DECLARATION

I, UWIMANA Marie Chantal, declare that this dissertation titled “Exploring the factors contributing to stress and coping strategies of nurses at University Teaching Hospital of Butare in Rwanda: an exploratory – descriptive study” is my original work. It has never been submitted for any other purpose, or at any other University. I also declare that sources of information utilized in this work have been acknowledged in the reference list.

UWIMANA Marie Chantal /..../…
(208516456) Date

Mrs Jane Kerr /..../…
(Research Supervisor) Date
DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to you my husband Mukama Evode and you our sons Mukama Izihirwe Bruno and Mukama Kundwa Bruce for your love and care.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The completion of this dissertation could have not possible without a number of people who contributed toward it. My profound gratitude is extended firstly to Jesus, my saviour and then to the following:

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ABSTRACT

Stress among nurses is still perceived as a challenge experienced by the nursing profession. Several studies have shown the negative impact of stress on both nurses and patients. However, little is known about the factors influencing stress among nurses in Rwanda.

Aim: The overall aim of the study was to explore the factors contributing to nurses’ stress and related coping strategies used by nurses in the University Teaching Hospital of Butare (UTHB), Rwanda.

Methods: The researcher used a non-experimental, descriptive study to explore the factors contributing to nurses’ stress and related coping strategies used by nurses in the University Teaching Hospital of Butare, Rwanda. This study was informed by a stress and coping theoretical framework. A questionnaire was used to collect the demographic characteristics of participants, while nurses’ stressors were assessed using the questionnaire of nurse’s stressors previously developed by Bianchi. The ways of coping were evaluated using the ways of coping elaborated by Folkman & Lazarus. A convenient sampling of 85 registered nurses, working at UTHB, participated in this study. Permission to conduct the study was requested and obtained from the University of KwaZulu-Natal Ethics Committee, the Kigali Health Institute -Institutional Review Board and the management of UTHB. The data was analysed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS), version 15, and was summarized using descriptive statistics. The results were presented in tables and graphs.

Results: The findings of the study revealed that registered nurses at UTHB face a variety of stressors such as shortages of staff and materials, facing death and dying, dissatisfaction with the work environment, work overload and time spent on bureaucratic activities. It was shown that consequences of stress vis-à-vis registered nurses could be low quality of care, job dissatisfaction and burnout syndrome. Among the major strategies of coping with stress, registered nurses have indicated problem solving, social support and accepting responsibility. This study indicates that stress can be prevented and managed by using
nursing strategies such as team work, effective communication improving work conditions and fostering the managerial nursing strategies in working unit.

**Conclusion:** Drawing from these findings, it can be inferred that nurses’ stressors need to be addressed in order to create a working environment conducive to high quality of care and also to enhance nursing staff morale, satisfaction, motivation and retention.
Table of Contents

DECLARATION .................................................................................................................................. i
DEDICATION ................................................................................................................................... ii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS ................................................................................................................. iii
ABSTRACT ...................................................................................................................................... v
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS ........................................................................................................... viii
LIST OF TABLES ........................................................................................................................... ix
LIST OF FIGURES ......................................................................................................................... x
APPENDICES ............................................................................................................................... xi
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

**AIDS**: Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome,

**HIV**: Human Immunodeficiency Virus

**KHI**: Kigali Health Institute

**SPSS**: Statistical Package for Social Sciences

**UTHB**: University Teaching Hospital of Butare
LIST OF TABLES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Table 3.1</td>
<td>Characteristics of wards in UTHB</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 3.2</td>
<td>Content validity</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 4.1</td>
<td>Socio-demographic characteristics</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 4.2a</td>
<td>Nurse’s stressors- Heavy Workload</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 4.2b</td>
<td>Nurse’s stressors- Patient demands and Facing death and dying</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 4.2c</td>
<td>Nurse’s stressors- Staff Shortage and Limited Resources</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 4.2d</td>
<td>Nurse’s stressors- Managerial and organizational issues</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 4.2e</td>
<td>Nurse’s stressors- Relationship conflicts</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 4.3</td>
<td>Ways of coping with stress in UTHB</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 4.4</td>
<td>Association between age groups and dissatisfaction of work environment</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 4.5</td>
<td>Association between problem solving and age of registered nurses</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 4.6</td>
<td>Association between problem solving and gender of respondents</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1.1  Model of reported stressors and coping strategies  21
Figure 3.1  Map of Rwanda  45
Figure 4.1  Main stressors at UTHB  63
Figure 4.2  Stressful situation experienced by nurses at UTHB  64
Figure 4.3  Reaction of nurse in stressful situation  65
Figure 4.4  Consequences of stress  66
Figure 4.5  Consequences of stress experienced by nurses  67
Figure 4.6  Strategies personally used by nurses in stressful situation  69
Figure 4.7  Nursing strategies for preventing or dealing with stress  70
Figure 4.8  Managerial nursing strategies used in working unit  71
APPENDICES

Appendix 1  Data collection instruments ................................................. 102
Appendix 2.  Ethical clearance from UKZN............................................. 121
Appendix 3  Approval by KHI................................................................. 122
Appendix 4  Permission by UTHB............................................................. 123
Appendix 5  Letter for instrument use ..................................................... 124
Appendix 6  Information document .......................................................... 126
Appendix 7  Informed consent and declaration of consent...................... 127
Appendix 8  Proof of editing ................................................................. 128