# The Nursing Shortage: What is Happening and How to Help

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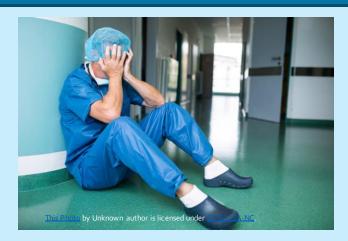
## **BACKGROUND**

One of the more noticeable effects of COVID-19 is the nursing shortage. Though many believe COVID is the sole cause of the shortage, it must be made clear that there has always been a "shortage" of healthcare workers, COVID just made it worse. The current nursing shortage has worsened staff to patient ratios, increased the mortality rate of patients, and driven many nurses from the field. The goal of this research project was to (1) identify the causes of the shortage, (2) highlight its effects of the safety of patients and nurses, and (3) find solutions to help reduce the shortage.

## **METHOD**

Search Databases: Google Scholar, PubMed [NCBI], ONESEARCH

Key Words: nursing shortage, patient safety, solving the shortage, nurse safety, nurse burnout



# The ageing population The population is ageing % of population aged 50+ 50% 45% ... and people are retiring later The average retirement age has been increasing for men and women, and this is likely to continue for women ... so older workers are 2013 a growing group % of workers aged 50+ 29% Square Photogulation Protections England; One Pension Trends CC BY

#### **RESULTS**

## Factors Contributing to the Shortage

- The aging population/aging workforce.
- Difficulty maintaining work/life balance.
- Increased nurse burnout.
- Increased nurse to patient ratio
- Lack of career advancement in certain regions

## Effects of the Shortage on Patient and Nurse Safety

- Increased patient load result in fatigued nurses and inhibit the quality care patients receive.
- Increased fatigue result in preventable mistakes in workplace such as medication errors.
- Increased patient load contributes to stress nurses experience and a rise in chronic conditions such as heart disease, diabetes, depression, and anxiety.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

- Standardized staffing numbers.
- Standardized nurse to patient ratio.
- Increased number of trained support staff.
- Improved employees scheduling.
- Reevaluation of workplace culture.
- Countermeasures to protect nurses experiencing fatigue - shuttle service.
- Designated place for fatigued employees to nap.
- Improve technological assistance.
- Increased availability of psychological support.



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