

Nursing Shortage 1

NURSING SHORTAGE

Name:

Grade Course:

Tutor's Name:

Date

Nursing Shortage

Abstract

This paper has dealt with nursing shortage as a result of three main factors including the stressful long hours, added responsibility and physical demands, and changing their role in nursing from patient care to administration. The paper concludes that urgent strategies are required to deal with the situation of nursing shortages in the U.S hospitals.

SAMPLE
Primeessaywritings.com

Introduction

Nursing profession is the largest healthcare profession with the largest number of members in the whole world. However, it is the profession that has the highest current and projected shortage implying that the number of individuals entering nursing profession is far much less as compared to required number to fill the shortage. As a result, the aim of this paper is to expound on three reasons for the nursing shortage in the United State, such reasons are stressful long hours, added responsibility physical demands and changing their role in nursing from patient care to administration.

The Stressful Long Hours

In early 1990s, many hospitals experienced high costs of managing healthcare, which are the greatest employers of nurses. This led to a restructuring in nurse working hours as a strategy to reduce hospital spending. According to Keenan and Kennedy (2003) mandatory overtime policies were implemented to ensure that registered nurses are always available to work whenever the workload increases. Despite this increase, there has been no rational wage increase to act as a compensation for the increased workload. This increased dissatisfaction amongst nurses and opted for other professions, hence leading to nursing shortages. Stress in the nursing profession has increased in the recent decades due to the increased amount of work load performed by nurses resulting from shift length. A study by McNeese-Smith (2006) indicated that nurse shift is not 8 hours, but 12, resulting to higher stress levels. These longer and stressful working hours have resulted to high levels of nurse dissatisfaction. Dissatisfaction has led to a shift to other professionals which those already in nursing profession think they are less stressing and have normal working hours per shift but with good pay.

Moreover, the general public has been made to believe that nurses undergo stressful experiences as depicted by the media. This ends up discouraging many young individuals

to join the nursing profession thinking that they will never have peace if they join nursing profession as it will demand them to work for more hours per day, but still receive peanut wage. Moreover, the public also sees the stressful responsibility of nurses which involves providing care to individuals from different social and religious backgrounds among other diversities with diverse behaviours, leading to emotional exhaustion. This discourages the community from sending their children to train nursing.

In addition, the largest percentage of nurses in the United States is women who are vulnerable to stresses as a result of family interference by work stresses. As a result, most of them never encourage their children or other people to undertake nursing as a career, but encourage them to undertake other professions due to stresses and long working hours. This is much different as compared to doctors and lawyers that ever encourage their children to take after them (Hodgman 1999).

Nursing training is also stressful as students have lots of work to do within the stipulated time; this makes them work for longer hours per day to accomplish their college responsibility. These stressful moments in colleges makes a number of nursing students to dropout, or change their profession before completing. Moreover, even after finishing, the procedures involved in registering nurses is long and tedious, which makes others fallout on the way and remain unregistered.

Added Responsibility and Physical Demands

Nurses in the United State are experiencing increased responsibilities. According to Kelley, et al (2004), a large percent of United State's population is gaining, and projections on nurse shortage are currently being viewed in the perspective of increased demand for the services offered by the nursing profession. According to Bonnie (2005) the United States population is expected to grow by about 18% between 2000 and 2020. However, the aged population aged 65 years and over is currently growing by 54 percent. This implies that the population needing more healthcare is expected to exponential grow, hence need for nurses.

In 1990s, the amount of workload to nurses drastically increased as hospitals reduced their staffs, but the number of patients requiring nursing services continued to increase. In the current competitive healthcare environment, hospitals are still not employing more nurses to deal with the increasing number of patients. As a result, the increasing workloads are resulting to nursing shortage in two ways. First, the increased workload means the number of nurses in a hospital is few hence undertake a huge workload. Secondly, the increased workload is a very crucial factor that determines the decision of either entering or remaining in the nursing profession. According to McNeese-Smith (2006), nurses having higher workplace dissatisfaction rates are those having higher workloads, implying that there are higher chances they drop their nursing profession.

The nursing profession is becoming more physical in nature. This is because some physical work including sitting and standing for long time, lifting, pooling and carrying of hospital equipments, griping and bimanual dexterity are all becoming the nurses responsibility. This is affecting nursing shortages in two ways. First, the number of nurses having enough physic to carry out such physic cores is less in hospitals, putting in mind that the largest percentage of nurses in U.S hospitals are women, implying that nursing

shortage is occurring in services requiring physical demands. Secondly, recruitment to join nursing colleges and even recruiting nurses to join hospitals is taking physical ability as a requirement for qualification. This implies that only a few are qualifying for the nursing positions or join nursing colleges. This is resulting to nursing shortages as a result of physical demands (Keenan & Kennedy 2003).

Changing Their Role in Nursing from Patient Care to Administration

With the current economic crisis, hospitals are refraining from employing hospital administrators; instead, they are taking hospital nurses to undertake hospital administration responsibilities. According to American Nurses Association Board of Directors (1992), this is reducing the number of nurses on the hospital floor attending to patients in need of nursing services. This results to nursing shortage in the nursing sector not because the number of nurses in the hospital is few, but because others have been placed on administrative roles, which are not their roles. On the other hand most hospitals in the U.S place nurses administrative role and expect them to carry out their nursing responsibilities at the same time. This increases exhaustion and workplace dissatisfaction leading to change in profession, higher absenteeism and turnover rates.

Conclusion

Reducing nursing shortage is an expensive and complicated endeavour which hospitals and nursing colleges in the U.S have to undertake. This is because increasing patient and nurse satisfaction heavily relays on this endeavour. As a result, though long-term solutions might be expensive, but effective utilization of nurses in hospitals and employing more hospital employees on part-time basis to undertake physical and administrative work is urgent to deal with the situation.

References

- American Nurses Association Board of Directors. (1992). *Joint statement on maintaining professional and legal standards during a shortage of nursing personnel*. Retrieved September 12 from:
www.nursingworld.org/MainMenuCategories/HealthcareandPolicyIssues/ANAPositionStatements/ANAPositions/joint/jtshort14469.aspx.
- Bonnie M. (2005). Work Stress and Burnout Among Nurses: Role of the Work Environment and Working Conditions. In Bonnie, M. (2005). *Patient Safety and Quality: An Evidence-Based Handbook for Nurses*. New York: Waleys.
- Hodgman, E. (1999). High School Students Of Color Tell Us What Nursing And College Mean To Them. *Journal of Professional Nursing*, 15(2): 95-105.
- Keenan, P. & Kennedy, F. (2003). The Nursing Workforce Shortage: Causes, Consequences, Proposed Solutions. retrieved on 13th September 2013 from:
www.commonwealthfund.org/user/doc/Keenan_payingforperformance_cong2004_708.pdf.
- Kelley, et al. (2004). Nursing Faculty Shortage Causes, Effects, and Suggestions for Resolution. *Media Release In 2005*.
- McNeese-Smith, D. (2006). A Content Analysis Of Staff Nurse Descriptions Of Job Satisfaction And Dissatisfaction. *Journal of Advanced Nursing*, 29(6):1332-1341.