

RESEARCH HIGHLIGHT

Newly Licensed Registered Nurses' Intent to Stay at their Jobs

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BACKGROUND

The United States is facing a shortage of 340,000 registered nurses (RNs) by the year 2020. Ample evidence suggests that inadequate nurse to patient staffing ratios exacerbated by the nursing shortage negatively affect health outcomes of hospital patients. To ensure adequate nurse staffing, hospitals must replace RNs who leave. Costs for replacing an RN range from \$82,000 to \$88,000. Findings from the study of a nationally representative sample of 3,380 newly licensed RNs from 34 states and District of Columbia provide crucial evidence for designing solutions to reduce turnover in new nurses.

KEY FINDINGS

New RN Report Unfavorable

- 88 percent of NLRNs worked in the hospital setting, and most were staff nurses.
- For them, the most important work characteristics are the "ability to do the job well" and "being rewarded fairly for the work."
- While 58.9 percent were satisfied or very satisfied, when asked if they were free to go into any job they wanted 41.5 percent answered that they would want another job.
- We found that 37.1 percent intend to search for a new position in one year.
- For those who had left their first job, poor management was the top reason for leaving their first job.

Many new RNs think about leaving their first job or have already left.

- When asked if they were free to go into any job they wanted, 41.5 % of NLRNs answered that they would prefer another job.
- 37.1 % of NLRNs stated their intent to search for a new position in one year.
- 27.2 % of NLRNs who had worked at least 13 months in nursing had already left their first job. Intent to leave or search for another job did not differ between the new nurses with first baccalaureate degree in nursing and those with first baccalaureate degree in another field.

New RNs report unfavorable work conditions and inadequate support from their managers.

- More than 33% said that they had too little time to get things done three or more days per week.
- Almost 26% found it "difficult or impossible" to do their job because of lack of equipment or supplies at least one day per week.
- 39% reported experiencing at least one strain or sprain; 21% a cut or laceration; 46 % a bruise or contusion; and 62% reported experiencing verbal abuse at least once.
- 17% said they found it "difficult or impossible" to do their job because of their supervisor at least once a month.
- 36% said that "poor management" is the reason that they left their job.

Organizational leaders and healthcare policy makers can modify hospital work environment characteristics to improve new RNs' intent to stay at their job.

- Factors positively related to new RNs' intent to stay at their jobs were job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and promotional opportunities.
- Work environment characteristics that organizational leaders can modify to improve job satisfaction and organizational commitment of new RNs included variety, autonomy, supervisory support, work group cohesion, mentor

support, procedural justice, organizational constraints, importance of benefits, and nurse-physician relations.

- Healthcare policy makers can influence hours of mandatory overtime and patient load, factors negatively related to new RNs' job satisfaction and organizational commitment.

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