



Experienced pediatric nurses' perceptions of work-related stressors on general medical and surgical units: A qualitative study



Alexandra De Almeida Vicente^{a,1}, Sanaz Shadvar^{a,2}, Stephanie Lepage^b, Janet E. Rennick^{c,d,*}

^a The Montreal Children's Hospital, McGill University Health Centre, 1001 boul. Decarie, Montréal, Québec, Canada H3A 3J1

^b Department of Nursing, The Montreal Children's Hospital, McGill University Health Centre, 1001 boul. Decarie, Montréal, Québec, Canada H3A 3J1

^c Department of Nursing and Department of Pediatrics, Division of Critical Care, The Montreal Children's Hospital, McGill University Health Centre, 1001 boul. Decarie, Room BS1.2566, Montréal, Québec, Canada H3A 3J1

^d Ingram School of Nursing and Department of Pediatrics, Faculty of Medicine, McGill University, Wilson Hall, 3506 University Street, Montreal, Québec, Canada H3A 2A7

ARTICLE INFO

Article history:

Received 26 October 2015

Received in revised form 2 May 2016

Accepted 6 May 2016

Keywords:

Experienced nurses

Nurse retention

Pediatric medical/surgical units

Work-related stressors

ABSTRACT

Background: Experienced pediatric nurses caring for increasingly sick and vulnerable children on medical and surgical units may be at particular risk for work-related stress. In view of their positive impact on quality of care, and the fact that they are particularly difficult to retain, it is imperative to understand the work-related stressors these nurses encounter in order to develop effective organizational interventions to minimize stressors and promote retention.

Objective: To explore experienced pediatric nurses' perceptions of work-related stressors in medical and surgical units.

Design: Qualitative descriptive design with semi-structured interviews.

Setting: Medical and surgical units at a quaternary care pediatric hospital in Montreal, Canada.

Participants: Nurses recognized as experienced by the nursing leadership team as reflected by having been 'in charge' of the unit, or having trained junior staff, and who had been practicing full-time for three years or more on a general medical or surgical pediatric unit were eligible to participate. Purposive sampling was used, and nurses recruited until data saturation was reached ($n = 12$). There were no refusals to participate.

Methods: Semi-structured interviews were conducted between August and December 2013.

Results: Nurses described a strong sense of responsibility for providing excellent patient care, and identified stressor that negatively impacted their ability to do so. Stressors are reflected in three themes: (1) "The kids are getting sicker and sicker": Difficulty ensuring excellent patient care to an increasingly vulnerable population, (2) Feeling powerless to provide quality care, and (3) Being a "jack-of-all-trades": Struggling with competing demands.

* Corresponding author at: The Montreal Children's Hospital, McGill University Health Centre, 1001 boulevard Decarie, Room BS1.2566, Montreal, Québec, Canada H4A 3J1. Tel.: +1 514 412 4400x22556; fax: +1 514 412 4355.

E-mail addresses: alexandra.dealmeidavicente@mail.mcgill.ca (A. De Almeida Vicente), sanaz.shadvar@mail.mcgill.ca (S. Shadvar), stephanie.lepage@muhc.mcgill.ca (S. Lepage), janet.rennick@muhc.mcgill.ca (J.E. Rennick).

¹ Present address: Ambulatory Clinic, Shriner's Hospital for Children, 1003 Decarie Boulevard, Montreal, Québec, Canada H4A 0A9.

² Present address: Miriam Center, 8160 Chemin Royden, Mont-Royal, Québec, Canada H4P 2T2.

Conclusion: Experienced pediatric nurses felt powerless to provide quality care to an increasingly acute and vulnerable population. Dealing with multiple and diverse responsibilities, and limited resources and support, were important stressors. Nurse Managers and educators could mitigate stressors and improve retention of experienced pediatric nurses by offering targeted continuing education to those newly responsible for additional roles, and building supportive working environments that encourage collaboration and empower experienced nurses.

Crown Copyright © 2016 Published by Elsevier Ltd. All rights reserved.

What is already known about the topic?

- Nursing shortages are recognized as a worldwide problem affecting population health and well-being. Work-related stressors have a significant impact on nurse retention.
- A shortage of experienced nurses is cause for concern, given that experience-based knowledge is needed for the clinical management of today's complex, high acuity patients.
- Although experienced nurses in pediatric medical and surgical units are highly stressed, little is known about the nature of these stressors.

What this paper adds

- Providing excellent care to increasingly acute pediatric populations across diverse medical and surgical units requires varied knowledge and experience, and is particularly challenging. Leadership support and ongoing education are needed to enhance retention of senior nursing staff.
- Nurses' years of experience and role stress appear to influence their perception of work-related stressors. Those with 3–6 years of experience do not consider themselves to be "experienced" nurses. Closer alignment of manager's expectations of senior staff with their levels of experience and the provision of educational support may prevent stress and support the development of nursing expertise.
- Experienced pediatric nurses' describe feeling powerless to provide quality care due to inadequate resources, insufficient time, and demanding role expectations as a major source of work-related stress.

1. Introduction

Nursing shortages occurring in health care systems around the world have adverse impacts on the health and well-being of populations (ICN, 2015). A 2010 Global Monitoring Survey from the World Health Organization (WHO) found that 86% of its member states reported experiencing a nursing shortage (WHO, 2010). In 2014, the Canadian Institute for Health Information (CIHI) reported that more nurses had left the profession that year than had entered it (CIHI, 2015). Indeed, the ongoing global needs for safe staffing levels and improved retention were identified by the International Council of Nurses (ICN) as key topics of importance at the 2015 International Workforce Forum (ICN, 2015). A number of underlying

factors have been identified as contributing to current shortages, including work-related stressors (Registered Nurses' Association of Ontario, 2008). Understanding work-related stressors is critical if organizations are to retain nurses. While all nurses experience work-related stressors, pediatric nurses may be at a particular risk, as they face emotional stress from taking care of sick children (Davis et al., 2013; Foglia et al., 2010; Sekol and Kim, 2014). Most studies have focused on the nurse's work environment in critical care settings, creating a gap in knowledge about working environments in general medical and surgical care units (Sekol and Kim, 2014).

Experienced nurses working in general medical and surgical pediatric settings may be more difficult to retain (Jakubik et al., 2004). They are expected to master the skills necessary to care for patients with a wide range of diagnoses and treatment issues (Jakubik et al., 2004), while accepting increased responsibilities. This can decrease the amount of time available for direct patient care and lead to job dissatisfaction (Ernst et al., 2004). Since experienced nurses positively impact quality of care (Hill, 2010), it is imperative to understand their work-related stressors in order to implement effective organizational interventions to minimize stressors and promote retention. The aim of this study was to explore experienced pediatric nurses' perceptions of work-related stressors in medical and surgical settings.

1.1. Background

Work-related stressors are defined as work-related environmental conditions that impact the health and well-being of the worker (UK Health & Safety Executive, 2007). Hayes et al. (2012) conducted a systematic review to examine the current state of knowledge regarding nursing turnover. They reviewed 68 research papers and identified determinants that influenced nursing turnover and nurses' intention to leave the workplace. These included: excessive workload, inadequate staff coverage and resources, lack of team support, increased patient acuity, poor supportive management, poor control in decision making, and lack of quality of care. Study samples were recruited from unidentified clinical areas, making it impossible to determine potential differences in stressors across settings.

Pediatric nurses are faced with unique care-giving challenges. Not only do they play a role in providing care for the sick child, but they also attend to the emotional needs of parents, siblings, and other family members. They are typically confronted with overwhelming emotional

Download English Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/en/article/1075975>

Download Persian Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/article/1075975>

[Daneshyari.com](https://daneshyari.com)