

# **Secondary Traumatic Stress Among Critical Care Nurses: Prevalence, Warning Signs, and Preventive Measures**

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## **Abstract**

Nurses are the front-liners for patients who need urgent care; therefore, they are exposed to several stressors. Indirect exposure to others’ trauma is called secondary traumatic stress. This study investigates the prevalence, warning signs and the preventive measures of secondary traumatic stress among critical care nurses in Jordan. A descriptive cross-sectional design was used. Data were collected through a questionnaire, both paper and electronic, from 317 nurses working in nine hospitals.

Nurses in this study had moderate levels of secondary traumatic stress with a mean of 40.9 (SD=11.29), around half of them met the diagnostic criteria. Arousal was most reported symptom followed by avoidance and lastly intrusion. Majority of the nurses had mild to moderate risk for developing Secondary traumatic stress. Multiple traumatizing events had positive relationship with STS prevalence. Nurses viewed the preventive measures as moderately to greatly effective. Efforts must be directed toward preventing, diagnosing and treating it.

**Keywords:** Critical care nurses, Preventive measures, Secondary traumatic stress, Traumatizing events, Warning Signs.