

Research RECAP



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Nursing Health Services Research Unit -
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BLOOMBERG

LAWRENCE S. BLOOMBERG
FACULTY OF NURSING
UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO

What factors influence hospital nurses to stay at their jobs?

What is this research about?

Shortages of Registered Nurses (RNs) are a global concern. Without enough RNs, RN roles are filled by healthcare providers with less knowledge and skill, ultimately impacting patient and organizational outcomes. Nurse turnover is a significant factor contributing to this shortage, and is especially high among new nurses. Strategies to retain current nurses are an important approach to ensure an adequate supply of RNs. A number of strategies to increase the supply of nurses have been initiated but these strategies may be ineffective if not developed on a solid understanding of the reasons that influence nurses to stay at their jobs.

The purpose of this study was to identify the reasons why hospital nurses stay employed in their current jobs. The information gathered from the study was used to develop a model of factors that impact hospital nurse intention to remain employed.

What did the researchers do?

Researchers conducted focus groups to explore

What you need to know:

This study explored the reasons that hospital nurses decide to stay employed in their current job. Nurse intention to remain employed can be assessed by satisfaction with at least eight categories, such as conditions of work environment, relationships, organizational support and other factors. Understanding these factors is essential for developing strategies that strengthen nurse retention.

reasons for why hospital nurses intended to stay in or leave their current employment. A sample of nurses in medical, surgical and critical care hospital areas in Alberta and Ontario were invited to participate in a series of focus groups. A total of 78 RNs took part in thirteen focus groups. Each session opened with the lead question: 'What circumstances in your work or life influence your decision to remain in or leave employment in your job at this hospital?' Researchers analyzed data while it was being collected.



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What did the researchers find?

Researchers identified eight thematic categories of factors influencing hospital nurse intention to remain employed in their current jobs. These eight categories and one additional category, nurse characteristics, were used to create a model of the reasons hospital nurses intent to remain employed (Fig. 1).

Relationships with Co-workers: The nature and quality of these relationships was a strong indicator of nurses' intentions to stay employed. Bullying or belittling by co-workers was identified as a motivator to leave their jobs.

Conditions of the Work Environment: Adequacy of resources, safety and physical work environments were found to influence intention to remain employed.

Relationship with and Support from one's Manager: Nurses' perceptions of the abilities and intentions of managers and their relationships with managers had an impact on their intention to remain employed.

Work Rewards: Salary, benefits, flexible scheduling and recognition were all identified as reasons to remain employed. More experienced nurses were concerned with salary and pension while younger nurses were most concerned with parental leave and scheduling.

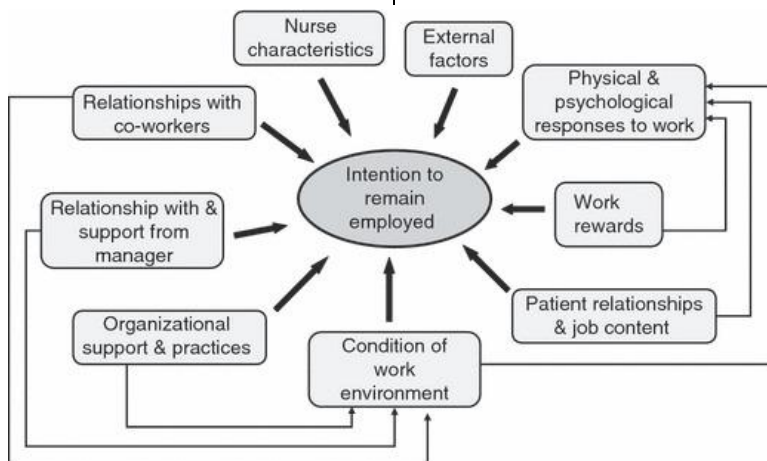
Organizational Support and Practices: Educational opportunities and proper job orientation were factors involved in nurse intention to remain employed. Accessible child and elder care, flexible hours and adjustable scheduling practices were mentioned as reasons to remain employed.

Physical and Psychological Responses to Work: Nurses who identified being very stressed or burned out indicated they were planning to leave employment.

Patient Relationships and Job Content: Positive connections with patients, manageable workloads and patient flow were identified as reasons to remain employed.

External Factors: Outside opportunities for employment and outside pay incentives influenced decisions to remain employed.

Fig. 1. Model of Determinants of Hospital Nurse Intention to Remain Employed



How can you use this research?

Employers interested in promoting hospital nurse retention need to focus on improving factors related to the reasons nurses stay employed. Retention may be promoted by developing strategies that focus on modifying work environment and organization characteristics rather than trying to modifying nurse behavior. There is clearly no one solution to improve nurse retention because there is no one single cause. Employers should focus on building respectful relationships and supportive work environments.

Original Article:

To learn more about this study, we invite you to read the original research article:

Tourangeau, A., Cummings, G., Cranley, L., Ferron, E.M. & Harvey, S. (2010).

Determinants of hospital nurse intention to remain employed: Broadening our understanding. *Journal of Advanced Nursing* 66(1), 22-32.

About the Researcher

Ann Tourangeau is an Associate Professor in the Faculty of Nursing at the University of Toronto, and an adjunct scientist at ICES.
tourangeau.research@utoronto.ca

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