

# Perspectives of Nurse Leaders Regarding Time Management in Nursing: Qualitative Research

## Önder Hemşirelerin Hemşirelikte Zaman Yönetimine İlişkin Bakış Açıkları: Nitel Araştırma

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### Abstract

**Aim:** To describe the experiences and opinions of nurses in leadership positions about time management and provide recommendations to avoid wasting time in the nursing field.

**Method:** This is a qualitative descriptive study. It involved self-descriptions of open-ended questions of 32 nurses in leadership positions from Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. Data were interpreted through content analysis.

**Results:** Data were organized into five themes: (1) Factors that facilitate time management in nursing, (2) Factors that hinder time management in nursing, (3) Impairments to care due to inappropriate use of time, (4) Differences in relation to other health professions, and (5) Measures for optimizing time management in nursing.

**Conclusion:** Nursing shortages, work overload, interferences, disorganization, and distractions are barriers to managing time. Nurse participants feel undervalued, have low salaries, and need to have more than one job to maintain themselves, and all these factors are obstacles to the adequate allocation of time that threaten the quality of care.

**Keywords:** Qualitative research, quality of health care, nurse administrators, nursing, time management.

### Öz

**Amaç:** Çalışma, hemşirelik alanında yönetsel pozisyonlarda çalışan önder hemşirelerin zaman yönetimi hakkındaki deneyimlerini ve görüşlerini ortaya koymak ve hemşirelikte zaman kaybını önlemek için önerilerde bulunmak amacıyla gerçekleştirilmiştir.

**Yöntem:** Çalışma, nitel araştırma yöntemiyle ve tanımlayıcı tasarımda gerçekleştirilmiştir. Çalışma, Rio de Janeiro, Brezilya'da, yönetsel pozisyonlarda çalışan 32 önder hemşirenin açık uçlu sorulara verdiği yanıtlara dayanmakta olup veriler, içerik analizi yöntemiyle değerlendirilmiştir.

**Bulgular:** Veriler; (1) Hemşirelikte zaman yönetimini kolaylaştıran etmenler, (2) Hemşirelikte zaman yönetimini engelleyen etmenler, (3) Zamanın uygunsuz kullanımından dolayı bakımdaki aksamalar, (4) Diğer sağlık meslekleriyle ilişkili farklılıklar ve (5) Hemşirelikte zamanın en iyi şekilde yönetimi için alınması gereken önlemler olmak üzere beş tema altında değerlendirilmiştir.

**Sonuç:** Hemşire eksikliği, artan iş yükü, beklenmedik olayların araya girmesi, düzensizlik ve dikkat dağınıcılığı durumlar, zaman yönetimini engelleyen etmenler olarak belirtilmiştir. Katılımcıların kendilerini değersiz hissetmeleri, düşük maaş alıyor olmaları ve geçimlerini sağlamak için birden fazla iş yerinde çalışmak zorunda kalmaları gibi etkenler, zamanın etkili bir şekilde yönetilmesini tehdit ederek, bakım kalitesini olumsuz yönde etkilemektedir.

**Anahtar Sözcükler:** Nitel araştırma, sağlık hizmet kalitesi, yönetici hemşireler, hemşirelik, zaman yönetimi.

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### Introduction

Time, humanity's most valuable asset, is fundamental and inflexible and must be used with caution and discernment (Tracy, 2013). Time does not stop; time does not go back. Time cannot be controlled, but it can be properly allocated through the science and art of time management (Sabuncuoğlu et al., 2010; Simsek et al., 2009). Time is the period in which actions take place. Based on this principle, it is concluded that time is life itself (Sabuncuoğlu et al., 2010). Time is a common good for all human beings; however, the way it is used can be different among people (Harmancı, 2006). Some individuals have more knowledge and talent to manage their time, while others feel pressured by the lack of time. Individuals who manage time well are those who have the ability to organize themselves, take pleasure in life, and are not at the mercy of events (Simsek et al., 2009).

Time management is a concept that has spread rapidly around the world due to the importance of managing this very valuable resource for human beings (Francis-Smythe, 2006). Time management is the proper use of time; therefore, it is not the accomplishment of tasks quickly, but the planning and analysis of situations, allocating time so that the actions are carried out correctly and within the due period, thus individuals do not feel pressured by the various functions they must perform (Sabuncuoğlu et al., 2010). In other words, time management is the efficient use of time (Simsek et al., 2009). Setting goals, making plans, determining priorities, and making decisions help with time management; on the other hand, attending unnecessary meetings, putting off appointments, working in a disorganized environment, and being a perfectionist can waste time (Harmancı, 2006). Time management affects the competence and creativity of employees (Brem and Utikal, 2019).

Institutions are positively affected when their managers realize that a company's most vital resource is time, not money (Harmancı, 2006). In some sectors, and especially for some professions, time management is even more fundamental. A good example is nursing, a profession characterized by the coverage of multiple functions that must be performed efficiently and in a short period of time to ensure the safety of the nurses themselves and their patients (Diniz et al., 2021; Farokhzadian et al., 2020; Leis and Anderson, 2020; Tofighi et al., 2022). Despite the importance of time management in the nursing field, the subject is not addressed as much as it should be (Farokhzadian et al., 2020).

Strategies to better allocate time and prevent the waste of this valuable asset should be taught in nursing schools (Aggar et al., 2018; Bickici and Torun, 2021) and in health care institutions during in-service training (Farokhzadian et al., 2020; Tofighi et al., 2022). However, studies carried out with nursing students in different countries identified a lack of knowledge about time management (Aggar et al., 2018; Bickici and Torun, 2021), and newly graduated nurses in particular can be challenged by time pressure (Leis and Anderson, 2020). The ability to manage time seems to be acquired as nurses gain experience (Ziapour et al., 2015).

The inappropriate use of time can make nurses feel stressed, dissatisfied, unmotivated, and anxious (Elsabahy, 2015; Ghorbanshiroudi, 2011, Tofighi et al., 2022). Thus, there is a relationship between time management and professional success (Leis and Anderson, 2020). Professionals who manage their time better have more self-confidence and feel more motivated in performing their duties (Tofighi et al., 2022). Therefore, in the case of nursing, time management directly interferes with the quality of care (Diniz et al., 2021; Farokhzadian et al., 2020), as nursing care is a complex process that demands dedication and time (Puerta Catano, 2017). Given the relevance of the subject, it is crucial to address time management in nursing, with the aim of developing measures to prevent the waste of this valuable resource, which is often decisive for the quality of life of individuals.

### Method

**Aim:** This study aimed to describe the experiences and opinions of nurses in leadership positions about time management and to provide recommendations to avoid wasting time in the nursing field.

**Design:** This is a descriptive study with a qualitative approach. This design was chosen because it offers comprehensive information about a specific phenomenon (Creswell and Creswell, 2018). The study was guided by the Consolidated Criteria for Reporting Qualitative Research (COREQ) checklist (Tong et al., 2007).

**Time and Place:** Data were collected between June 10th and June 30th, 2022 using online Google Forms. This approach was chosen to overcome geographic barriers and to reach participants easily and quickly (Opara et al., 2023). Furthermore, it allowed for the capturing of spontaneous written responses that were unaffected by interviewer/interviewee dynamics.

**Participants:** The study consisted of nurses at different levels of leadership working in the state of Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. Participants were recruited by individual instant messages sent through various social media applications. The initial messages were sent to individuals who identified themselves as nurse managers/head nurses/nurse leaders and who were currently working in the state of Rio de Janeiro, as indicated in their social media profiles. To ensure that only nurses in leadership positions and working in the state of Rio de Janeiro participated in the study, questions regarding their job title and place of work were included in the data collection tool. In addition, the snowball sampling technique was used to reach more participants, thus, other nurses who met the inclusion criteria of the study were identified by the initial participants. The messages included the invitation to participate in the study, general information about the study, the Free and Informed Consent Term, and the data collection tool.

The study comprised the written answers of 32 nurses based on eight open-ended questions. Nurses in leadership positions who worked in the state of Rio de Janeiro for at least one year, and who signed the Free and Informed Consent Term, agreeing to participate in the study, were included. Other members of the nursing team were not included.

**Data Collection:** The data were collected by a female registered nurse/assistant professor, who has a Doctorate in nursing management and a cultural background similar to that of the nurses participating in this study. The researcher has taken a course in qualitative research methods and has carried out other qualitative studies previously.

The first part of the data collection form covered questions related to the personal and professional characteristics of participants, such as age, gender, marital status, position at work, work unit, and years of work experience, among others. In the second part of the form, there were open-ended questions related to time management which were prepared based on the literature review (Boduc and Baykal, 2021; Elsbahy, 2015; Leis and Anderson, 2020; Rakhshan et al., 2019). The questions included in the questionnaire are presented in Table 1.

**Table 1. Open-ended questions included in the questionnaire**

Questions
1. If you have received education on time management during nursing school or through in-service training, could you provide details?
2. What are your strategies for using your time properly while working?
3. What can prevent nurses from using time properly?
4. Do you feel that time is not sufficient when you are working? Could you clarify?
5. How can nurses' time wastages negatively impact patient care?
6. How can nursing differ from other healthcare professions in terms of time management?
7. What should be done for nurses to make better use of their time?
8. Do you have any additional insights or comments related to the subject that haven't been addressed in the previous?

The data collection instrument was evaluated through two pilot tests, after that, one question was included. The data of these two participants were not included in the study. The questions were asked in Portuguese. At first, it was thought that data obtained from a total of 20 participants would be enough to achieve data saturation, but even after 25 nurses' responses, the need to collect more data was felt and invitations were sent again to some nurses. Upon reaching 30 participants, data saturation was achieved (Creswell and Creswell, 2018), however, two more participants were included to achieve certainty.

**Data Analysis:** Participants' responses were read line by line and analyzed using the content analysis method (Creswell and Creswell, 2018). The answers of the 32 participants were read and re-read, analyzed for themes, main ideas, similarities, and differences, and coded manually. Themes, sub-themes, and codes have been checked several times by the researcher. The interpretation of the data was completed through constant reflections on the study objectives. First, the author became familiar with the data, which allowed initial codes to be generated and grouped into themes. A review of the data was then carried out through repeated readings of the participants' responses and the final themes were then defined. Data analysis was carefully planned and the researcher paid attention to the continuous reflexivity and fidelity of participants' responses at all stages of the analysis.

**Rigor:** To ensure the reliability of this qualitative study, various steps were followed, encompassing credibility, dependability, confirmability, and transferability (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). Credibility was established through intentional sampling, ensuring a diverse participant pool. Thorough descriptions of the research context and data collection procedures were articulated to provide a transparent insight into the study's methodology. Dependability was maintained through the implementation of a specific data collection routine. The procedures for data analysis were clearly outlined, and the researcher had prolonged interactions with the data, which promoted consistency and reliability. The researcher gained a profound understanding of the dataset, facilitating a comprehensive and intricate analysis. The use of a single researcher for data analysis ensured consistency in interpretation and coding, with multiple readings, revisions, and re-evaluations conducted. The researcher's experience in qualitative research and intimate familiarity with the dataset contributed to a nuanced contextual understanding. Confirmability was upheld by incorporating direct quotations from participants, enabling readers to independently verify the accuracy of the findings. Coding, subthemes, and themes underwent thorough scrutiny to ensure alignment with the collected data, with multiple iterations and reviews enhancing confirmability. To enhance transferability, the study provided detailed descriptions of participants, the research context, and data collection procedures.

**Ethical Considerations:** The study was approved by a university hospital's Research Ethics Committee (approval date: June 7, 2022; decision number: 5.453.714). Participants were informed about the aims and methods of the study and a Free and Informed Consent Term was signed by all of them. The anonymity of the participating nurses was maintained.

**Limitations:** The data collection process is one of the limitations of the study since online self-report questionnaires do not allow in-depth approaches. Most participants were female which can also be considered a limitation of the study. Another limitation is that although the researcher is an expert in qualitative studies, the fact that the data were analyzed by only one person should be considered an important weakness of the study. In addition, the results cannot be generalized in qualitative studies.

## Findings

The average age of nurse participants was 41.40 years old, 27 (84.37%) nurses were female, 19 (59.37%) participants were married, 22 (68,75%) had a postgraduate degree, 22 (68,75%) were working as clinical nurse managers, and most participants were working in emergencies (n=7) or Intensive Care Units (n=7). Participants' average work experience was 15.75 years. The characteristics of the participants are shown in Table 2.

The findings were organized into five themes: (1) factors that facilitate time management in nursing, (2) factors that hinder time management in nursing, (3) impairments of care due to inappropriate use of time, (4) differences in relation to other health professions, and (5) measures to optimize time management in nursing. Also, nineteen sub-themes were identified (Table 3).

**Table 2. Characteristics of nurse participants (n=32)**

Participant	Age	Gender	Educational Level	Marital Status	Working Unit	Position at Work	Work Experience (years)
1	45	F	PG	Single	Maternity	CNM	18
2	43	F	PG	Married	Pediatric Clinic	NC	19
3	31	M	MS	Single	ICU	CNM	8
4	39	F	PG	Single	ICU	CNM	16
5	44	F	PG	Married	STIP	ESN	21
6	47	M	MS	Married	ER	CNM	22
7	45	F	PG	Married	Dialysis Clinic	NS	15
8	45	M	BS	Divorced	ER	CNM	25
9	44	F	PG	Single	ER	CNM	20
10	40	F	PG	Divorced	ER	CNM	10
11	40	F	PG	Married	CSU	CNM	14
12	47	F	PG	Single	Hospital Audit	NC	17
13	35	M	PG	Married	ICU/ER	CNM	12
14	40	F	BS	Married	ICU	CNM	2
15	39	F	PG	Married	OR/CSU	CNM	17
16	55	F	PG	Single	Maternity	CNM	26
17	50	F	PG	Married	ICU	CNM	3
18	37	F	MS	Married	HICC	HICCN	14
19	50	F	BS	Married	MC	CNM	18
20	49	F	PG	Divorced	OR	CNM	12
21	38	F	PG	Married	MC	CNM	15
22	44	F	MS	Married	ICU	CNM	20
23	42	F	PG	Married	ICU	CNM	18
24	50	F	PhD	Married	ES	ESN	27
25	45	F	MS	Single	Pediatric Clinic/SC	CNM	18
26	38	M	BS	Married	Psychiatric Clinic	CNM	14
27	40	F	PG	Married	PHC	HN	20
28	30	F	PG	Married	PHC	PN	2
29	26	F	PG	Single	ER	CNM	2
30	46	F	PG	Married	PHC/ER	CNM	19
31	60	F	PG	Married	PHC	HN	35
32	31	F	PG	Single	PHC	HN	5

BS = Bachelor's degree; CNM = Clinical Nurse Manager; CSU = Central Sterilization Unit; ER = Emergency Room; ESN = Epidemiological Surveillance; ESN = Epidemiological Surveillance Nurse; HN = Head Nurse; HICCN = Hospital Infection Control Commission Nurse; ICU = Intensive Care Unit; MC = Medical Clinic; MS = Master's degree; NC = Nursing Coordinator; NS = Nursing Supervisor; OR = Operating Room; PG = Postgraduate; PHC = Primary Health Care; PN = Preceptor Nurse; SC = Surgery Clinic; STIP = Sexually Transmitted Infections Program

**Table 3. Themes, sub-themes, and codes**

Themes	Sub-themes	Codes
Factors that facilitate time management in nursing	- Planning activities - Factors related to the personality of nurses	- Prioritizing tasks - Taking notes
Factors that hinder time management in nursing	- Nursing shortages - Work overload - Doing the work of others - Emergence of interurrences - Disorganization and distractions	
Impairments to care due to inappropriate use of time	- Bureaucratic work - Lack of time for care	
Differences in relation to other health professions	- Having more than one job - Full-time care - Variety of functions	
Measures for optimizing time in nursing	- Better working conditions - Better description of functions - Teamwork - Less bureaucracy - Valuing the nursing profession - Coordination between services - Teaching time management	

## Theme 1. Factors that Facilitate Time Management in Nursing

One of the themes that emerged through the participants' answers was "Factors that facilitate time management in nursing". This theme includes two sub-themes: "Planning activities" and "Factors related to nurses' personality".

### Subtheme 1.1. Planning activities

Planning activities was reported as an important time management strategy adopted by nurses. This sub-theme is divided into two codes: "Prioritizing tasks" and "Taking notes".

**Prioritizing tasks:** The prioritization of tasks appears as an important factor in the planning of routines. Many participants reported using this important strategy to better manage time and provide quality care. Participant 14 stated: *"I perform tasks by priority"*, while participant 25 said: *"I first do the mandatory, I mean dressings, patient evolution, and then manage complications and exams, among other duties."*

**Taking notes:** Taking notes on the activities to be carried out also seems to be a common strategy adopted by nurses. Nurse participants stated using checklists: *"I make a list of activities to be carried out"* (Participant 18). Other participants reported using notes to facilitate time management. Participant 3 stated: *"I try to write down as much information as possible."* The use of an agenda to facilitate the planning of activities was also mentioned: *"I write everything down in my agenda diary"* (Participant 6).

### Sub-Theme 1.2. Factors related to the personality of nurses

According to participants, personal characteristics, such as the ability to concentrate and organize, also influence the allocation of time. Participant 17 reported: *"I use my concentration, speed, and organization"*. A similar statement was made by Participant 23: *"I do everything in an organized way; I don't leave anything for later."*

## Theme 2. Factors that Hinder Time Management in Nursing

This theme is presented under five sub-themes: "Nursing shortages", "Work overload", "Doing the work of others", "Emergence of interurrences" and "Disorganization and distractions".

### Sub-theme 2.1. Nursing shortages

According to the participants' answers, the insufficient number of nurses is an important factor that interferes with the allocation of time in the nursing area. Participants emphasized that nurses perform many functions, and most of the time the number of staff is not enough, as can be observed in the narrative of Participant 5: *"There are many demands and not enough staff."*

### Sub-theme 2.2. Work overload

Some participants specifically pointed to work overload as an obstacle to the allocation of time in nursing and, consequently, as a barrier to the provision of quality care, as can be noticed in the narrative of Participant 25: *"Quality care requires time. Work overload does not lead to good care."* Missed care was mentioned: *"In the health sector there is always something that is not done due to lack of time"* (Participant 21).

### Sub-theme 2.3. Doing the work of others

Gaps in job descriptions and a lack of knowledge about nursing roles were also identified as obstacles to time management. Participant 5 reflected on the subject *"Nurses find it difficult to manage time by solving demands not inherent to the profession."* Participant 22 made a similar statement: *"Nurses are usually responsible for tasks outside their competence."*

### Sub-theme 2.4. Emergence of interurrences

Participants emphasized that constant interurrence is a major barrier to effective time allocation in nursing. Participant 2 reported that *"Complex problems with the patient, which are difficult to resolve or which involve other healthcare workers; meetings held without prior notification, health reports that are informed by nurses very close to the change of shifts, and delays in the delivery of necessary supplies for care are some of the complications that make it difficult to manage time in nursing."* For some specific sectors, such as emergencies, the impossibility of making forecasts and the absence of a

routine were pointed out as important factors that prevent the proper allocation of time. Participant 1 stated: *"Because it is an emergency unit many complications arise, which makes time management difficult."*

### Sub-theme 2.5. Disorganization and distractions

Disorganization and distraction were also mentioned by participants as obstacles to time management in the nursing field. One participant reported that *"not setting goals makes time allocation difficult"* (Participant 20). Another participant emphasized that *"lack of planning, lack of knowledge, procrastination, and distraction"* (Participant 8) make time management difficult.

### Theme 3. Impairments to Care Due to Inappropriate Use of Time

The third theme identified refers to the risks to the quality of nursing care that arise when nurses are unable to manage their time. This theme includes two sub-themes: "Bureaucratic work" and "Lack of time for care".

#### Sub-theme 3.1. Bureaucratic work

Participants stated that nurses have a lot of bureaucratic work, which ends up keeping them away from patients. The excessive amount of administrative work can hamper care when time is not properly managed by nurses. Participant 23 reflected: *"The use of time with tasks that are not related to the care takes nurses away from patients' bedsides"*. Participant 12 made a similar statement: *"Doing too much bureaucratic work can harm care."*

#### Sub-theme 3.2. Lack of time for care

According to the participating nurses, not only administrative work, but also other factors can prevent nurses from spending the necessary time with patients, which harms the quality of care. Participants emphasized the importance of having enough time to interact with patients and attend to their needs. Participant 15 stated: *"Due to lack of time, nurses do their duties in a hurry, which increases the risk of adverse events."*

### Theme 4. Differences in Relation to Other Health Professions

Some participants reported that time management in the nursing field is hampered by characteristics inherent to the profession that are not observed in other health professions. The fourth theme is "Difference in relation to other health professions", which is divided into three sub-themes: "Having more than one job", "Full-time care", and "Variety of functions".

#### Sub-theme 4.1. Having more than one job

Participants stated that due to low salaries, many nurses work in two places, which makes nurses work tired, impairing time management and care. A total of 18 (56.25%) nurses participating in this study reported having more than one job. Participant 16 reflected on the subject: *"Nurses work in several health institutions to support themselves. Tiredness and fatigue impair care."*

#### Sub-theme 4.2. Full-time care

According to the participants, the nursing profession differs from other professions in the health area because nursing care is provided 24 hours a day, and there is a continuity of care that demands a lot from nurses. It can be observed in the narrative of Participant 2: *"The continuity... all health professions act as if they were punctual in the patient's life - just a consult - nursing is the only one that acts continuously in care."*

#### Sub-theme 4.3. Variety of functions

The variety of nursing functions is also identified as a challenge inherent to the profession that makes time allocation difficult. Participant 23 emphasized that the various roles of nurses make it difficult to use time properly: *"The nurse is a leader who provides care and often has to resolve issues related to the multidisciplinary team."*



### Theme 5. Measures for Optimizing Time in Nursing

Participating nurses pointed out measures that should be taken to facilitate the allocation of time in nursing. The fifth theme refers to *"Measures for optimizing time in nursing"* and is organized into seven sub-themes: *"Better working conditions"*, *"Better job descriptions"*, *"Teamwork"*, *"Less bureaucracy"*, *"Valuing the nursing profession"*, *"Coordination between services"* and *"Teaching time management"*.

#### Sub-theme 5.1. Better working conditions

The poor working conditions of nurses were identified as obstacles to the adequate allocation of time, so one of the measures pointed out by nurses to facilitate time management was the hiring of more employees, as observed in the narrative of Participant 1: *"It is necessary to increase the number of nursing professionals and offer qualification..."* The salary increase is also pointed out as an important measure to reduce barriers to time allocation in nursing: *"Nurses should earn decent salaries, compatible with the working day"* (Participant 16).

#### Sub-theme 5.2. Better description of functions

According to the participants, many nurses perform functions that should be done by other professionals. Thus, a clear description of the nurses' roles could help in time management, as Participant 9 stated: *"...Sometimes we have to do the stretcher service, we have to do the work of others... tasks of other professionals."*

#### Sub-theme 5.3. Teamwork

Participants emphasized the importance of teamwork for optimizing nursing time. Teamwork, task delegation, and decentralization were identified as important measures to facilitate time management. Participant 8 stated: *"Better planning, a good notion of teamwork, decentralization, and delegation of tasks as well as continuing education and systematization of care are good strategies to manage time."*

#### Sub-theme 5.4. Less bureaucracy

The bureaucracy was pointed out by the participants as an obstacle to time management; according to them the large amount of administrative work keeps nurses away from patients. Thus, another important measure to better allocate time would be the reduction of bureaucratic work, as can be noticed in the following answers: *"Less paper and bureaucracy would help with time management"* (Participant 17).

#### Sub-theme 5.5. Valuing the nursing profession

According to the participants' answers, if nursing were valued, functions would decrease and time would be more easily allocated. Participant 7 stated: *"When professional appreciation comes for us nurses, we will live with dignity and we will provide the best care to our patients."*

#### Sub-theme 5.6. Coordination between services

According to the answers, if there was better coordination between sectors, nurses would be able to better allocate their time. Participant 2 reflected on the subject: *"Every time while an emergency nurse wastes time looking for someone to clean a wet floor, sepsis can occur. Every time nurses are diverted from their duties for trivial matters in other departments, they spend less time caring for patients."*

#### Sub-theme 5.7. Teaching time management

Although a total of 23 (71.87%) nurses participating in this study have reported not having received any education in time management, many participants emphasized the importance of time management education for nurses. The subject was addressed as follows: *"In-service training on the topic should be offered"* (Participant 4). *"In-service training is important"* (Participant 31).



### Discussion

This study sought to describe the experiences and opinions of nurses in leadership positions about time management and provide recommendations to avoid wasting time in the nursing field. Participants reported factors that facilitate and also factors that hinder time management in nursing; additionally, impairments to nursing care due to inappropriate use of time were identified. According to the nurse participants, some characteristics inherent to the profession make time management in nursing more difficult than in other health professions. In addition, some measures to optimize time in nursing were suggested.

Participants pointed out that planning activities through prioritizing tasks and taking notes are important strategies to facilitate time management in nursing. These findings are in line with those from a study conducted in Türkiye which stated that taking notes, having goals, and prioritizing are fundamental for nurses to perform their tasks on time (Karatepe and Atik, 2015). Prioritization, the delegation of functions, organization, and preparation for non-routine tasks were also pointed out as strategies taken by Iranian nurses to manage time (Talebi et al., 2019).

According to participants, factors related to the personality of nurses, such as being punctual and focused, are also important for the adequate allocation of time. A previous study reported a connection between self-control, mindfulness, and individual personality constructs in terms of how individuals manage their time (Osgood et al., 2017). Similar information was identified in an integrative review, indicating that time management is associated with personal characteristics. It was emphasized that organizational support can only aid workers in carrying out their responsibilities without experiencing pressure and stress (Said, 2014).

Nursing shortages, work overload, doing functions outside of nursing, interurrences, disorganization, and distractions were identified by nurses participating in this study as barriers to time management. A study conducted in Pakistan also pointed out that working under pressure; doing secretarial work, and facing insufficient human resources are obstacles that prevent nurses from managing time properly (Habib et al., 2018). It is known that the high workload of healthcare workers is a threat to patient safety (Steyrer et al., 2013).

Participating nurses reported that the time mismanagement can impair care. Similar findings were identified in studies conducted in different countries. A study carried out with Iranian nurse managers emphasized the importance of time management for the quality of care (Tofighi et al., 2022). A study from Türkiye determined that when nurses learn how to manage time, the quality of care is increased (Karatepe and Atik, 2015).

Participants emphasized that time management may be more difficult in nursing than in other health professions because nurses spend more time at patients' bedsides, have a greater variety of functions, and receive a lower salary. Low wages can make nurses frustrated, and dissatisfaction at work can impair time management (Elsabagy et al., 2015). In a previous study carried out in Brazil, nurse managers reported that they spend most of their time worrying about patients' values, making decisions to ensure the best care for patients, and evaluating the performance of the nursing team (Alferes et al., 2022). These findings reinforce the answers of the participants in this study as they demonstrate how much nurses spend their time on continuity of care.

Better working conditions, better job descriptions, teamwork, less bureaucratic work, valuing the profession, coordination between services, and teaching time management were suggestions provided by the participants so that nurses can allocate time appropriately. In a previous study conducted in Brazil, it was determined that nurses perform activities that could be done by other professionals and spend more time performing indirect tasks than direct patient care (Diniz et al., 2021). In a study carried out in Iran, nurses reported extending available time through teamwork, extra-role performance, and skill development (Talebi et al., 2019). According to another study from Iran, teaching time management to nurses makes them learn their strengths and weaknesses, empowering them to be more efficient and effective while performing their duties (Ghorbanshiroudi et al., 2011). The need to teach time management to nurses became more pivotal in a study carried out with Chinese nurses during the COVID-19 pandemic; according to the findings of the related survey, training in time management can benefit the mental health of nurses (Sun, 2021).

There are many suggestions given by the participants that can facilitate time management in nursing. However, it is necessary to highlight that certain situations must be addressed more promptly, such as the devaluation and low salaries of nurses, which force them to work in multiple jobs and decrease their motivation. Tired and unmotivated nurses may struggle to manage their time effectively and provide quality care.

## Conclusion

Time management is essential for the delivery of quality nursing care. Nurses at different levels of leadership positions reported facilitators and barriers to time management in the nursing field. The negative influence of inappropriate use of time on the care and characteristics of the profession that make time management in nursing more difficult than in other health professions were emphasized. Better working conditions and time management training were identified as important for the nursing team to provide quality care.

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