

## Major CP Mkhize

Major Carol Mkhize has a 4-Year Diploma in Nursing {General, Psychiatry, Community Health Nursing} and Midwifery at Natalspruit Hospital, a BA Cur in Nursing Education and Nursing Administration through UNISA, did Critical Care Nursing through the University of Johannesburg, has done several military courses and is currently doing a Senior Military Officer's Course.

She is employed at 1 Military Hospital as an Area Manager and Military Officer.

Major Mkhize was a Unit Manager in the Intensive Care Unit at 1 Military Hospital during all the levels of COVID-19 until January 2022 and was instrumental in the preparation and procurement of emergency equipment for COVID-19 patients within the Department of Defence.



# THE IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON NURSES AND NURSING

MAJ. C.P. MKHIZE




# AIM


The aim of this presentation is to highlight the physical, emotional and psychological impact of COVID-19 on nurses

A decorative graphic consisting of several parallel white lines of varying lengths, slanted upwards from left to right, located in the bottom right corner of the slide.

# BACKGROUND

- On the 5<sup>th</sup> March 2020, NICD announced 1<sup>st</sup> case of COVID-19.
  - By the 20<sup>th</sup> of March, SA experienced a steady increase.
  - Hospitals started admitting very sick patients.
  - Patients needed close monitoring
  - Other depts were closed in order to staff COVID wards.
  - Elective operations were cancelled
  - The main focus was on sick COVID-19 patients
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# CHALLENGES RELATED TO MANAGEMENT OF COVID-19 PATIENTS

- Late consultation.
  - Thick sticky secretions
  - Bleeding
  - Micro- emboli
  - Secondary infection
  - Happy hypoxia
  - Challenges with sedation : self-extubation
  - Patients deteriorated quickly
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# NURSING CHALLENGES

- Started attending to these patients
- Sudden influx of very sick patients.
- Increased workload on nurses.
- Shortage of nursing personnel.
- Inexperienced nurses were pulled out of the wards.
- Minimal supervision/ guidance.
- Long working hours.



# NURSING CHALLENGES CONT.

- Shortage of PPE
- Shortage of consumables
- Equipment malfunctioned
- Support staff given social distancing hours
- Nurses had to do non-nursing duties
- Patient care suffered

Patients died unnecessarily

# PHYSICAL IMPACT



- Patient care kept nurses busy.
- No rest periods
- **Frustration:** Challenges related to donning and doffing PPE.
- Providing physical care difficult.
- Simple tasks difficult to perform
- Excessive sweating leading to dehydration
- **Extreme exhaustion.**



# EMOTIONAL IMPACT

- **Fearful and worried**
  - Close contact with infected patients.
  - Getting infected or dying from the disease.
  - Infecting our family members
- **Emotional Exhaustion**
  - Witnessing patients suffering
  - High mortality rate
  - EXHAUSTION: Medical errors
  - Lack of empathy when treating patients



# EMOTIONAL IMPACT CONTINUED



- **Emotional scars**
  - Patients dying a lonely death.
  - Relatives not getting regular updates.
  - Did our best but patients still died
  - Suddenly deteriorate and demise
  - Felt incompetent – blame( self, patient, institution, government)
  - Hospital members contracted disease
  - Admissions and death of colleagues
- **Rejection by family members**
- **Our own family members died**

# PSYCHOLOGICAL IMPACT

- Nurses most affected
- Carried the heavy burden
- Post-Traumatic Disorder
- Depression and Anxiety Disorder, on medication
- Stigmatisation.



# PSYCHOLOGICAL IMPACT CONTINUED



- Due to high mortality rate
- Chronic Insomnia
- Nightmares
- Suffer from grief and loss

# NURSES THAT CONTRACTED COVID-19

- Developed Long Covid or Post Covid Syndrome
- Life is never the same



# PHYSICAL EFFECTS

## NURSES THAT CONTRACTED COVID-19



- Extreme fatigue
- Unresolved pain
- Constant headaches

# RESPIRATORY IMPACT

## NURSES THAT CONTRACTED COVID-19

- Covid causes scarring of the lung tissue
- Interstitial Disease
- Recovery may take months or years
- Shortness of breath
- Exercise intolerance



# HEART PROBLEMS

## NURSES THAT CONTRACTED COVID-19



- Covid Causes inflammation of the heart muscle
- Chest pains
- Palpitations
- Shortness of breath
- Prone to
  - PE



# NEUROLOGICAL PROBLEMS

## NURSES THAT CONTRACTED COVID-19

- **Brain fog**
  - Lack of concentration
  - Forgetful
  - Difficulty thinking
- **Covid Insomnia**
  - Exacerbate fatigue
- Prone to:
  - Strokes



# DM TYPE 2

NURSES THAT CONTRACTED COVID-19




Some patients develop  
Type 2 DM.

# POSITIVE EFFECTS OF COVID-19

- Hospital well equipped
- Our nursing skills and knowledge are sharpened
- Better prepared for disasters and pandemics
- Lessons learnt:
  - Together, we can do more
  - Respect and value life.
  - Life is a gift



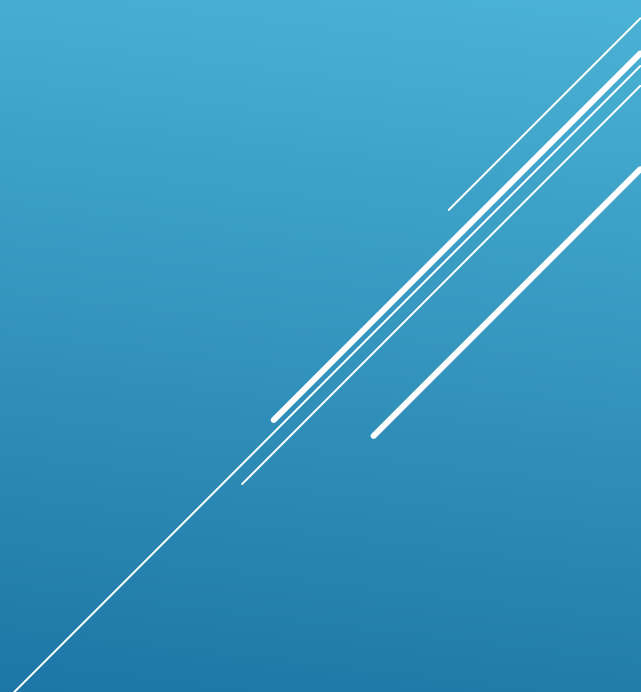
# RECOMMENDATIONS

- Ancillary services to be more involved
  - Nurses need special psychological care throughout the pandemic.
  - Frequent rotation of all nursing personnel in ICU and High Care.
  - Maintenance of good interpersonal relationships amongst members of the Multi-Disciplinary Team.
  - The Unit Manager to ensure that calmness is maintained during a pandemic.
  - Proper triaging of patients on admission.
  - Patient admin to assist with patient statistics.
  - Incentives for nurses working directly with infected patients.
  - Family members to be taken care of.
  - Re-allocation of nurses suffering from Long Covid.
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# CONCLUSION



# BRAVE FRONTLINE HEROES

- At the time when SA was hit hard, nurses stood firm in the frontline
  - They were the 1<sup>st</sup> line of defence, protecting South Africans
  - We spent 12 or more with infected and dying patients.
  - We soldiered on even at the expense of our own lives
  - Nurses were prepared to die with their boots on
  - Our sacrifice paid off, we saved lots of lives
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“NURSES ARE THE HEARTBEAT OF  
HEALTHCARE”

By Donna Cardillo



VIVAVIDEO

## IN MEMORY OF OUR FALLEN NURSES

- We remember and salute nurses who sadly lost their lives
- We remember them with pride.
- May their souls rest in peace.



Thank  
You