

Nursing practice environment in hospital context

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Abstract

Introduction

The Nursing Practice Environment (NPE) is essential for the success of health care systems^{1,2} and is related to the quality of nursing care, job satisfaction, client safety, and the effectiveness of care for clients and the efficiency of organizations.¹⁻³

The presence of organizational attributes, especially autonomy, control over the environment and collaboration between health professionals, makes the NPE beneficial to the development of care, as well as to the contribution to better outcomes for the client, health professionals and the institution itself, resulting in the Quality of Nursing Care (QNC) provided.^{1,4}

Objectives

To assess the nursing practice environment in several Portuguese hospitals.

Methods

Quantitative, observational, descriptive and cross-sectional study, with a sample of 767 nurses from four public hospitals in Portugal. The Nursing Work Index scale translated and validated for Portugal by Anunciada, Benito, Gaspar, & Lucas⁵ was applied.

Results/Discussion

A sample of 767 nurses was obtained, 59.2% of whom had the professional category of nurse, 83.4% had a university degree, 84.2% were female, and the mean age was 36.78 years. The nurses who participated in this study consider, in general, that the NPE in which they are inserted is favorable. However, the dimensions Professional Development, Secure Staffing and Organization of Nursing Care were unfavorably evaluated, suggesting that nurses could have greater involvement in organizational and service decisions, greater opportunities for professional and career development, which could influence the NPE. The items concerning the number of nurses and the adequacy of services, together with the item concerning salary satisfaction, obtained the most unfavorable results, showing the shortage of human resources that the nurses surveyed experience on a daily basis in their care provision. The Multidisciplinary Relationship dimension, the item related to nurses' experience and the nurse manager's accessibility obtained the most favorable results, showing that the surveyed nurses have a good relationship with the multidisciplinary team and the nurse manager, which reveals the importance assigned to teamwork and the relationship with the nurse manager.

Conclusions

The nurses who participated in this study consider, in general, that the NPE in which they work is favorable. However, the Professional Development, Secure Allocations and Organization of Nursing Care dimensions were unfavorably assessed. The Multidisciplinary Relationship dimension, the item regarding nurses' experience and accessibility of the nurse manager achieved the most favorable results.

Implications for knowledge development: Improving the nursing practice environment has consequences on QNC according to scientific evidence.

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This study is relevant to the context of nursing management, care practices and research, due to the relationship that the NPE has with quality of care, job satisfaction, customer satisfaction and efficiency of organizations, as proven by scientific evidence.

Keywords

Nursing; Work Environment; Quality of Care; Hospitals.

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