

## Push and Pull Factors for Nurses Working in a Community Palliative Care

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### BACKGROUND

Majority of Singaporeans prefer to be cared for at home in the end stages of illness. With Singapore's ageing population, the demand for palliative care at home will continue to rise. Current literatures are focused challenges and alleviating factors that reduced stress experienced by palliative nurses in acute setting. In view of global and local shortage of nurses, it is vital that research looks into ways to retain nurses in home palliative care.

### METHODS

A purposive sample of 12 home palliative care nurses at a registered charity in Singapore was invited to participate in face-to-face interview using a semi-structured interview guide. Saturation was achieved after 11 participants and additional one interview was conducted to validate. The audiotaped interview data were transcribed verbatim and thematic analysis of Braun and Clarke was performed. The Chinese philosophy of Yin-Yang was adopted to understand the findings.

### RESULTS

Dualism is observed in many of the six themes and 12 subthemes identified which also provided an insight into the relationship between balance, well-being and intention to stay. Each subtheme is a stressor (Yin) or alleviator (Yang) which has varied effect on individual nurses. It influenced one's level of job satisfaction and well-being through validation and valuation which poses a significant impact on turnover and retention. The extent to which the factors caused an imbalance of well-being and job satisfaction requires an understanding of the individual's experiences, perception, character and environment. Essentially, the balance of Yin and Yang is imperative in maintaining one's well-being and increase retention.

#### The Essence of Work

##### Dealing with death and dying

"It's the nature of the work... it's all different here. You are the nurse, you're the doctor, you're the social worker, you are the counsellor... whatever they ask you, you need to know... it's very draining." (P9, 2)

##### Fulfilment from the journey

"I just feel the satisfaction in actually this work... I see patient and then I actually walk this journey with them. And then when actually they died peacefully and families feel that they have done their job ... that they are loved ones did not suffer, actually is very good satisfaction for me." (P6, 14)

#### Harmony of Self and Job

##### Earning a wage

"I'm unlike other who are younger one, I'm not looking for money, I'm not looking for ladders to climb anymore" (P8, 6)

##### Perfect match

"If your personality and your character... gel very well with this nature of job, then I think despite of the obstacles or whatever, it keeps the nurse going... What you believe will also affect your delivery of your job." (P7, 3)

#### A Balancing Act

##### Looking after oneself

"[I have] my own reflection time...I practice mindfulness... awareness of your own emotion, awareness of your interaction... if you don't have your own time to sit back and reflect and deal with it, it will naturally lead to burnout." (P5, 10)

##### Calling to home palliative nursing

"I was in HR... I retire earlier... in search for ... meaning of life... went to nursing school at the age of 50... really no regret... to start with the calling is from God, I believe." (P8, 6)

#### Pillars of Strength

##### Family variable

"The fact that I'm still single so that also helps me in, able to invest a lot of, more time and effort... If you have young kids at child care then you need to pick up then you know you have a lot of other considerations. For me because I know that I don't have plans... so there's a lot of flexibility there for me." (P7, 3)

##### Social circle

"Religion helps me a lot. Our job, sometimes I feel that we are the giving end... at the end of the day sometimes you just like get home... you can get really really drained out. so I feel that if you do not have a source of strength from something that's above to sustain you, you can actually get burnout... my religion give me... a lot of hope as well." (P7, 3)

#### The Atmosphere of Workplace

##### Avenues for growth

"[This organization doesn't] tall career ladder my difficult time is] advancement... so a lot of colleagues... who given you people who comes in... find even little bit support... that they are stagnant here" (P8, 6)

##### Policies and practices

"I feel why I actually I still continue I really very very hear the voice of the nurses... appreciate the organization to needs of [individuals]... create arrange these two pregnancy the kind of culture of love and I in doing triage nurse which is think the environment will be more conducive for people to stay on" (P7, 3)

##### Undercurrents of team

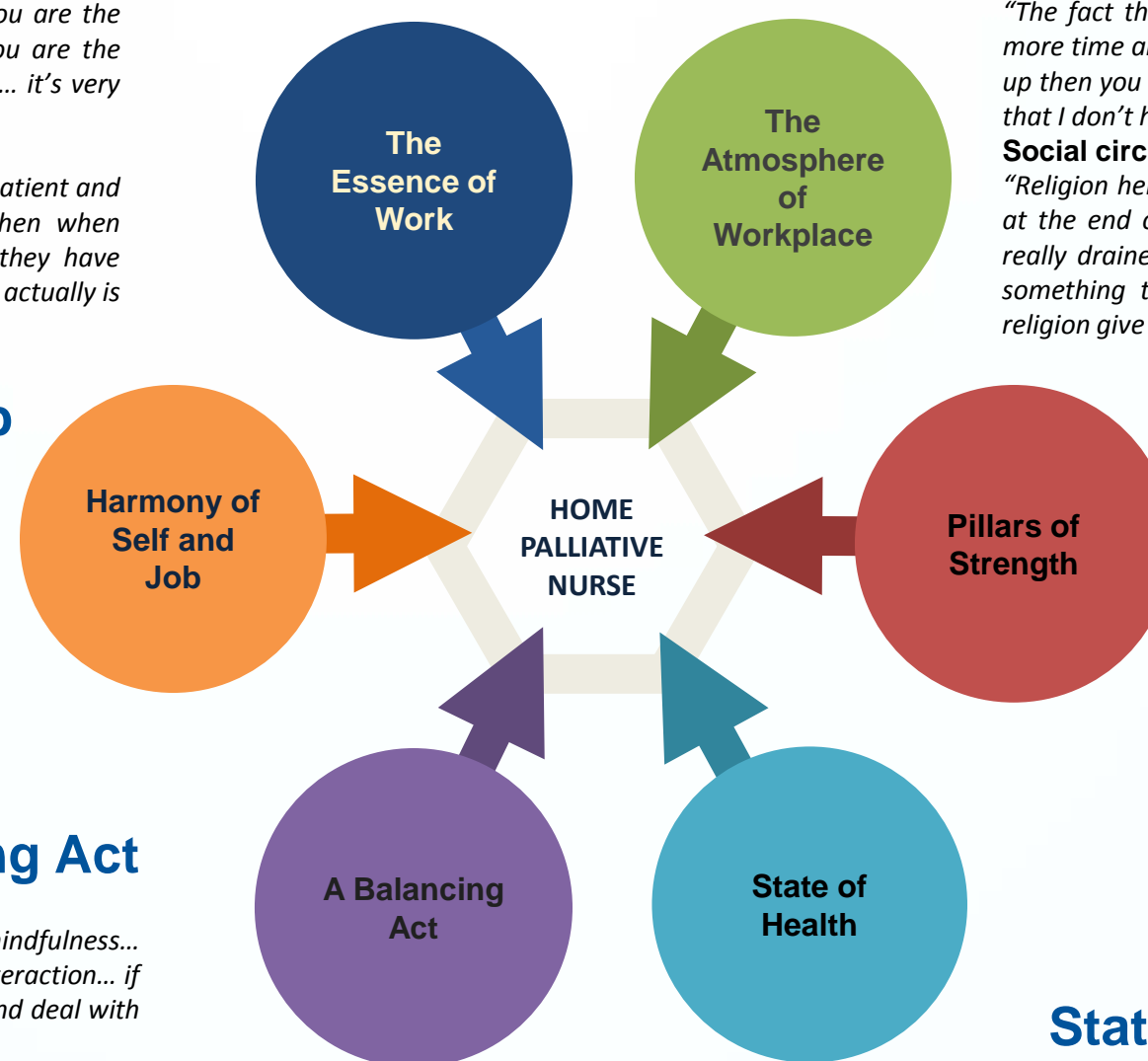
"[What made me stay during promise] tall career ladder my difficult time is] advancement... so a lot of colleagues... who given you people who comes in... find even little bit support... that they are stagnant here" (P8, 6)

##### Influence of power

"Management would need to continue I really very very hear the voice of the nurses... appreciate the organization to needs of [individuals]... create arrange these two pregnancy the kind of culture of love and I in doing triage nurse which is think the environment will be more conducive for people to stay on" (P7, 3)

#### State of Health

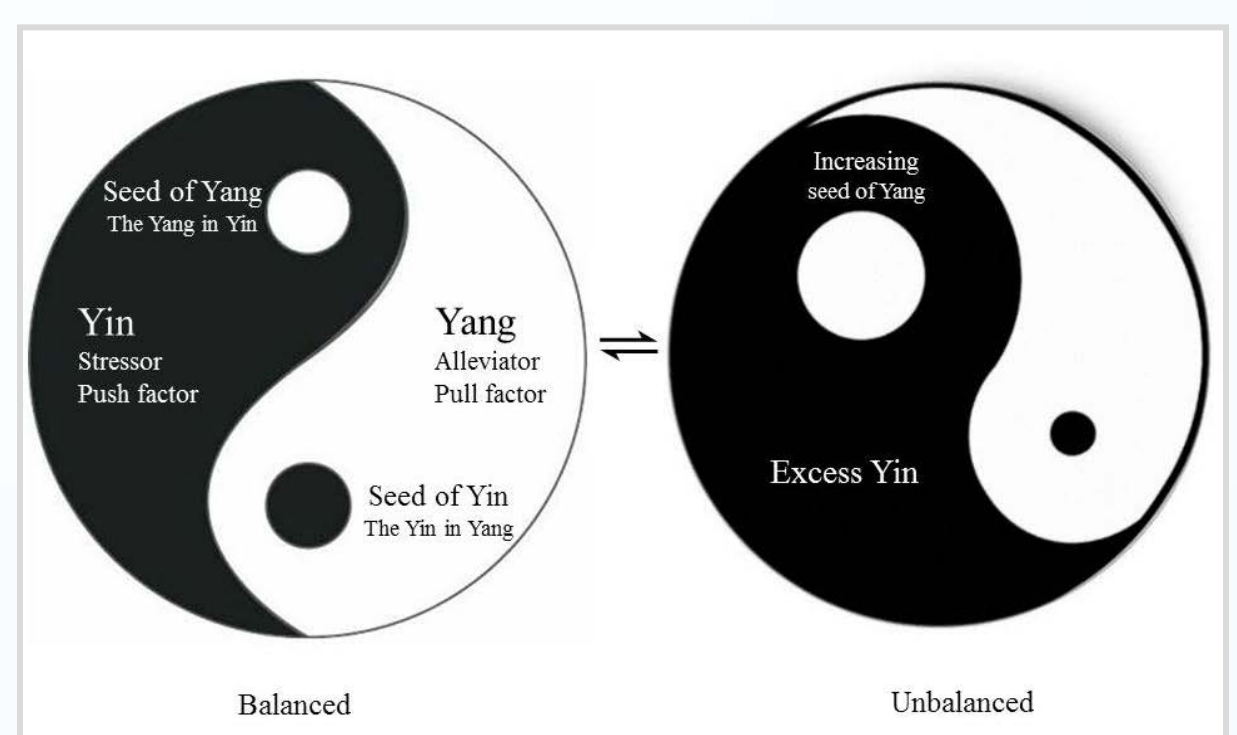
"As long as my health allows me... I will work part-time, I won't really leave... because our job involves a lot of travelling so if I'm symptomatic or I can't journey... there is no way for me to go and stress myself and make my health worse." (P3, 10)



### CONCLUSION



The work of caring compels home palliative nurses to maintain their well-being which is a balance between emotional, physical and spiritual health. Maintaining this balance involves dealing with the demands of the job by managing time, boundaries, self-expectations, roles and role-conflicts. Home palliative nurses are seen as a system interacting with energies which has varying effects on individuals. The extent to which Yin and Yang caused imbalance requires an understanding of experiences, perception, character and environment. Findings from this study highlight that home palliative service providers should strengthen the nurses' coping skills while improving the working environment as coping mechanisms build resilience and increase commitment which are instrumental in managing the demands of home palliative nursing.



ORGANISER

SECRETARIAT