


EDITORIAL

Nursing Trends: research for a better health – Lisbon 2024

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Mental health and wellbeing of the healthcare workforce: A challenge that requires to act now

Healthcare workers are under high levels of stress, burnout and absenteeism related to staff shortages, low pay or inadequate working conditions. Prevalence data suggests no significant change in mental health issues among health and care workers since 2022. Almost 40% of healthcare workers have had high levels of anxiety and depression. Besides, burnout and moral distress is worsening, especially among intensive care unit nurses (Abdul Rahim H, et al 2022)

The State of the World's Nursing Report (WHO, 2020) presented a detailed description of the nursing workforce at national, regional and global levels. Population ageing together with an expected global professional's shortage of over 10 million nurses by 2030 generates a need to protect the mental health and wellbeing of healthcare workers. Moreover, nurses are raising their voices on how their mental health and wellbeing is affected by demands of their workplace. Therefore, employers are increasingly responding through the provision of organizational and individual interventions. New initiatives are calling attention at organizational level and policy action such as:

Global Strategic Directions for Nursing and Midwifery at the 78th World Health Assembly (WHA, WHO, 2021) provides evidence to support anticipated governance decisions by WHO Member States on the education, jobs leadership and service delivery.

Our duty of care: A global call to action to protect the mental health of health and care workers (WHO and World Innovation Summit for Health of Qatar Foundation, 2022) provides policy actions as a framework for immediate follow-up by employers, organizations and policymakers.

Global health and care worker compact (WHA and International Labour Conference in 2022) reaffirmed the obligations of governments and employers to protect the workforce, ensure their rights and provide them with decent work in a safe and enabling practice environment that upholds their mental health and wellbeing.

The future of Nursing 2020-2030: Changing a path to achieve health equity (National Academy of Medicine, USA) aims to advance the critical need of supporting nurses wellbeing in ensuring the delivery of high quality care. To achieve this goal, they propose bolster the systems, structures and policies that affect the health and wellbeing of nurses.

Bucharest Declaration on health and care workers (WHO-Europe, 2023) recommends improving the supply (retention and recruitment) of healthcare workers, and optimize their performance by creating decent, safe, adequate staffed work environments. Besides, this declaration calls for an increase public investment in workforce education, development and protection.

Magnet4Europe has studied in over 65 European hospital in six European countries with twinned hospitals in the United States. The results indicates that organizational



interventions should be implemented to improve hospital work environments and staffing mental health.

World Health Professions Alliance, stands up for positive practice environments draws attention to the problem through its assembling of 41 million health care professionals in more than 130 countries, and have found health and care settings that support excellence and decent work conditions have the power to attract and retain staff, and provide quality patient care. Moreover, recently the European Health Union's comprehensive approach to mental health (European Commission, 2023) acknowledges health workers are at a higher risk of experiencing mental health problems related to their jobs and is prioritizing mental health €1.23 billion in funding. The impact of failing to protect health and care workers mental health and wellbeing is clear and evidenced; guidance exists for what needs to be done by employers, organizations and policymakers. However, application of these recommendations within health systems and with appropriate policy action remains a challenge.

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