Feasibility of launching a multi-state nursing health study in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic

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Feasibility of Launching a Multi-State Nursing Health Study in the Midst of the COVID-19 Pandemic

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Background
• Clinical Registered Nurses (RN) provide direct patient care
• RN well-being should be supported to optimize patient and caregiver outcomes
• Nursing health concerns have increased in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic
• Research on the preventive health habits of RNs is therefore essential, but is limited
• The scientific evaluation of health habits of RNs may facilitate targeted interventions to promote RN wellness

Purpose
• This study aimed to assess feasibility of collecting health data from RNs working full-time 12-hour shifts in hospitals around the United States during the COVID-19 pandemic

Methods
• Day and night-shift RNs tracked health habits for a one-week period that included 3 “on-shift” days and 4 “off-shift” days
• Figure 1 summarizes study activities and measures
• Data collected included:
  • Self-reported physical and psychological health status
  • Sleep via wrist actigraphy and self-report
  • Diet via electronic applications (using MyFitnessPal and the Automated Self-administered recall system or ASA24)
  • Exercise via a wearable pedometer and self-report surveys
  • Optional stool samples for microbiome analysis
• Frequency statistics characterized preliminary feasibility

Preliminary Results
• Preliminary feasibility is displayed in Figure 2.
• Data collection strategies have been successful thus far with 70% of those who consented completing the study thus far.

Current Evaluation
• Current evaluation suggests it is feasible to conduct multi-site RN-focused studies even during a global pandemic
• Conducting the study during the COVID-19 pandemic presented unique challenges to overcome:
  • Meeting with research team and participants remotely
  • Coordinating shipping and receiving study supplies
  • Providing all study information digitally

Next Steps
• Once completed, analysis will focus on characterizing the health habits of participating RNs to direct future biobehavioral studies in this population
• RN well-being is an important part of caring for patients and should remain a healthcare research priority
• Current limitations highlighted by our pilot study include the small sample size with limited numbers of participants in multiple regions
• The study is on-going with data collection ending Fall 2021

Key References
• Available upon request