

# Fatigue in Intensive Care Nurses and Related Factors

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## Abstract

**Background:** Fatigue negatively affects the performance of intensive care nurses. Factors contributing to the fatigue experienced by nurses include lifestyle, psychological status, work organization and sleep problems.

**Objective:** To determine the level of fatigue among nurses working in intensive care units and the related factors.

**Methods:** This descriptive study was conducted with 102 nurses working in intensive care units in the West Black Sea Region of Turkey. Data were collected between February and May 2014 using a personal information form, the Visual Analogue Scale for Fatigue (VAS-F), the Hospital Anxiety and Depression Scale and the Pittsburg Sleep Quality Index.

**Results:** The intensive care nurses in the study were found to be experiencing fatigue. Significant correlations were observed between scores on the VAS-F Fatigue and anxiety ( $p=0.01$ ), depression ( $p=0.002$ ), and sleep quality ( $p<0.001$ ).

**Conclusion:** Anxiety, depression and quality of sleep were significantly affected by the intensive care nurses' levels of fatigue. These results can be of benefit in taking measures which may be used to reduce fatigue in nurses, especially the fatigue related to work organization and social life.

**Keywords:** Anxiety; Depression; Fatigue; Critical care nursing; Sleep; Sleep disorders, circadian rhythm

## Introduction

Fatigue is a complex phenomenon that negatively impacts an individual's biological, psychological, and cognitive processes. As a health problem, fatigue results in a reduction in attention and physical capacity, irritability, forgetfulness, difficulties facing unexpected situations, slowing of thought processes, reduction in perception and reaction, and difficulties in communication.<sup>1-3</sup> Cases of fatigue in workplace can be either acute or chronic. Intensive care nurses tend to experience chronic fatigue due to their

heavy workload and round-the-clock responsibilities involving working in units with high-tech equipment, diagnosing and monitoring patients with complicated and life-threatening problems, performing advanced intensive care and treatment procedures and establishing therapeutic communication with patients and their relatives.<sup>4-7</sup>

Previous studies have shown that there is a strong relationship between fatigue and the lifestyles and psychological states of shift-workers, particularly 12-hour or longer shifts and night shifts, working longer than 40 hours per week and workloads.<sup>1,6-12</sup>

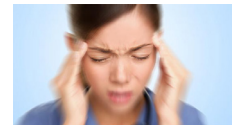
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