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A Study on The Application of Psychological Intervention for Problem Managers After Internship Nurses Encounter Workplace Language Violence

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Abstract

Objective: This study aims to explore the effectiveness of Problem Management Plus (PM+) in providing psychological intervention for intern nurses who have experienced workplace language violence. **Methods:** A self-control experimental design was employed, with 30 intern nurses who experienced language violence during their internship at our hospital from October 2023 to October 2024 as the subjects. They were randomly divided into a control group of 15 and an experimental group of 15. The control group received routine psychological counseling, while the experimental group underwent a 4-week one-on-one psychological intervention for interns who had experienced language violence. The Psychological Resilience Scale (CD-RISC) and the Nurse Professional Commitment Scale were used to assess the subjects before and one week after the intervention. **Results:** The study found that PM+ effectively enhanced the psychological resilience of intern nurses, increased their professional commitment, reduced negative emotions, and stabilized the nursing workforce. **Conclusion:** Problem Management Plus provides a new psychological intervention tool for nursing education and management, with significant theoretical and practical implications.

Keywords

Problem manager; Intern nurse; Workplace language violence; Psychological intervention; Professional commitment

1. Introduction

Workplace verbal violence is a common form of psychological violence in medical settings, particularly affecting intern nurses. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), workplace verbal violence includes verbal attacks such as insults, belittlement, and threats, which can severely damage the mental health of victims [1]. Intern nurses, due to their young age, lack of social experience, and immature professional skills, are often the primary victims of workplace verbal violence. Studies show that 70.7% of nursing students have witnessed verbal violence, and 46.9% have personally experienced it during their internships [2]. This type of violence not only affects the mental health of nursing students but can also lead to occupational burnout and increased intention to leave, thereby impacting the stability of the nursing workforce [3-6]. Problem Management Plus (PM+) is a low-intensity psychological intervention method designed by the WHO for middle-and low-income countries. It aims to help individuals cope with psychological stress and improve their physical and mental functions through short-term, cross-diagnostic interventions [7]. The core feature of PM+ is task transfer, enabling non-psychological health professionals to provide effective psychological support, thereby alleviating the shortage of human resources in mental health systems [8]. However, there is currently a lack of research on the application of PM+ in psychological interventions following workplace verbal violence in medical settings, especially systematic intervention programs for intern nurses [9]. Zhang Bing's team's research indicates that: (1) group PM+ intervention methods can effectively alleviate the depressive and

anxious moods of medical students; (2) these methods can also reduce the loneliness and emotional barriers among medical students; (3) while group PM+ intervention methods have a partial effect on improving medical students' interpersonal empathy, they do not significantly impact the neural mechanisms of pain empathy [10]. Liu Yu, Liu Xiaotong, Yang Ye, et al. suggest that long-term and short-term PM+ psychological training can reduce the perceived stress levels of new recruits, enhance their positive emotions, proactive coping strategies, and social support, thereby strengthening their psychological adaptability [11]. Based on this, this study aims to develop a psychological intervention program based on PM+, explore its effectiveness in addressing workplace language violence among intern nurses, and provide effective psychological intervention tools for nursing education and management, aiming to stabilize the nursing workforce.

2. Materials and Methods

2.1 Research design

This study adopted a quasi-experimental design, which was divided into two stages: the first stage was the construction of the intervention program, and the second stage was the application of the intervention program and the evaluation of its effect.

2.2 Research object

The study focused on nursing students who interned at our hospital from October 2023 to October 2024. Inclusion criteria were: (1) experiencing workplace verbal violence within one week; (2) not suffering from mental illness; (3) having an internship period of at least one month; (4) voluntarily participating in the study. Ultimately, 30 nursing students were included, randomly divided into an intervention group and a control group, with 15 students in each group.

2.3 Intervention programmes

The intervention program is based on four core strategies of PM+: stress management, problem management, behavior activation and enhanced social support. The specific intervention steps are as follows:

(1) Establishment of WeChat group: After the internship nurses arrive at the clinic, the nursing department will take the lead to establish a contact group for the internship nurses, and extract the personal data of the internship nurses who are willing to participate in this study.

(2) Team building: The intervention team consists of 7 nurses with certain knowledge of psychology, who are required to complete the study of "Problem Manager" translated by Qian Wei and Tong Huiqi, and 80 hours of classroom training, master the four strategies of PM+, and be able to use them skillfully.

(3) Determination of research subjects: Within one week after experiencing workplace language violence, internship nursing students can contact the research group through various channels and fill in the psychological resilience scale and the nurse professional commitment scale, which will be evaluated by the intervention team. The final intervention subjects will be determined according to the evaluation results.

(4) Implementation plan: A one-to-one psychological intervention for 4 weeks was conducted on the subjects in the second week after the event occurred

First week stress management: Promote the initial control of stress and anxiety through effective methods, primarily using yoga breathing techniques. The facilitator guides the participants to close their eyes, clear their minds, and practice abdominal breathing: inhale for 5 seconds, then exhale for 5 seconds. Once this breathing becomes more natural, they can try inhaling for 5 seconds and exhaling for 10 seconds. This should be done three times a day, each session lasting 10-15 minutes. Second week problem management: Participants list the psychological issues they face, and intern nurses are encouraged to share their negative emotions after experiencing workplace verbal violence, as well as how these emotions affect their future work. The facilitator helps them choose the most effective solutions and collaborates to develop and implement a plan. Third week behavior activation: Intern nurses are encouraged to actively participate in enjoyable activities from the past. The facilitator assigns task-oriented activities based on their specific situations, such as running, dancing, swimming, or working out 1-2 times a week. These activities are planned and scheduled, supervised to improve mood, and recommended group activities at the hospital, such as flower arranging or mountain climbing, to help interns quickly return to their pre-event lives.

2.4 Evaluation indicators

The psychological resilience scale (CD-RISC) and the nurse occupational commitment scale were used to evaluate the intervention's effectiveness. The psychological resilience scale consists of 25 items across three dimensions: toughness, self-reliance, and optimism. The nurse occupational commitment scale includes five dimensions: affective commitment, normative commitment, cost commitment, opportunity commitment, and social value commitment, with a total of 27 items.

2.5 Data analysis

SPSS 19.0 was used for data analysis, and the main methods included descriptive statistics, t-test, and variance analysis.

3. Results

3.1 Psychological resilience level

The intervention group scored significantly higher than the control group on the post-intervention psychological resilience scale ($p<0.05$), indicating that the PM+ intervention could effectively improve the psychological resilience level of nursing students.

Table 1. Comparison of psychological resilience scale scores between the intervention group and the control group

Dimension	Intervention group (n = 15)	Control group (n = 15)	t value	P value
Tough and tensile	34.8±4.3	28.5±5.0	4.56	<0.01
Self-improvement	28.2 ± 3.7	23.1 ± 4.1	4.23	<0.01
Optimistic	20.3 ± 2.8	16.1 ± 3.0	4.89	<0.01
Total points	83.3 ± 8.0	67.7 ± 9.3	5.34	<0.01

Notes: The data were expressed as mean ± standard deviation, and the t value was the result of an independent sample t-test. P<0.05 indicated a significant difference.

3.2 Level of professional commitment

The intervention group scored significantly higher than the control group on the post-intervention nurse career commitment scale ($p<0.05$), indicating that the PM+ intervention can enhance the career commitment of nursing students.

Table 2. Comparison of intervention group and control group nurse occupational commitment scale scores

Dimension	Intervention group (n = 15)	Control group (n = 15)	t value	P value
Emotional commitment	22.1 ± 3.0	18.5 ± 3.4	3.89	<0.01
Norm commitment	19.5± 2.7	16.0 ± 2.9	4.12	<0.01
Commitment to the cause	15.4±2.4	13.2 ± 2.6	3.45	<0.01
Commitment to opportunity	83.3 ± 8.0	67.7 ± 9.3	5.34	<0.01
Social value commitment	18.3 ± 2.6	15.1 ± 2.8	4.01	<0.01
Total points	89.4 ± 9.1	74.8 ± 9.8	5.12	<0.01

Notes: The data were expressed as mean ± standard deviation, and the t value was the result of an independent sample t-test. P <0.05 indicated a significant difference.

3.3 Negative emotions

The anxiety and depression after the intervention were significantly reduced in the intervention group, and the difference was significant compared with the control group ($p<0.05$), indicating that the PM+ intervention could effectively reduce the negative emotions of nursing students.

Table 3. Comparison of negative emotion scores between the intervention group and the control group

Metric	Intervention group (n = 15)	Control group (n = 15)	t value	P value
Anxiety	12.1 ± 2.0	18.5 ± 2.4	5.89	<0.01
Depression	10.6 ± 1.8	16.2 ± 2.1	5.45	<0.01

Notes: The data were expressed as mean ± standard deviation, and the t value was the result of an independent sample t-test. P <0.05 indicated a significant difference.

4. Discussion

The results of this study show that PM+, as a low-intensity psychological intervention method, can effectively improve the psychological resilience level of nursing students, enhance their sense of professional commitment, and reduce negative emotions. This is consistent with the relevant domestic and foreign research results, indicating that PM+ has significant effects in coping with psychological stress and improving physical and mental functions.

4.1 Improve psychological resilience

4.1.1 Stress management and psychological resilience

The PM+ stress management strategy, which includes relaxation techniques such as yoga breathing, helps nursing students alleviate anxiety and enhance their sense of control over stress. Research indicates that stress management is a crucial method for boosting psychological resilience. In this study, the intervention group showed significant emotional improvement during the stress management phase, indicating that the PM+ stress management strategy can help nursing students better cope with the psychological stress caused by workplace verbal violence.

4.1.2 Problem management and psychological resilience

The PM+ problem management strategy enhances the resilience of nursing students by helping them identify and address the psychological issues they face. Research indicates that improved problem-solving skills are a key indicator of enhanced psychological resilience. In this study, the intervention group demonstrated a more proactive approach to the challenges of workplace verbal violence during the problem management phase, indicating that the PM+ problem management strategy effectively boosts the psychological resilience of nursing students.

4.1.3 Long-term effects of psychological resilience

Enhancing psychological resilience not only helps nursing students better adapt to clinical work environments but also boosts their ability to handle future career challenges. Research indicates that individuals with high psychological resilience tend to maintain a positive mindset and work efficiently when facing occupational stress. Therefore, PM+ intervention not only benefits the short-term mental health of nursing students but also positively impacts their long-term career development.

4.2 Enhanced professional commitment

Occupational commitment refers to the individual's sense of identity, belonging, and responsibility to the occupation. In this study, the score of the occupational commitment scale of nurses in the intervention group after PM+ was significantly higher than that of the control group ($p<0.05$), indicating that PM+ could effectively enhance the occupational commitment of nursing students.

4.2.1 Behavioral activation and occupational commitment

The PM+ behavioral activation strategy encourages nursing students to engage in enjoyable activities, helping them rebuild positive feelings towards the nursing profession. Research indicates that behavioral activation significantly boosts individual job satisfaction and commitment. In this study, the intervention group showed a higher level of professional identity during the behavioral activation phase, indicating that the PM+ behavioral activation strategy effectively enhances nursing students' professional commitment.

4.2.2 Social support and occupational commitment

The enhanced social support strategy of PM+ encourages nursing students to communicate with their families, friends, and instructors, thereby helping them gain more social support. Research indicates that social support is a significant factor influencing professional commitment. In this study, the intervention group demonstrated a stronger sense of

professional belonging during the social support enhancement phase, indicating that PM+ 's social support strategy effectively boosts nursing students' professional commitment.

4.2.3 The practical significance of professional commitment

Enhancing professional commitment can help reduce the intention of internship nursing students to leave their jobs and stabilize the nursing workforce. Research shows that individuals with high professional commitment are more likely to pursue long-term careers in nursing. Therefore, PM+ intervention not only benefits the mental health of internship nursing students but also holds significant practical implications for the stable development of the nursing industry.

4.3 Reduced negative emotions

Negative emotions refer to the anxiety, depression, and other negative emotions produced by individuals when they encounter pressure or adversity. In this study, the anxiety and depression of the intervention group after PM+ intervention were significantly lower than those of the control group ($p<0.05$), indicating that PM+ can effectively reduce the negative emotions of nursing students in internship.

4.3.1 Stress management and negative emotions

The PM+ stress management strategy helps nursing students relieve their anxiety through relaxation techniques. Research shows that stress management is an effective method to reduce negative emotions. In this study, the intervention group showed significant emotional improvement during the stress management phase, indicating that the PM+ stress management strategy can effectively reduce the negative emotions of nursing students.

4.3.2 Problem management and negative emotions

The PM+ problem management strategy helps nursing students address their psychological challenges, thereby reducing the occurrence of negative emotions. Research indicates that enhancing problem-solving skills can significantly reduce anxiety and depression levels. In this study, the intervention group exhibited lower levels of negative emotions during the problem management phase, indicating that the PM+ problem management strategy effectively reduces the negative emotions of nursing students.

4.3.3 Long-term effects of negative emotions

Reducing negative emotions not only benefits the mental health of nursing students but also enhances their work efficiency and job satisfaction. Research indicates that individuals with low levels of negative emotions tend to maintain a positive attitude and high efficiency in their work. Therefore, PM+ intervention not only benefits the short-term mental health of nursing students but also positively impacts their long-term career development.

5. Conclusion

This study explores the application of a psychological intervention program based on PM+ for nursing students who experience workplace language violence during their internships. The findings indicate that PM+ can effectively enhance the psychological resilience of these students, strengthen their professional commitment, and reduce negative emotions. This research provides a new psychological intervention tool for nursing education and management, with significant theoretical and practical implications. Future studies could expand the sample size and extend the intervention period to further validate the long-term effectiveness and general applicability of PM+.

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