

**Experiences of Nurses Caring for Tuberculosis Patients at Tshilidzini Hospital
in Limpopo Province,
South Africa**

by

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ABSTRACT

Background: Tuberculosis (TB) is a disease which is caused by a relatively large, non-motile, rod-shaped pathogen called *Mycobacterium tuberculosis*. TB is a major cause of illness and death worldwide, especially in Asia and Africa. Despite the fact that TB is a curable illness, the tragedy is that TB remains the biggest killer in the world as a single pathogen.

Purpose: The purpose of this study was to determine the experiences of nurses caring for TB patients at Tshilidzini Hospital in Limpopo Province, South Africa.

Methodology: Qualitative, exploratory and descriptive contextual designs were used. Purposive sampling method was used to select the participants. The personal experiences of six nurses caring for TB patients at Tshilidzini Hospital were explored, and it was guided by data saturation. Data were collected through in-depth individual interviews, field notes were taken and data audio-recorded. Data were analysed using Colaizzi's method of data analysis. Trustworthiness was ensured and ethical considerations were observed in this study.

Findings: The research findings revealed six major themes from the raw data: challenges of the working environment, problems impacting on the quality of nursing care, fear, anxiety, stress and risk of contracting infection, nurses perceptions towards patients, support structure available in the Hospital and support needs for the nurses.

Conclusion: According to the findings of this study it is concluded that nurses caring for TB patients at Tshilidzini Hospital have bad experience. They expressed feeling stressed, frustrated and helpless, they were at risk of contracting TB infection due to inadequate physical environment which impact the quality of health provided to the patients.

Recommendations: The findings of this study revealed that nurses caring for TB patients have bad experiences in the wards. Therefore there is an urgent need to address this problem by the Department of Health, Hospital Executive Managers and Nursing Service Manager. Further more studies are also recommended to look at the reason why rural Hospitals do not have TB infection control and prevention measures in place.

Keywords: Caring, Experiences, Nurses, Patients, Tuberculosis.