**Background**
- Caring work environments and belonging are important for the wellbeing of nurses as well as patient outcomes.
- Cultivating and supporting a caring, healing environment is essential for patients’ health outcomes and the wellbeing of the nurses who care for them (Norman, et al., 2016).
- The Watson Theory of Human Caring addresses individual and organizational commitments to seeking and providing authentic human connections and caring relationships between oneself and others (Watson, 2008).
- When nurses perceive caring behaviors are present in the workplace, they are likely to report a higher sense of physical and mental safety (Ulrich et. al, 2005).

**Purpose**
- Describe the perceptions of nurses regarding self-care and feeling cared for and belonging by co-workers and leaders within the work environment.
- Assess the reliability of the three Watson Caritas Scores: Self-Rating Co-Workers, and Leader Scores.

**Methods**
This study was reviewed by the Inova Health System Institutional Review Board.

**Design** A mixed-methods descriptive, exploratory, cross-sectional survey was conducted March-May 2021.

**Study Sample** Convenience sample of registered nurses employed by Inova Health System for >3 months. The Inova Health System includes 6 Care Sites which represent five acute care settings and over 150 ambulatory settings.

**Study Procedures** Nurses were invited to anonymously complete the 1) Watson Caritas Self-Rating Score®, the 2) Watson Caritas Co-Workers Score®, and 3) Watson Caritas Leader Score® via REDCap®. Comments were invited after each score. Statistical analyses were conducted for the quantitative data using IntellectusStatistics™. Qualitative analysis of the comments is continuing.

**Results**
- 148 nurses from Inova Alexandria Hospital participated in this study. (19.97% response rate)*
- 82% were clinical nurses, 82% had a BSN or higher and 66.22% were certified nurses.
- See Table for nurses’ mean scores on the three Watson Caritas Scores.
- 90% said they would recommend Inova to someone they love (See Figure).
- There were significant positive correlations between the statement, “I would recommend this hospital to someone I love”, and scores on the:
  - Watson Self-Rating Score \( r_p = 0.28, p < .001, 95\% CI [0.12, 0.42] \)
  - Watson Co-Workers Score \( r_p = 0.25, p < .002, 95\% CI [0.06, 0.39] \)
  - Watson Leader Score \( r_p = 0.45, p < .001, 95\% CI [0.31, 0.57] \)
* (An estimated 741 nurses were eligible at the time of the survey).
** These correlations represent moderate (0.24) and large (0.37) effect sizes (Cohen, 1988).

**Findings**
- All the Watson Caritas Scores had good to excellent reliability.
- Majority of scores were greater than 5 and participants’ mean scores were similar to those of Caritas Coaches (Brewer, et. al., 2020).
- Positive feelings of self-care, co-worker caring, and leader caring were correlated with recommending Inova to someone they love.

**Implications**
- Study contributes to the understanding of nurse perceptions of caring across a large healthcare system and appears to be the largest to use these relatively new scales.
- Findings contribute to Caring Science by examining the reliability (internal consistency) of the Watson Caritas Scores.
- Care Sites may benefit from understanding the relationship between the nurses’ perceptions of caring and their recommending their health system to someone they love.
- Inova’s Shared Governance Care Design and Implementation Sub-Committee plans to evaluate and respond to the results of this study.

**Limitations**
- Voluntary convenience sample may not be representative.
- Participation and inclusion were based on anonymous self-reported answers.
- Results were only a snapshot in time so perceptions could change over time.
- History bias: Study was conducted during the middle of a pandemic which might have affected participants’ perceptions.

**Recommendations**
- Repeat study in 18 months to compare results after the New Shared Governance structures and caring interventions are implemented.
- Explore qualitative data for better understanding about:
  - The ratings nurses gave on the Caritas scores.
  - Differences in scores within and across the care sites.
  - Site Principal Investigators (PIs) disseminate results to their respective care site Nursing Research/EBP Council and to the system’s shared governance council.

**References**
- http://dx.doi.org/10.1097/NNA.0000000000000846

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