

Pure Altruism, Warm-glow, and Burnout: The Case of Japanese Nurses

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Abstract It is believed that nurses should be altruistic. However, this study clarifies that nurses with pure altruism, which is one of altruistic preferences in behavioral economics, are likely to psychologically burnout. We conduct an online questionnaire survey toward 501 samples of nurses, who work at medical institutions in Japan. We create hypothetical questions based on Lilley and Slonim's model (2014), set them in the survey, and use the responses to identify which altruistic preference each nurse has among pure altruism, warm-glow, and no altruism. We obtain three main findings from the empirical analysis. First, when nurses have pure altruism and their utility is positively correlated with others', they show higher level of emotional exhaustion, one of psychological burnout dimensions, than nurses with no altruism. Second, purely altruistic nurses are more likely to regularly use sleeping, tranquilizer, or antidepressant drugs than those with no altruism. Third, we observe the similar tendencies in nurses with warm-glow, while the result of pure altruism is more robust than that of warm-glow.

Keywords: Pure Altruism, Warm-glow, Burnout, Nursing Education, Personnel Allocation

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