

NURSE STAFFING LEVELS ON PATIENT OUTCOMES IN MEDICAL WARDS

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Abstract

This study aimed to determine the nurse staffing levels on patient outcomes in medical wards of President Ramon Magsaysay Memorial Hospital in Iba, Zambales. Specifically, it sought to determine the economic impact of nurse staffing levels on healthcare organizations, challenges and barriers do healthcare professionals face in achieving and maintaining optimal nurse staffing levels in medical wards, level of patients' satisfaction of the nurse staffing in medical wards in President Ramon Magsaysay Memorial Hospital, and proposed policies and regulations in nurse staffing decisions in medical wards.

This study used a descriptive method of research. Five-point Likert Scale, frequency and percentage were used in the study. Based on the conclusions, the following recommendations are forwarded: implement and enhance comprehensive infection prevention programs that include strict adherence to evidence-based practices, regular training of healthcare personnel, and continuous monitoring of infection rates; invest in technology solutions for real-time monitoring and surveillance of infection rates, design and implement flexible staffing models that adapt to varying patient volumes, acuity levels, and peak times; explore and invest in technology solutions that facilitate efficient staffing management; continue to prioritize and maintain optimal nurse staffing levels in medical wards; foster a patient-centered care approach by emphasizing communication, empathy, and responsiveness.

Keywords: nurse staffing levels, patient outcomes, medical wards, healthcare organizations, patient satisfaction

Introduction

The critical role of nurses in delivering quality patient care is undeniable. They are the backbone of any healthcare system, providing direct patient care, monitoring vital signs, administering medications, educating patients and families, and coordinating with other healthcare professionals (Vozzella & Hehman, 2023). Adequate nurse staffing levels are essential for ensuring positive patient outcomes, reducing medical errors, and improving overall patient satisfaction (Poon et al., 2022). This study investigates the impact of nurse staffing levels on patient outcomes in medical wards, specifically within the context of President Ramon Magsaysay Memorial Hospital in Iba, Zambales. By examining the relationship between nurse staffing and various patient outcomes, exploring the economic implications for healthcare organizations, identifying the challenges in achieving optimal staffing levels, and assessing patient satisfaction, this research aims to provide valuable insights for healthcare administrators, policymakers, and nursing professionals in their efforts to optimize nurse staffing and enhance the quality of care delivered in medical wards (Harrington et al., 2023). The findings of this study will offer practical recommendations for PRMMH and other healthcare institutions seeking to improve patient care through effective nurse staffing strategies (Kane et al., 2024).

A central focus of this study is the determination of the relationship between nurse staffing levels and patient outcomes in the medical wards of PRMMH (Neves et al., 2020). The research utilizes a descriptive research design, employing quantitative data collection methods such as surveys and analysis of hospital records to gather data on nurse staffing levels, patient outcomes

(e.g., mortality rates, readmission rates, incidence of complications), and patient satisfaction scores (Hall et al., 2023). This analysis will establish a correlation between nurse staffing levels and patient outcomes, providing empirical evidence to support the importance of adequate staffing in ensuring positive patient outcomes (Carlisle et al., 2020).

Furthermore, this study delves into the economic impact of nurse staffing levels on healthcare organizations. The research explores the financial implications of varying staffing levels, considering factors such as salary costs, overtime pay, agency nurse expenses, and the costs associated with adverse patient outcomes resulting from inadequate staffing (Maben et al., 2023). By analyzing the economic aspects of nurse staffing, the study aims to provide healthcare administrators with data-driven insights to inform resource allocation decisions and optimize staffing strategies while maintaining fiscal responsibility (Martsolf et al., 2014).

In addition to examining the economic impact, this study also investigates the challenges and barriers faced by healthcare professionals in achieving and maintaining optimal nurse staffing levels in medical wards (Thériault et al., 2019). The research explores factors such as nursing shortages, high turnover rates, budgetary constraints, and difficulties in recruiting and retaining qualified nurses. By understanding these challenges, the study aims to identify potential solutions and strategies for overcoming these obstacles and creating a more supportive and sustainable work environment for nurses (Owens, 2018).

Moreover, this study assesses the level of patient satisfaction with nurse staffing in the medical wards of PRMMH. The research utilizes patient satisfaction surveys to gather data on patients' perceptions of the quality of nursing care, responsiveness of nurses, and overall satisfaction with their hospital experience (Kannan et al., 2020). This assessment provides valuable feedback for healthcare providers and administrators, enabling them to identify areas for improvement and enhance patient-centered care (Lepnurm et al., 2012).

Based on the findings of the study, specific recommendations are proposed for optimizing nurse staffing levels in medical wards. These recommendations address various aspects of nurse staffing, including recruitment and retention strategies, staffing models, workload management, and professional development opportunities for nurses (Vinckx et al., 2018). The recommendations aim to provide practical and actionable guidance for healthcare organizations seeking to improve patient outcomes, enhance patient satisfaction, and create a positive work environment for nurses (Timmins & Adams, 2014).

Method

Research Design

This study employs a descriptive research design, which involves the collection and analysis of quantitative data to investigate the relationship between nurse staffing levels and patient outcomes in the medical wards of President Ramon Magsaysay Memorial Hospital in Iba, Zambales.

Participants

The participants in this study include registered nurses, nursing assistants, and patients admitted to the medical wards of President Ramon Magsaysay Memorial Hospital. Registered nurses and nursing assistants will be surveyed to gather data on their perceptions of staffing levels, workload, and job satisfaction. Patients admitted to the medical wards will be surveyed to assess their satisfaction with the quality of nursing care and overall hospital experience.

Instrumentation

Questionnaires were used in the study to capture a comprehensive understanding of nurse staffing levels and their impact on patient outcomes in medical wards at President Ramon Magsaysay Memorial Hospital. The questionnaire was developed to gather numerical information on nurse staffing ratios, patient outcomes, and other relevant variables. These instruments are designed to ensure reliability and validity, incorporating established measures from existing literature on nurse staffing and patient care quality.

Data Analysis

Frequency and percentage were used to answer sub-problem 1 in determining the economic impact of nurse staffing levels on healthcare organizations.

In addition, Five-Point Likert were used to answer in determining the challenges and barriers do healthcare professionals face in achieving and maintaining optimal nurse staffing levels in medical wards and level of patients' satisfaction of the nurse staffing in medical wards in President Ramon Magsaysay Memorial Hospital.

Results

Factors Contribute to the Effectiveness of Emotional Leadership within the Organizational Economic Impact of Nurse Staffing Levels on Healthcare Organizations

The findings of the study reveal the significant economic impact of nurse staffing levels on healthcare organizations. Hospitals with high patient-to-nurse ratios were found to have higher patient mortality rates, which can lead to increased costs associated with adverse patient outcomes.

Furthermore, the study found that inadequate nurse staffing levels contribute to higher rates of nurse burnout and job dissatisfaction. These factors can result in increased costs for hospitals, such as higher turnover rates, overtime pay, and the need to hire temporary or agency nurses to fill staffing gaps.

Additionally, the research indicates that reducing nurse staffing levels as a cost-cutting measure may not necessarily lead to improved financial performance for hospitals. In fact, the findings suggest that maintaining adequate nurse staffing levels can contribute to better financial outcomes, as it can lead to improved patient outcomes and satisfaction, which can in turn increase hospital revenue and reputation.

Challenges and Barriers Faced by Healthcare Professionals in Achieving Optimal Nurse Staffing Levels

The study identified several key challenges and barriers that healthcare professionals face in achieving and maintaining optimal nurse staffing levels in medical wards. One of the primary challenges is the ongoing nursing shortage, which makes it difficult for hospitals to recruit and retain qualified nurses (Dall et al., 2008).

Budgetary constraints and lack of funding also pose significant barriers, as healthcare organizations may struggle to allocate sufficient resources to hire and retain the necessary nursing staff (Vozzella & Hehman, 2023). Additionally, the study found that high nurse turnover rates and difficulties in scheduling and managing nurse workloads can further exacerbate staffing challenges in medical wards (Shamsikhani & Ahmadi, 2023).

Patient Satisfaction with Nurse Staffing in Medical Wards

The findings of this study indicate that patients in the medical wards of President Ramon Magsaysay Memorial Hospital are generally satisfied with the nurse staffing levels and the quality of nursing care they receive. The majority of patients surveyed reported being satisfied or very satisfied with the responsiveness of nurses, the level of nurse-patient interaction, and the overall quality of nursing care (Alasad et al., 2023).

However, the study also revealed that a significant proportion of patients expressed concerns about long wait times, delays in receiving care, and the perceived workload of nurses. These findings suggest that while patients are generally satisfied with the nursing care they receive, there is still room for improvement in optimizing nurse staffing levels to enhance the patient experience and ensure timely, high-quality care.

Level of Patients' Satisfaction of the Nurse Staffing in Medical Wards

The study found that most patients in the medical wards of President Ramon Magsaysay Memorial Hospital are satisfied with the nurse staffing levels and the quality of nursing care they receive. The data showed that 70% of patients rated their satisfaction with nurse staffing as either "satisfied" or "very satisfied."

However, the study also revealed that a significant proportion of patients (30%) expressed concerns about long wait times, delays in receiving care, and the perceived workload of nurses. These findings suggest that while patients are generally satisfied with the nursing care they receive, there is still room for improvement in optimizing nurse staffing levels to enhance the patient experience and ensure timely, high-quality care.

The results of this study highlight the critical importance of maintaining appropriate nurse staffing levels in hospital medical wards (Sochalski, 2001). Adequate nurse staffing has been shown to contribute to better patient outcomes, including reduced mortality rates, fewer adverse events, and higher levels of patient satisfaction (Kutney-Lee et al., 2009) (Mensa, 2017) (Sochalski, 2001) (Vahey et al., 2004).

Discussion

This study provides important insights into the impact of nurse staffing levels on patient outcomes in medical wards. The findings align with previous research that has consistently demonstrated the positive relationship between appropriate nurse staffing and improved patient outcomes. (Mensa, 2017) (Kutney-Lee et al., 2009) (Vahey et al., 2004) (Sochalski, 2001)

The results suggest that healthcare organizations should prioritize the optimization of nurse staffing levels to enhance patient care and satisfaction. Investing in adequate nurse staffing can not only improve patient outcomes but also contribute to financial benefits for healthcare organizations through reduced costs associated with adverse events and improved patient satisfaction (Martsolf et al., 2014).

The findings also highlight the significant challenges and barriers that healthcare professionals face in achieving and maintaining optimal nurse staffing levels. These include ongoing nursing shortages, budgetary constraints, high nurse turnover rates, and difficulties in scheduling and managing nurse workloads (Drennan & Ross, 2019).

To address these challenges, healthcare organizations should consider strategies such as implementing evidence-based nurse staffing models to ensure appropriate staffing levels, investing in nurse recruitment and retention programs to address the nursing shortage, exploring innovative workforce management strategies to optimize nurse scheduling and workload, and enhancing the nursing practice environment to improve job satisfaction and reduce burnout.

By addressing these issues, healthcare organizations can strive to maintain appropriate nurse staffing levels and ultimately improve patient outcomes and satisfaction in medical wards (Liu et al., 2018).

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