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The association between death anxiety and psychological distress among nurses

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Based on the stress-buffering model, the current study sought to examine the moderating role of perceived social support in the association between death anxiety and psychological distress among nurses. Selected variables found in previous studies to correlate with psychological distress served in the current study as covariates to control for their relationship with psychological distress: gender, years of professional experience, self-rated health, self-efficacy, and self-defined burnout. Structured questionnaires were administered to a sample of 795 professionally active nurses in Israel of whom 80.4% were women. Higher levels of death anxiety were found to be associated with higher levels of psychological distress only among nurses with lower levels of perceived social support, yet no association was found between these variables among nurses with higher levels of perceived social support. The current study supports the stress buffering hypothesis. Therefore, it is important to improve support mechanisms at the workplace and to promote informational and educational efforts in order to increase the awareness of professional managers, the nurses themselves, and their family to the issue of support.