala District.

Methodology

Study design.

A descriptive cross-sectional design was used, employing a quantitative method.

Study Area

The study was conducted at Kawempe National Referral Hospital, Kampala District, off Kampala – Bombo highway, 4 km from Kampala city center. The hospital provides many health services, although it majorly focuses on maternal and child health services. The study setting was selected because it was well known to the researcher, and the problem under study was on the increase.

Study Population

The study included frontline Nurse Managers providing health care services to patients at Kawempe National Referral Hospital, Kampala District.

Sample Size Determination

The sample size was determined using the Morgan and Krejcie table for sample size determination. Based on the

table for sample size determination above, with a study population of 35 frontline Nurse Managers providing health care services to patients at Kawempe National Referral Hospital, Kampala District, the sample size was 30 respondents.

Sampling Technique

A convenience sampling procedure was used to select respondents for the study.

Sampling Procedure

A convenience sampling procedure was used to select respondents for the study. In this procedure, the researcher conveniently selected the eligible available respondents who met the study criteria and consented to participate in the study and included them in the study. This continued until the total number of respondents to be interviewed per day was achieved.

Data Collection Method

Questionnaires were distributed to respondents in the different wards or departments where they were found, giving them time to fill out the questionnaire and later go back and collect them.

Data Collection Tools

Data was collected using an approved semi-structured questionnaire, which consisted of both open and closed-ended questions. This tool was selected because the study involved only literate respondents who were thus able to read, write, and understand English.

Data Collection Procedure

Before approaching and collecting data from respondents at the hospital, the researcher was accompanied and introduced to the respondents by the in-charges of the participating wards and departments where respondents were found. Then the researcher introduced herself and the research topic, distributed questionnaires to the respondents and gave them time to answer, then went back later and collected them. The researcher sampled 10 respondents per day for a total of 30 respondents for 3 days.

Study Variables

The dependent variables for the study included.

Challenges faced by frontline nurse managers

The independent variables for the study included.

Patients and health facility-related challenges faced by frontline nurse managers.

Quality Control.

The questionnaire was pre-tested among 10 frontline Nurse Managers providing health care services at Kawempe National Referral Hospital, Kampala district, to enable the researcher to assess its clarity, accuracy, and reliability and thereafter make any necessary adjustments before applying the interview guide in the study area. The questionnaire was checked for consistency, meaningfulness, and reliability before it was used for data collection in the study.

Data Analysis and Presentation

The collected data was first analyzed manually by the use of papers and pens and tallying, after which the researcher

presented them in tables, graphs, and pie charts generated by Microsoft Excel.

Ethical approval.

Ethical approval to carry out the study was obtained, and a letter of introduction will be obtained from the Uganda Institute of Allied Health and Management Sciences, Mulago, introducing the researcher to the administration of Kawempe National Referral Hospital and, hence, introduce the researcher to the respondents.

Informed consent

Respondents were assured of maximum confidentiality, and only numbers instead of names were used to identify the respondents. The study only commenced after the objectives of the study had been well explained to participants and they had consented to participate in the study.

Results.

Social Demographic Characteristics.

Figure 1: Distribution of respondents by age n=30

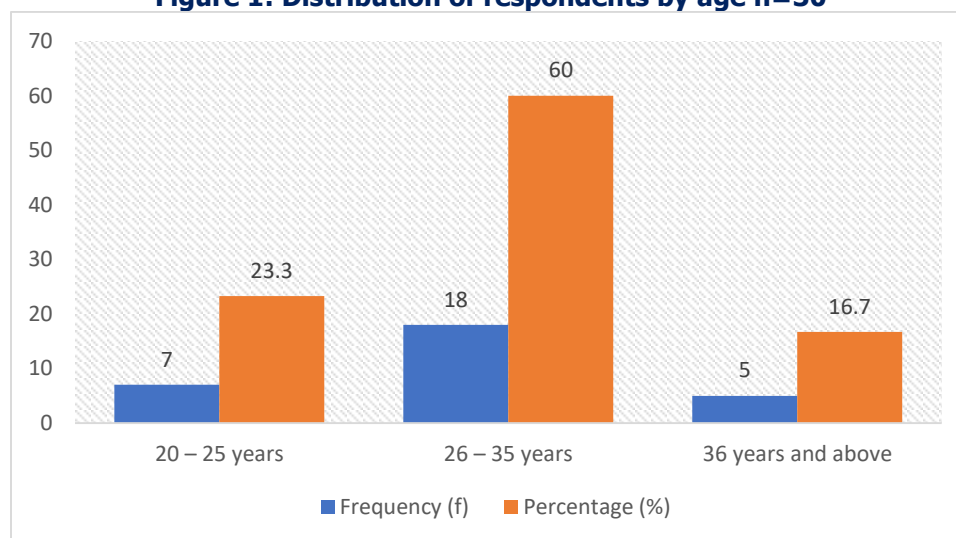


Figure 1: shows that the majority 18 (60%) of the respondents were in the age range of 26 – 35 years, followed by 7 (23.3%) who were 20 – 25 years, while the least 5 (16.7%) were 20 – 25 years

Figure 2: Distribution of respondents by gender n=30

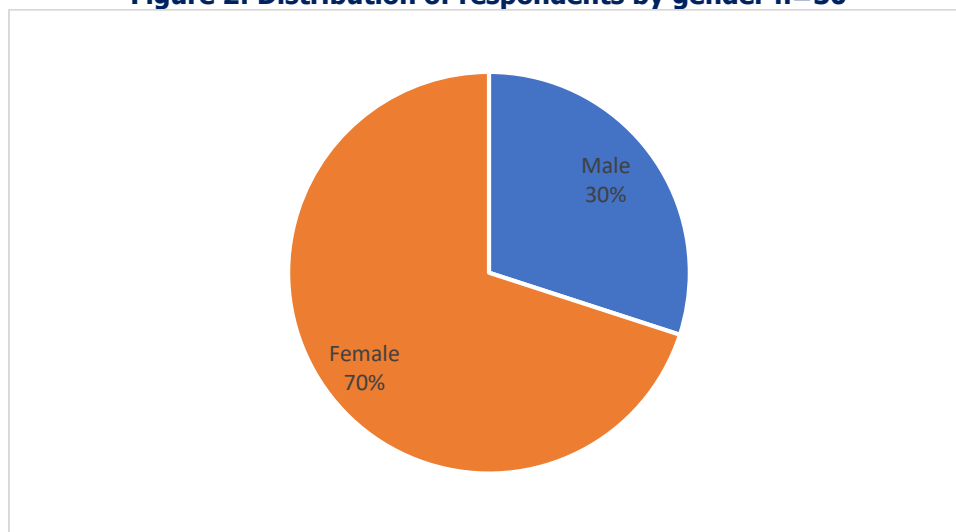


Figure 2: shows that the majority 21 (70%) of the respondents were female while the least, 9 (30%) were male.

Figure 3: Distribution of respondents by cadre n=30.

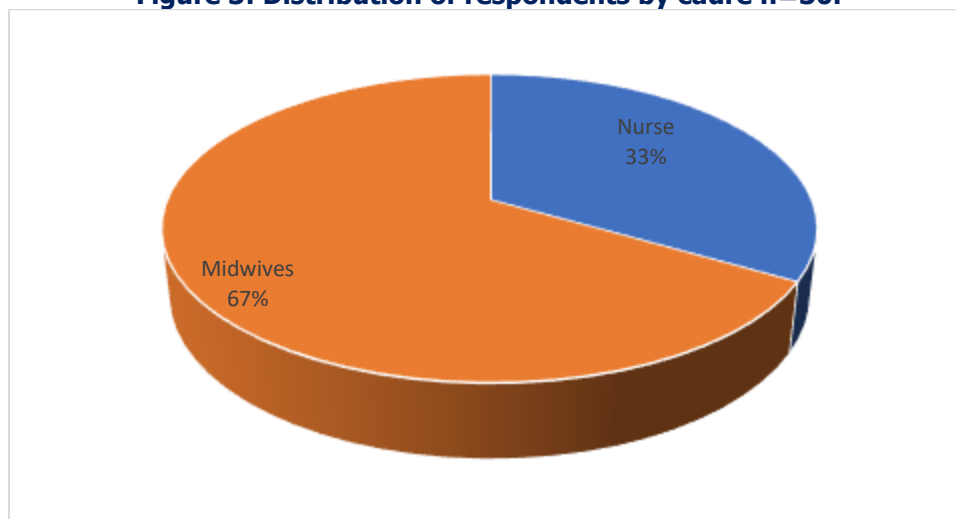


Figure 3 indicates that most 20 (66.7%) of the respondents were Midwives while the least 10 (33.3%) were Nurses.

Table 1: Distribution of respondents by years of experience n=30.

Years of experience	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
1 – 5 years	12	40
5 years and above	18	60
Total	30	100

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Table 1 shows that most 18 (60%) of the respondents had 5 years and above of experience while the least 12 (40%) had 1 – 5 years.

Figure 4: Distribution of respondents by department n=30

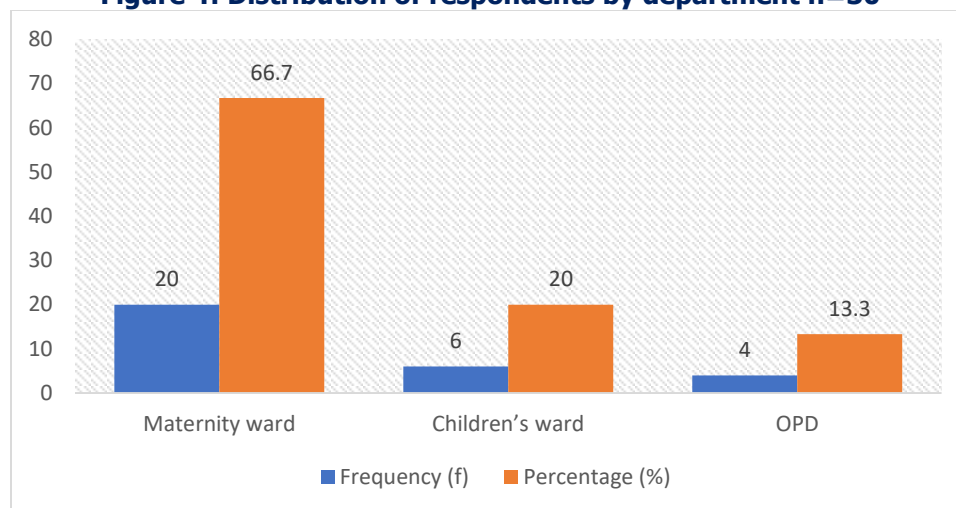


Figure 4 indicates that the majority, 20 (66.7%) of the respondents worked in the maternity ward, followed by 6 (20%) who worked in the children's ward, while the least 4 (13.3%) worked in OPD.

atient-related challenges faced by frontline Nurse managers during the COVID-19 pandemic

Figure 5: Whether poor health-seeking behavior of patients due to fear of COVID-19 infection from hospitals is a challenge faced by respondents n=30

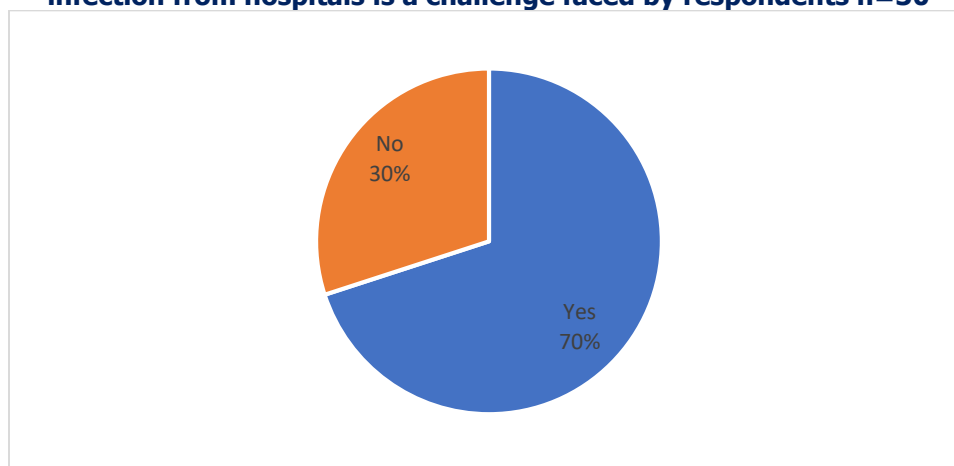


Figure 5: Majority 21 (70%) of the respondents reported that poor health-seeking behavior of patients due to fear of COVID-19 infection from hospitals is a challenge faced by respondents, while the least 9 (30%) reported that it was not.

Table 2: Whether patients' failure to adhere to recommendations is a challenge they faced during the COVID-19 pandemic n=30

Responses	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Yes	30	100
No	0	0
Total	30	100

Table 2: shows that, all 30 (100%) of the respondents reported that patients' failure to adhere to recommendations is a challenge they faced during the covid 19 pandemic.

Table 3: Whether patients' preference for local herbs instead of modern medication was a challenge faced during the COVID-19 pandemic n=30

Responses	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Yes	30	100
No	0	0
Total	30	100

Table 3 indicates that all 30 (100%) of the respondents reported that patients' preference for local herbs instead of modern medication was a challenge faced during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Table 4: Whether lack of appreciation from patients and community members was a challenge faced by health workers during the COVID-19 pandemic n=30

Responses	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Yes	30	100
No	0	0
Total	30	100

Table 4: All 30 (100%) of the respondents reported that lack of appreciation from patients and community members was a challenge they faced during the COVID-19 pandemic

Table 5: Whether social stigma and fear to associate or come close to health workers by patients due to fear of getting infected by COVID-19 was a challenge faced n=30

Responses	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Yes	30	100
No	0	0
Total	30	100

Table 5 shows that all 30 (100%) of the respondents reported that social stigma and fear of associate or come close to health workers by patients due to fear of getting infected by covid was a challenge faced.

Facility-related challenges faced by frontline Nurse managers during the COVID-19 pandemic

Table 6: Whether increased exposure to highly contagious, life-threatening infections is a challenge respondents faced during the COVID-19 pandemic n=30

Responses	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Yes	30	100
No	0	0
Total	30	100

Table 6 shows that, all 30 (100%) of the respondents reported that increased exposure to highly contagious, life-threatening infections is a challenge respondents faced during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Table 7: Whether lack of support, supervision, and monitoring was a challenge faced during the COVID-19 pandemic n=30

Responses	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Yes	18	60
No	12	40
Total	30	100

Table 7: shows that majority 18 (60%) of the respondents reported that lack of support, supervision and monitoring was a challenge faced during the covid 19 pandemic while the least 12 (40%) reported that it was not a challenge they faced.

Table 8: Whether lack of resources such as oxygen was a challenge faced during the COVID-19 pandemic n=30

Responses	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Yes	30	100
No	0	0
Total	30	100

Table 8: shows that, all 30 (100%) of the respondents reported that lack of resources such as oxygen was a challenge faced during the covid 19 pandemic.

Table 9: Whether lack of equipment such as beds to handle the number of patients was a challenge faced during the COVID-19 pandemic n=30

Responses	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Yes	30	100
No	0	0
Total	30	100

Table 9: indicates that, all 30 (100%) of the respondents reported that lack of equipment such as beds to handle the number of patients was a challenge faced during the covid 19 pandemic.

Table 10: Whether excessive job demands and heavy workload were a challenge faced by respondents during the pandemic n=30.

Responses	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Yes	25	83.3
No	5	16.7
Total	30	100

Table 10: shows that, majority 25 (83.3%) of the respondents reported that excessive job demands as well as heavy workload was a challenge faced during the pandemic while the least 5 (16.7%) reported that it was not a challenge.

Figure 6: Whether an inadequate supply of protective gear such as masks and sanitizer was a challenge faced during the COVID-19 pandemic n=30

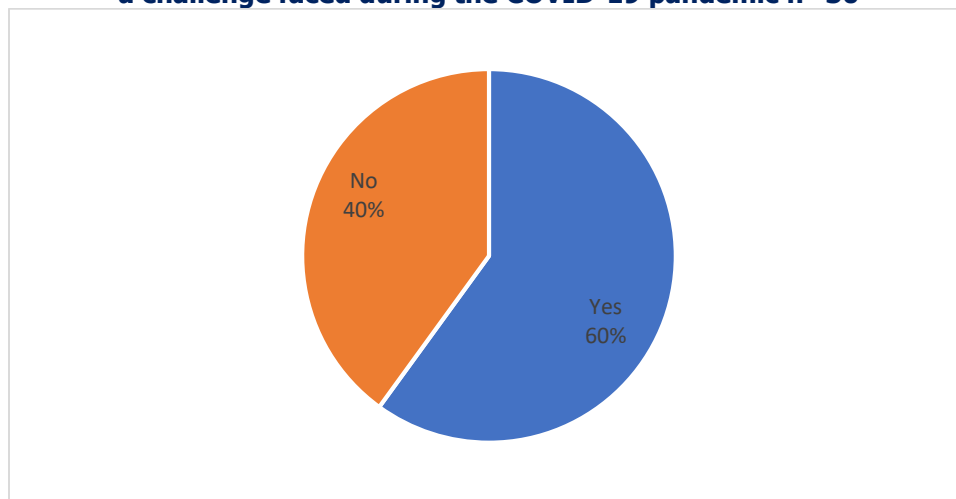


Figure 6: shows that, most 18 (60%) of the respondents reported that inadequate or lack of protective gears such as masks and sanitizer was a challenge faced during the covid 19 pandemic while the least 12 (40%) reported that it was not a challenge they faced.

Figure 7: Whether low health worker to patient ratio was a challenge faced during the COVID-19 pandemic n=30

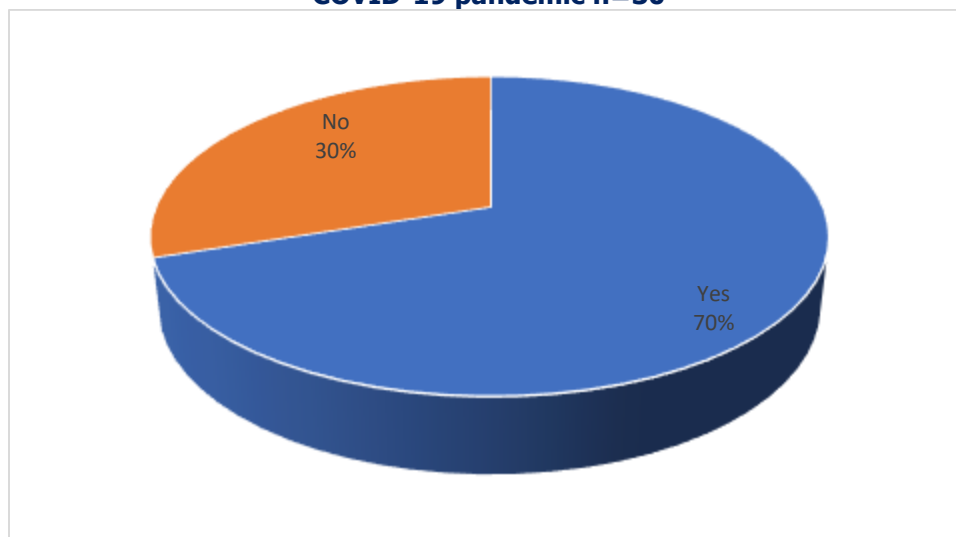


Figure 7: shows that, majority 21 (70%) of the respondents reported that low health worker to patient ratio was a challenge faced during the covid 19 pandemic while the least reported that it was not a challenge.



Discussion of results.

Patient-related challenges faced frontline Nurse managers during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The majority 21 (70%) of the respondents reported that the poor health-seeking behavior of patients due to fear of covid 19 infection from hospitals is a challenge faced by respondents which was in line with Stennett et al, (2021) whose study about lessons learned from the resilience of Chinese hospitals to the COVID-19 pandemic: a scoping review reported that patient-related challenges faced by frontline nurse managers during covid 19 pandemic included poor health seeking behavior due to fear of infection from hospitals.

All 30 (100%) of the respondents reported that patients' failure to adhere to recommendations is a challenge they faced during the covid 19 pandemic which was in line with Billings et al, (2021) whose study about the experiences of frontline healthcare workers and their views about support during COVID-19 and previous pandemics: a systematic review and qualitative meta-synthesis reported that patient-related challenges faced by frontline nurse managers during covid 19 pandemic included failure to adhere to recommendations.

All 30 (100%) of the respondents reported that patients' preference for local herbs instead of modern medication was a challenge faced during the covid 19 pandemic which was in line with Sun et al, (2020) whose qualitative study on the psychological experience of caregivers of COVID-19 patients revealed that patient-related challenges faced by frontline nurse managers during covid 19 pandemic included a preference for local herbs instead of modern medication.

All 30 (100%) of the respondents reported that lack of appreciation from patients and community members was a challenge they faced during the covid 19 pandemic which was supported by Houghton et al, (2020) whose study about barriers and facilitators to healthcare workers' adherence with infection prevention and control (IPC) guidelines for respiratory infectious diseases: a rapid qualitative evidence synthesis revealed that patient-related challenges faced by frontline nurse managers during covid 19 pandemic included lack of appreciation from patients and community members.

All 30 (100%) of the respondents reported that social stigma and fear of associating or coming close to health workers' patients due to fear of getting infected by COVID-19 was a challenge faced which was in agreement with Mahmud and

Islam (2020) whose study about social stigma as a barrier to Covid-19 responses to community well-being in Bangladesh revealed that patient-related challenges faced by frontline nurse managers during covid 19 pandemic included social stigma and fear to associate or come close to health workers by patients due to fear of getting infected by covid.

Facility-related challenges faced frontline Nurse managers during the COVID-19 pandemic.

All 30 (100%) of the respondents reported that increased exposure to highly contagious, life-threatening infections is a challenge respondents faced during the covid 19 pandemic which was in line with Nyashanu et al, (2020) whose study about exploring the challenges faced by frontline workers in health and social care amid the COVID-19 pandemic: experiences of frontline workers in the English Midlands region, UK reported that facility-related challenges faced by frontline nurse managers during covid 19 pandemic included increased exposure to highly contagious, life-threatening infections.

The majority 18 (60%) of the respondents reported that lack of support, supervision, and monitoring was a challenge faced during the covid 19 pandemic which was in line with Kreh et al, (2021) whose study about ethical and psychosocial considerations for hospital personnel in the COVID-19 crisis: Moral injury and resilience revealed that facility-related challenges faced by frontline nurse managers during covid 19 pandemic included lack of support, supervision and monitoring.

All 30 (100%) of the respondents reported that lack of resources such as oxygen was a challenge faced during the covid 19 pandemic which was Razu et al, (2021) whose study about the challenges faced by healthcare professionals during the COVID-19 pandemic: A Qualitative inquiry from Bangladesh revealed that facility related challenges faced by frontline nurse managers during covid 19 pandemic included lack of resources such as oxygen.

All 30 (100%) of the respondents reported that lack of equipment such as beds to handle the number of patients was a challenge faced during the covid 19 pandemic which was in agreement with Schwartz et al, (2020) whose study about protecting healthcare workers during the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) Outbreak: Lessons from Taiwan's Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome Response revealed that facility-related challenges faced by frontline nurse managers during covid 19 pandemic included lack of equipment such as beds to handle the number of patients.



The majority 25 (83.3%) of the respondents reported that excessive job demands, as well as heavy workload, was a challenge faced during the pandemic which was in agreement with Nguyen, Drew, and Joshi (2020) whose study about the risk of COVID-19 among frontline healthcare workers and the general community: A prospective cohort study revealed that facility-related challenges faced by frontline nurse managers during covid 19 pandemic included excessive job demands as well as heavy workload among others.

Most 18 (60%) of the respondents reported that inadequate or lack of protective gear such as masks and sanitizer was a challenge faced during the covid 19 pandemic which was in line with Ahmed et al, (2020) whose study about the availability of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) among US and Pakistani Doctors in COVID-19 Pandemic revealed that facility-related challenges faced by frontline nurse managers during covid 19 pandemic included lack of protective gears such as masks and sanitizer.

The majority 21 (70%) of the respondents reported that the low health worker-to-patient ratio was a challenge faced during the covid 19 pandemic which was in line with Singh and Subedi (2020) whose study about COVID-19 and stigma: Social discrimination towards Frontline Healthcare providers and COVID-19 recovered patients in Nepal revealed that facility-related challenges faced by frontline nurse managers during covid 19 pandemic included low health worker to patient ratio as well as lack of supervision and monitoring among others.

Conclusion.

The established patients and health facility-related challenges included; poor health-seeking behavior of patients due to fear of covid 19 infection from hospitals, patients' failure to adhere to recommendations, patients' preference for local herbs instead of modern medication, lack of appreciation from patients and community members, increased exposure to highly contagious, life-threatening infections and lack of support, supervision, and monitoring.

Recommendations.

The Ministry of Health should endeavor to provide all the necessary equipment and resources to enable efficient and effective service delivery.

The administration of Kawempe National Referral Hospital should endeavor to provide all the required resources such as beds, PPE and equipment in an effort to ensure provision of high quality, efficient services.

There is a need for the administration to provide appropriate monitoring and supervision to ensure the effective provision of services.

List of abbreviations.

HCWs:	Health Care Workers
ICU:	Intensive Care Unit
MoH:	Ministry of Health
PPE:	Personal Protective Equipment
SARS-CoV-2:	Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome Coronavirus 2
SDGs:	Sustainable Development Goals
SPSS:	Statistical Package for Social Scientists
WHO:	World Health Organization

Source of funding.

There is no source of funding.

Conflict of interest.

No conflict of interest was declared.

Availability of data.

Data used in this study is available upon request from the corresponding author.

Authors contribution

ELO designed the study, conducted data collection, cleaned and analyzed data and draft the manuscript and EB supervised all stages of the study from conceptualization of the topic to manuscript writing.

Authors biography.

Emily Likico OPU is a student of diploma in health leadership and management at Uganda Institute of Allied Health and Management Sciences, Mulago.

Dr. Elisha Birungi is a research supervisor at the Uganda Institute of Allied Health and Management Sciences, Mulago.

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