

# Facing the unknown COVID-19 pandemic Experiences of nurses and nursing assistants

PRESENTER: NERTILA PODGORICA



Touch, hug, joke with patients and  
colleagues.

Care for others and yourself, support  
each other.

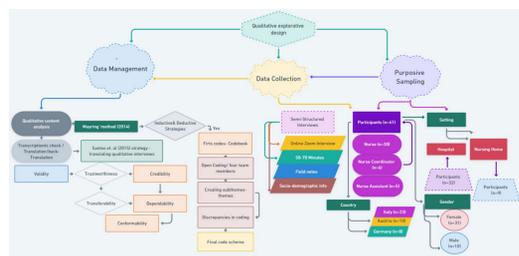
Strengthen teamwork, communicate  
and be supported by the institution,  
family and friends.

## BACKGROUND

Pandemics adversely affect health systems and health professionals. This study, conducted in Italy, Austria, and Germany, investigated the challenges faced by nurses and nurse assistants in the care of COVID-19 patients in hospital and long-term care.

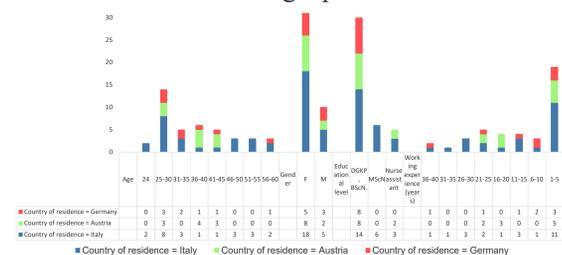
## METHODS

Qualitative exploratory design. Purposive sampling (n=41): nurses (n = 30), nurse coordinators (n = 6), nurse assistants (n = 5) from hospitals (n = 32) and long-term care facilities (n = 9) in Austria, Germany, and Italy. Data collection: August - December 2020. Instrument: online semi-structured interviews & field-notes. Data analyzed with Mayring's qualitative content analysis.



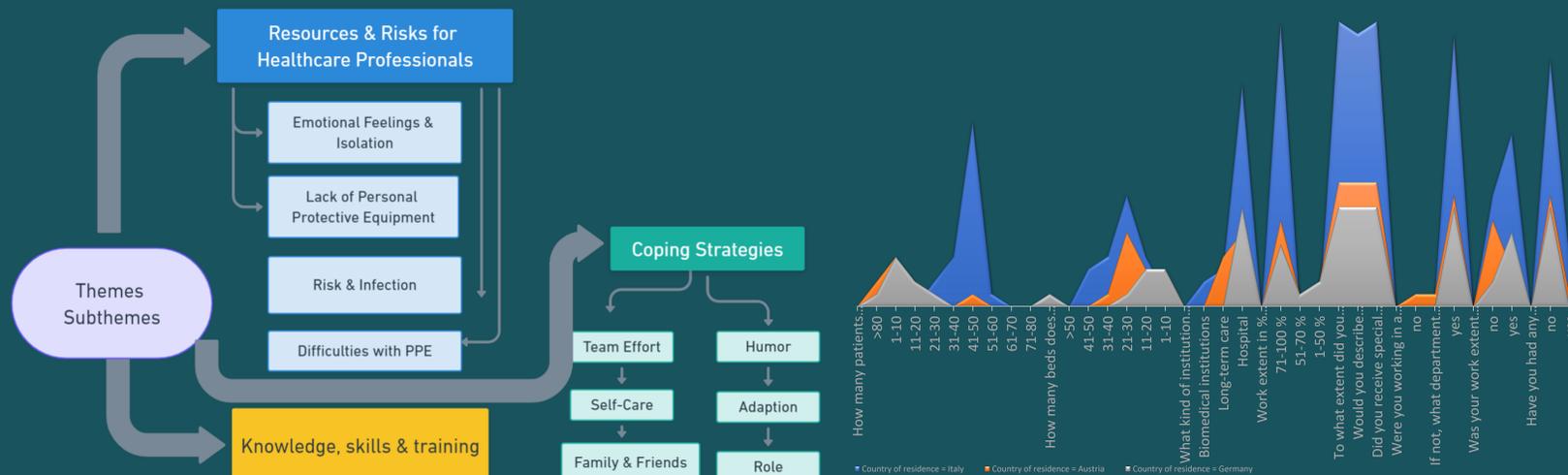
## RESULTS

### Socio-demographic Information



## CONCLUSIONS

Some of findings can be applied to reduce these challenges and create better working conditions for nurses and nurse assistants in similar events. Further research, training of staff, and adaptation of institutional policies is needed.



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SCAN ME

Table 1. Questions from the interview guide

**Interview Questions**  
 Could you tell me about your work experience as a nurse/nurse assistant?  
 Probe: education, workplace, training, and general information  
 Could you tell me about your experience and preparation before caring for a patient with COVID-19?  
 Probe: preparation, performing procedures, communication  
 Could you tell me what challenges did you experience when providing care for COVID-19 patients?  
 Probe: barriers, challenges. Could you expand on that? Can you give me an example? How did you overcome these challenges?  
 Could you describe your feelings related to this situation? How did you manage to continue working in such a situation?  
 Probe: feelings, coping strategies. Could you expand on that? Can you give me an example? How did that help you?  
 Before closing the interview: Is there anything else you would like to tell me?

**DEMOGRAPHIC QUESTIONNAIRE**  
 Age: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Gender: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Number of people you are currently living with: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Nationality: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Country of residence: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Educational level (e.g., Assistant Nurse, Diploma, BSc, MSc, etc.): \_\_\_\_\_  
 Working experience (years): \_\_\_\_\_  
 Please indicate your work extent in percentage during the COVID-19 outbreak (full time = 100%):  
 Was your work extent during the pandemic crisis different from normal? Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_ if so, what changed? \_\_\_\_\_  
 What kind of institution do you work in (e.g., hospital, long-term care, etc...)? \_\_\_\_\_  
 Were you working in a COVID-19 station during the outbreak? Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_  
 If not: what department did you work in? \_\_\_\_\_  
 How many beds does your department have? \_\_\_\_\_  
 Of which: single rooms \_\_\_ double rooms \_\_\_ multi-bed rooms \_\_\_  
 How many COVID-19 patients did you supervise? (Approximately) \_\_\_\_\_  
 To what extent did you have access to personal protective equipment?  
 Sufficient \_\_\_ insufficient \_\_\_ not at all \_\_\_  
 Have you had any training in advance on pandemics like this? Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_  
 Did you receive special working instruction before you started supervising/looking after COVID-19 patients?  
 Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_ Undecided \_\_\_  
 Would you describe yourself as a spiritual or religious person?  
 Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_ Undecided \_\_\_

## LIMITATIONS

Study sample included only nurses and nursing assistants who were working in Austria, Germany, and Italy during the COVID 19 pandemic. Due to travel restrictions, interviews were conducted online via Zoom, which could be a limitation.

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