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Reflective Annotated Bibliography

Introduction:

Research Question: How does the nursing shortage impact the safety of patients and staff?

Still recovering from the COVID-19 pandemic, one of the more noticeable effects it had is the nursing shortage. It must be noted that throughout history the nursing shortage has always been a problem, but the pandemic contributed to its worsening. This in mind, after experiencing the effects of the nursing shortage at work, when asked to find a social justice issue of importance to me I did not need to look farther than my own environment. There have been many times that I have gone to work where there has only been myself and two other aides on the floor caring for about 40 patients. It does not seem possible and sounds like I am overestimating the situation, but that is the reality of my situation. And I can guarantee similar conditions are occurring worldwide and can be worse than what I presented.

The reality of what is happening is not fair to us nurses and patients. With the lives resting on my hands this problem needs to be addressed more thoroughly. This led me to question what effects the nursing shortage has on patient safety and nurse safety. I believe that while everyone prioritizes patient safety few focus on the nurses who work to ensure those patients safety. Through this research, I seek to find out more about the nursing shortage in general, what factors contribute to it, how it affects patients, but more importantly to me, how it affects the nurses and what can be done to resolve the issue.

Source Entries:*Citation # 1*

Haddad, Lisa M, et al. "Nursing Shortage." *National Library of Medicine*, StatPearls, 22 Feb. 2022, <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK493175/>.

Summary

This article talks about one of the major concerns the world is currently facing, the nursing shortage. The piece began by defining and introducing how crucial nurses are to healthcare, making up the bulk of the profession. It was noted that "According to the World Health Statistics Report, there are approximately 29 million nurses and midwives globally... [and] Estimates of upward of one million additional nurses will be needed by 2020" (Haddad et al.). Additionally, it is mentioned that "an article in the Nursing Times, The US Bureau of Labor Statistics Projects that more than 275,000 additional nurses are needed from 2020 to 2030" (Haddad et al.). The piece continues to suggest reasons for the shortage which includes the aging population, aging work force, nurse burn out, career and family, regions (location), growth potential, and workplace violence.

The aging population increases the need for health services because they are surviving longer and need increased care as they are living with multiple lifelong health issues that need to be heavily managed. Addition the as the population ages the workforce decreases significantly because many workers are retiring at one time. This impacts the educational institutions mostly as the number of faculty decreases limits the number of students schools can accept decreases the availability of new nurses. Furthermore, because of the increased number of patients and limited support nurses are more overworked leading to increased rates of nurse burnout and high

turnover rates. Also, with most nurses being female and at the age where most are starting families, limits on how much these nurses can work increase until they leave the profession all together.

The article also states that the shortage impacts regions around the United States differently as some have more nurses than needed and others can barely meet the needs of their communities. The main issue is getting nurses where they are needed in areas that are seen to have a slower growth potential. Another issue is finding nurses to take up the vacant positions on units that have higher instances of violence like the emergency or psychiatry departments. The article then highlights that the major issue is the staffing ratios which put the safety of the nurse and patient at risk for several reasons. Some interventions were suggested to combat this problem include improved technological resources and an empowering environment that supports and facilitates the staff.

Reflection

I agree with the source discussed regarding the nursing shortage. The statistics presented on the shortage make it clear that work needs to be done to solve this problem. As a nurse myself, I have experienced the high patient to nurse ratios firsthand. There is so much potential for educators within the aging of the population. I think that more should be done so that the nurses who retire consider teaching the next generation. Also, I feel the nursing associations and unions can do more to help by advocating for more support staffing and implementing programs that will help decrease the number of nurses who experience burnout.

I think the problem will be worse before it gets better. Many aspects of the article resonated with me, especially when it mentioned violence nurses experience within the health care system. Many of my friends have told me that the potential for violence is one of the main reasons that made them change their mind about selecting a career in nursing and I am sure that

it is the same for many others as well. The study referenced for that section of the article was interesting. It stated that nurses who work in the inpatient setting experience more verbal abuse and that nurses in general are the “most vulnerable to aggression” (Haddad et al.). Through my research, I believe that I will discover more information to solve issues such as short staffing for example. Because where I work, they are never adequately staffed. If I can present some solutions to the organization that have been shown to work, hopefully they will consider making similar changes. I would like to make my voice heard to advocate for myself, patients, and other nurses. Overall, the article was clear and presented the information in a way that lacked any bias.

Quotation

“Nursing shortages lead to errors, higher morbidity, and mortality rates. In hospitals with high patient-to-nurse ratios, nurses experience burnout, dissatisfaction, and the patients experienced higher mortality and failure-to-rescue rates than facilities with lower patient-to-nurse ratios” (Haddad et al.).

Citation # 2

King, Lucy. *We Know the Real Cause of the Crisis in Our Hospitals. It's Greed.* *The New York Times*, The New York Times, 19 Jan. 2022,
<https://www.nytimes.com/2022/01/19/opinion/nurses-staffing-hospitals-covid-19.html>.

Summary

This video is short, about 7 minutes in length and is an opinion piece done by The New York Times. The video opens with nurses detailing the violence they experienced while on the job. These same nurses go on to inform views that the nursing shortage has been an issue for a while and worsened due to the pandemic. The idea presented is that the nursing shortage is not the result of a shortage of nurses, but instead the result of hospitals not willing to hire nurses.

Throughout the video, TikTok's from other nurses were shown to be in tears, complaining about the conditions they are forced to work under and stating how they want to leave the profession. Many of the nurses interviewed suggest feeling as though they failed to do their job because of being overwhelmed by patients and not being able to care for them in the way they deserve or desire to. The video reminds viewers that the hospital is a business and just like any other business the goal is to increase their profits. It concludes with the suggestion to implement policies that will ensure safe patient to staff ratios. It was said to be the focus of many states, some of which passed the bill while others rejected it.

Reflection

As a nurse I was not surprised to hear what the nurse in the video had to say because I go through the same thing five days a week. This opinion video gives an alternative view of what is commonly suggested to the public, the pandemic did not cause the shortage of nurses, the hospitals did. Though I do believe that this is not the only cause, because from my research I learned of other factors that contributed to the shortage, the hospital as a business indeed is the primary factor. I have to say that the video is a little biased because the nurses are placing the blame of the shortage on the hospital, but I cannot find anything wrong with that. I say this because what they are saying has some truths to it, the hospital is a business with a budget where half goes to staffing.

With the several types of staff needed to run a hospital, not a lot of that budget can be spent on nurses. What needs to be done is have management reevaluate the in-place budget so that funds can be reallocated to support the hiring of nurses. Also, support needs to be given to the policies that ensure adequate staffing numbers. I believe governments should also help fund hospitals to ensure they are staffed correctly. However, my only issue is that the other video did

not comment on how short staffing is also a problem of other in-patient institutions like nursing homes and rehabilitations centers. I say this because I work at one and the conditions impacting nurse and patient safety are the same as those in the hospital. What I need to do is do more research to see if I can find related works that discuss those settings.

Quotation

“If you're in the hospital your chances of dying go up by 7% for every additional patient your nurse has to care for” (King and Kessel).

Citation # 3

Trinkoff, Alison M., et al. “CE: Nurses Are More Exhausted Than Ever: What Should We Do About It?” *The American Journal of Nursing*, vol. 121, no. 12, 2021, pp. 18–28, <https://doi.org/10.1097/01.NAJ.0000802688.16426.8d>.

Summary

The article discusses how the covid-19 pandemic has increased the risk of fatigue. It is mentioned that working longer hours when understaffed can cause many kinds of health problems like cardiovascular diseases, diabetes, anxiety, and depression. The result of this fatigue impacts both the nurses and the patient's safety. The article is divided into three different sections. The first section discusses the factors that result in the fatigue that nurses experience. They include heavy job demands, sleep and work challenges, and maintaining a work-life balance. The second section presents various solutions for nurse fatigue. Some of the solutions include sleep training, workplace napping, how and when to sleep, countermeasures to drowsy driving, integrative health practices, and improved technological assistance. The third and last section of the article highlights the barriers to reducing nurse fatigue. The barriers mentioned include nursing and workplace culture, scheduling, and staffing.

Reflection

I agree with the information presented in this article as something needs to be done. Reading about the interventions to reduce and safely manage nurse fatigue which are sorely needed gave me more ideas I can research and present to my job as changes to implement. One that stood out to me was workplace napping. The article states that “nurses who tried napping fell asleep about half the time for an average of 31 minutes, and reported feeling "alert and refreshed" afterward” (Trinkoff, Alison M., et al. 21). This is an interesting concept, and I would like to see how it would be carried out. I have been interested in trying this during the days when I am asked to cover another shift, but not having a designated area that would allow me to nap comfortably prevents me from trying it. This article did an excellent job of presenting the information in a way that made it clear what they were trying to say and provided enough evidence to support their suggested changes. Also, since most of the authors of the article are nurses, they did a wonderful job of keeping biased opinions out of the article.

Quotation

“Despite evidence that longer shifts contribute not only to higher error rates but also to nurse fatigue, job dissatisfaction, and burnout, many hospital leaders believe 12-hour shifts are essential for nurse recruitment and retention” (Trinkoff, Alison M., et al. 25).

Conclusion

The current nursing shortage is a worldwide problem that was worsened due to the COVID-19 pandemic. This research explored the effects of nursing shortage on the safety of patients and nurses. I decided to investigate this because everyone always considers the patients first and usually forgets about the nurses responsible for providing them care. If the nurse is unwell physically and mentally, how can they give their patient the quality of care they deserve?

That said, my research highlighted that there are many causes of the nursing shortage including the current health care system, the aging population, nurses leaving the profession, and more. The research also provided potential solutions to the shortage including policies enforcing safe staffing numbers, how to reduce nurse fatigue – naps, yoga, and alternative scheduling, and technological updates. Considering all the information I gathered, I believe that this evidence would best be viewed by the management of various inpatient facilities because they are the ones that can implement the changes. What I learned will go a long way to improving the conditions that nurses work under and will hopefully result in the end of the nursing shortage. I am only one person, but the more attention that is called to the problem and valid solutions presented, then change will occur.