



# Compassion Fatigue and Its Effects on Geriatric Nursing: A Critical Analysis in End-of-Life Care

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## Abstract

Compassion fatigue, a state of emotional exhaustion and burnout, significantly impacts the well-being and quality of care provided by geriatric nurses. This critical analysis explores the multifaceted nature of compassion fatigue in geriatric nursing, its underlying factors, and the broader implications for both nursing practice and patient care. The study highlights the relationship between compassion fatigue and patient outcomes in end-of-life care settings. By addressing organizational support, promoting self-care, and fostering resilience among nursing professionals, the well-being of geriatric nurses and the quality of care for their most vulnerable patients can be improved.

**Keywords:** Compassion fatigue; Geriatric nursing; End-of-life care; Emotional burden; Nursing well-being; Patient outcomes; Quality of care

## Introduction

Compassion fatigue is an emotional, physical, and spiritual distress that can arise from the continuous exposure to the suffering of others, particularly in the context of caregiving for terminally ill patients. For geriatric nurses, who often work with older adults facing complex medical challenges and end-of-life issues, the risk of developing compassion fatigue is heightened [1]. As these healthcare providers navigate the demands of delivering high-quality palliative care, they may encounter significant emotional burdens, leading to detrimental effects on their well-being and the quality of care they provide. The geriatric population is increasingly vulnerable, with many individuals experiencing chronic illnesses and facing the realities of aging. Geriatric nurses play a crucial role in ensuring that these patients receive compassionate and effective care during their final stages of life. However, the emotional toll associated with witnessing suffering and loss can lead to compassion fatigue, characterized by symptoms such as emotional exhaustion, diminished empathy, and feelings of helplessness [2]. As this fatigue accumulates, it can significantly impair nurses' job performance, patient interactions, and overall mental health. This paper aims to conduct a critical analysis of compassion fatigue and its effects on geriatric nursing within the realm of end-of-life care. By examining existing literature and research findings, the study seeks to identify the underlying factors contributing to compassion fatigue in this context, as well as its implications for nursing practice. Moreover, it will explore strategies for mitigating the impact of compassion fatigue, emphasizing the importance of organizational support, self-care practices, and resilience-building initiatives. Ultimately, addressing compassion fatigue is essential for enhancing the well-being of geriatric nurses and ensuring the delivery of compassionate, patient-centered care to older adults during their most vulnerable moments [3].

## Discussion

Compassion fatigue is a critical concern in geriatric nursing, particularly within end-of-life care settings. As healthcare professionals

witness the suffering and decline of their patients, the emotional toll can lead to significant burnout and a decline in the quality of care provided. This discussion explores the multifaceted nature of compassion fatigue in geriatric nursing, its underlying factors, and the broader implications for both nursing practice and patient care [4].

Several factors contribute to the development of compassion fatigue among geriatric nurses:

**High Patient Acuity:** Geriatric patients often present with multiple comorbidities, requiring intensive and complex care. The continuous demands of managing these cases can lead to increased stress and emotional strain on nursing staff.

**Emotional Burden of Care:** The nature of end-of-life care

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inherently involves confronting death and grief regularly. Nurses may struggle with their own feelings of loss and sadness, which can compound the emotional exhaustion associated with compassion fatigue [6].

**Lack of Support Systems:** In many healthcare settings, nurses may find themselves without adequate support from management or colleagues. The absence of structured debriefing sessions, mentorship, or mental health resources can exacerbate feelings of isolation and helplessness.

**Work Environment:**

may increase the workload and contribute to a toxic environment: