Empowering Experienced Pediatric Nurses Working on General Medical & Surgical Units

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LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Identify experienced pediatric nurses’ perceptions of work-related stressors on general medical and surgical units.
- Discuss managerial strategies for workplace empowerment.
INTRODUCTION

In 2015, more nurses had left the profession that year than had entered it (Canadian Institute for Health Information, 2015).

Work-related stressors have been identified as one of the contributing factors to current shortages (Registered Nurses’ Association of Ontario, 2008).
LITERATURE REVIEW

Work-Related Stressors

The Nature of the Job

Insufficient Resources

Management Style

Hayes et al., 2012
KNOWLEDGE GAP

Pediatric Medical/Surgical Care Units VS Pediatric Acute Care Units

- Highest level of burnout and lowest levels of job satisfaction (Sekol and Kim, 2014).
- Higher levels of PTSD symptoms (Czaja et al., 2012).
- Work-related stressors and underlying causes unknown.
KNOWLEDGE GAP

Experienced Pediatric Nurses in Medical/Surgical Units

- Impact unit wellbeing, increase quality of patient care, and improve patient safety (Hill, 2010).
- Increased responsibilities → increased stress, workload and job dissatisfaction (Davis et al., 2013; Foglia et al., 2010; Sekol and Kim, 2014).
METHOD

Purpose

Explore experienced nurses’ perceptions of work-related stressors in pediatric medical and surgical units.
METHOD

Design

- Qualitative descriptive with semi-structured interviews

Procedure

- Recruitment and data collection

Analysis

- Thematic content analysis (Hsieh and Shannon, 2005)
### Characteristics of the Study Sample

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Participants</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Years as RN</th>
<th>Working unit</th>
<th>Years of experience on unit</th>
<th>Level of education</th>
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Notes: RN – registered nurse; Surg. – general surgical unit; Med. – general medical unit; Nursing diploma – college/professional degree; BScN – bachelor of science, nursing; MSc – master’s degree.
RESULTS

“‘The kids are getting sicker and sicker’”: Difficulty ensuring excellent patient care to an increasingly vulnerable population;

Feeling powerless to provide quality care;

Being a ‘‘Jack-of all trades”’: Struggling with competing demands.
“The kids are getting sicker and sicker”

Most of the time, they give me the sickest patient [in addition to] other patients, you don’t spend time with them so you can focus on the one that is more critical. It bothers me, I feel like I didn’t give my 100% for them [less critical patients].

(P4)
Feeling powerless to provide quality care

“There is less equipment, less personnel, less of things that you need, and more running around and finding things, and equipment and resources...I find it more stressful in terms of managing your time.” (P11)
“[In the] five years that I’ve been here I can count with one hand how many doctors have actually included our opinion and asked us…what do you think should be the next step?” (P7)
Being a “Jack-of-all-trades”

When you’re working at night, you’re the most senior and everyone comes to you for answer[s], and they kind of expect you to have all the answer[s], and you have to know how to deal with the situation and sometimes it’s very stressful… On top of it, you’re in charge. And most of the time, they give you the patients who are sicker. (P12)
Being a “Jack-of-all-trades”

“I don’t find three years is a long time to be considered the ‘go-to person’.” (P11)
“You feel like you’re drowning, and then you get a bit of air, ok, another hour has passed.”(P2)
DISCUSSION

Feeling Powerless to Provide Quality Care

♥ Nurse managers may perceive work environment more positively than staff nurses (Bruyneel et al., 2014)


♥ Poor access to information, support & resources → sense of powerlessness - *Theory of structural empowerment* (Kanter, 1977)
DISCUSSION

New Finding

• Uncomfortable being called “experienced”.

Limitations
IMPLICATION FOR PRACTICE

Promoting Empowerment

- Continuous education
- Regular communication of shared expectations
- Multidisciplinary team building

Hayes et al., 2012
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REFERENCES


