## TRIGGER SITUATIONS OF COMPASSION FATIGUE: PRELIMINARY RESULTS FROM PORTUGAL

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**Introduction:** Globally there is apprehension about a nursing workforce shortage. To date, no studies have connected quality of work life with other contributing and co-existing factors such as depression, anxiety and stress.

**Aim:** This study explores the association of the quality of compassion fatigue and compassion satisfaction with anxiety, depression and stress and builds a portrait of nursing profiles to identify the factors/triggers that move a nurse from normally functioning, to at risk or very distressed levels.

**Methods:** Exploratory cross sectional survey of 112 registered nurses working in several departments of a Portuguese tertiary hospital using a self-report survey tool to collect data.

**Results:** Burnout and secondary traumatic stress were significantly related to higher levels of anxiety and depression. Higher anxiety levels were correlated with nurses that were younger in age, working 40h per week, and without a postgraduate qualification. Older and more experienced nurses exhibited higher levels of compassion satisfaction. Twenty percent had elevated levels of compassion fatigue, with 7.6% of the sample having a very distressed profile. At risk nurses stress and depression scores were significantly higher than nurses with higher compassion satisfaction scores.

**Conclusions:** In recognition of the importance of continuing professional education and in line with previous studies into burnout in pre-registration nurses, educators should advocate including strategies in undergraduate and postgraduate nursing programs that facilitate students identifying and managing compassion fatigue and build personal resilience through the development of positive coping strategies.