

# A study on Stigma concerning COVID-19 felt by nurses in Japan –Focusing on the content related to the family-

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## Background

- The current COVID-19 outbreak has provoked **Stigma and discriminatory behaviors** against nurses caring for COVID-19 patients.
- In Japan, it has been suggested that the stigmatizing attitudes of people are stronger than in other countries, and therefore, support and care for nurses experiencing stigma is an urgent issue.
- However, little is known about what COVID-19-related Stigma perceived by nurses, some of which is often family related.

## Method

- Participants: Ten female nurses (working in medical facilities)
- Data collection: Focus group interviews
- Data analysis: Krippendorff's method of content analysis
- Trustworthiness: four dimension criteria (credibility, dependability, confirmability and transferability)
- Ethical considerations: This study was approved by the research ethics review committee.

## Purpose

This study was to identify the content of Stigma associated with nurses' families.

## Results

### Family-related Stigma perceived by nurses

21 codes, 8 subcategories and 5 categories

Sub category	Category
Being avoided by their family	Being avoided
Keeping oneself apart	
Being treated as dirty by their family	Being treated as dirty
Feeling oneself as dirty	
Family members are treated as if they were infected.	Discrimination toward family members
Family members might be treated as if they were infected.	
Others pry into my work by asking family members.	Others prying
My family and I will not disclose anything.	Non-disclosure

### The characteristics of the participants (Ten female nurses)

Age:  $48 \pm 7.2$  (Mean  $\pm$  SD) Years of nursing experience :  $25.7 \pm 6.4$  (Mean  $\pm$  SD)  
All participants had family members living with them.

*They don't say "Don't come here" or "Don't come close", but I can feel it in the air.*

*My laundry is done separately.*

*Because people know my job, I think they're avoiding my family.*

*My family and children are often asked about my work.*

## Conclusions and Implications

- Nurses working in facilities accepting COVID-19 were found to be experiencing various Stigma, not only their own but also those of their family members.
- **The nurses kept these Stigma within and did not reveal anything . This is characteristic of Japan, which emphasizes the notion of keeping everything to oneself.**
- **The results of this study suggest that patients with COVID-19 may similarly feel Stigma related to their families.**
- Health care providers need to be aware of the existence of family-related Stigma and provide support not only to patients but also to their families.

