



Prifysgol Cymru
Y Drindod Dewi Sant
University of Wales
Trinity Saint David

BSc (Hons) Health and Social Care

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Student ID: 2322678

Student Name: Kristela Shehu or Sechou

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Proposal Research:

The influence of workplace stress on healthcare staff shortage in the United Kingdom

1.Topic:

The influence of workplace stress on healthcare staff shortage in the United Kingdom

2.Research

Question:

How does the influence of workplace stress affect healthcare staff shortage in the United Kingdom?

3.Objectives:

- Examine the statistical association between burnout/stress levels and absenteeism rates among healthcare staff.

- Identify which workplace stressors (workload, shift patterns, staffing levels, leadership) most strongly predict absenteeism.
- Compare the impact across professional groups (nurses, doctors, ancillary staff).
- Propose targeted interventions to mitigate stress-driven absenteeism.

4.Rationale:

Workplace stress is a key factor contributing to the shortage of healthcare staff in the United Kingdom. The demanding environment, heavy workloads, and emotional strain lead to burnout among medical professionals (Maben, Bridges and Taylor, 2021). Burnout reduces retention and increases turnover, creating a cycle of stress and staff loss (West, Coia and Bailey, 2020). Research also shows that chronic stress harms staff wellbeing, productivity, and patient care quality. Kinman, Teoh and Harriss (2020) found that occupational stress is strongly linked to poor mental health, absenteeism, and intentions to leave, highlighting the urgent need to address its causes.

5.Methods:

Research Design:

This study will apply a secondary research design via a scoping literature review to investigate the impact of workplace stress on healthcare staff shortages in the United Kingdom. This method enables the systematic mapping of current evidence, the identification of knowledge shortages, and the synthesis of critical factors affecting workforce wellbeing (Trapé et al., 2025).

Date base:

Searches will be conducted in major bibliographic databases such as PubMed, CINAHL and ProQuest to identify relevant studies on workplace stress and staff shortage in UK healthcare (Shehata, 2025).

Keywords:

Workplace stress, burnout, healthcare workforce, staff shortage, employee retention, job satisfaction, mental health, NHS, United Kingdom, scoping review.

Inclusion Criteria:

- Studies published between 2019 and 2025
- Written in English
- Conducted within UK healthcare settings (e.g., NHS, hospitals, primary care)
- Focus on workplace stress, burnout, or mental health among healthcare professionals
- Examine the relationship between stress and staff shortages, retention, or turnover
- Include quantitative, qualitative, or systematic review research designs

Exclusion Criteria:

- Studies published before 2019
- Research not conducted in the United Kingdom
- Articles not written in English
- Studies focusing only on students or trainees rather than qualified healthcare staff
- Opinion pieces, editorials, or papers lacking empirical evidence
- Studies that do not link workplace stress to staffing outcomes such as turnover, retention, or shortages

6.Ethical considerations:

This review utilises publicly accessible, published literature and does not include human participants; therefore, ethical approval is not required. It will adhere to sound academic principles by ensuring accurate citation, clear reporting, responsible data collection, and recognition of limitations and possible biases (Fromm, 2025).

7.Reference list

Bailey, S. and West, M. (2022) *What is compassionate leadership?* The King's Fund. Available at: <https://www.kingsfund.org.uk/insight-and-analysis/long-reads/what-is-compassionate-leadership> (Accessed: 12 October 2025).

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Kinman, G., Teoh, K. and Harriss, A. (2020) 'Supporting the well-being of healthcare workers during and after COVID-19', *Occupational Medicine (London)*, 70(5). doi:10.1093/occmed/kqaa096.

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Shehata, N. and D'Souza, R. (2025) 'Writing a systematic review', *The Journal of Rheumatology*, [early view]. doi:10.3899/jrheum.2024-1241 (Accessed: 30 October 2025).

Trapé, C.A., Sivalli Campos, C.M., de Freitas Oliveira, C., Sanchez, G.Y., Figueiró, M.F., Domingues, S.M.C. and Yonekura, T. (2025) 'Scoping review of evidence synthesis: Concepts, types and methods', *PLOS ONE*, 20(5), e0323555. doi:10.1371/journal.pone.0323555 (Accessed: 30 October 2025).

