

LEADERSHIP BURDEN AND MENTAL WELL-BEING IN NURSING EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS DURING BASIC PROGRAM CURRICULUM REFORM: A NARRATIVE REVIEW

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ABSTRACT

Introduction: Curriculum reform in nursing education is a global imperative, driven by the need to align training with evolving healthcare demands, technological advancements, and patient-centred care models. It is essential to align programs with evolving healthcare needs and competency-based frameworks. However, reform processes place significant burdens on academic leaders, who must balance administrative responsibilities, faculty support, and student engagement. These demands often compromise leaders' mental well-being, leading to stress, burnout, and reduced job satisfaction.

Methods: A narrative review was conducted to synthesise evidence on leadership burden and mental health during basic program curriculum reform. Literature was drawn from peer-reviewed journals, policy documents, and institutional reports published between 2010 and 2026. Thematic analysis was applied to comprehend leadership roles and responsibilities, challenges and stressors, mental well-being outcomes, and coping strategies of the heads of NEIs.

Results: Findings reveal that leaders face increased workload, role conflict, and heightened expectations for innovation and quality assurance. Mental health consequences include emotional exhaustion, diminished resilience, and reduced motivation. Leaders are also expected to provide psychological support to faculty and students, compounding their own strain. Mitigating factors include institutional support structures such as mentorship, peer collaboration, and access to mental health resources. Participatory decision-making and transparent communication foster collective ownership of reform initiatives, while supportive organisational cultures enhance adaptability.

Discussion and Conclusion: Leadership burden during curriculum reform should be recognised as both a challenge and an opportunity. Institutions must adopt sustainable practices that safeguard leaders' well-being while advancing educational transformation. Embedding mental health support into reform strategies ensures leaders remain resilient and capable of guiding successful curricular change. Balancing reform demands with the human dimensions of leadership is essential for sustainable progress in nursing education.

Keywords: Basic program, Curriculum reform, Leadership, Mental well-being, Nursing education institution