

# **AN AMERICAN EPIDEMIC: BURNOUT SYNDROME IN HOSPITAL NURSES**

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# Introduction

- **Burnout Syndrome is the result of unyielding stress and high standards experienced by people working in “helping” occupations, such as nursing**
- **The three main symptoms considered to be signs of Burnout Syndrome are emotional exhaustion, alienation from job-related activities, and reduced work performance**

# Introduction

- **Nursing has been one of the fastest growing professions for the past 20 years, and is projected to keep growing at 19%, faster than other occupations at least until the year 2022**
- **BLS statistics projected the U.S. would be 800,000 RNs short of the national need by the year 2020, the number has increased to a projected 1.1 million RNs short by 2022**
- **Burnout Syndrome in nurses increases about 23% for each additional patient added to the nurse's shift workload**

# Introduction

- **Burnout Syndrome has affected 49% of Registered Nurses (RNs) under the age of 30, and 40% of RNs over 30**
  - Higher nurse workloads (a ratio of one nurse to eight patients at worst) have been related to Burnout Syndrome
  - More than 40% of hospital staff nurses score in the high range for job-related burnout
  - More than 20% of hospital staff nurses have reported they intend to leave their hospital jobs within one year

# Results

- **A factor contributing to the projected nursing shortage is more than 50% of the nursing workforce is approaching retirement age**
  - Also, fewer students are being accepted into nursing programs
  - In 2014, U.S. nursing schools turned away over 78,000 qualified applicants due to insufficient faculty in nursing programs
  - Reason for faculty shortages
    - Limited pool of candidates with post-graduate degrees
    - Non-competitive teacher salaries, especially when compared to salaries for NPs and CRNAs

# Results

- **Nurses working in hospital settings affected by the nursing shortage claim to be dissatisfied with their job due to increased workloads, longer working hours, and not having sufficient staff to provide the highest quality care to patients**
- **Stagnant wages are a complaint for nursing staff (less than a 0.5% pay increase each year)**

# Results

- **40% of hospital nurses have Burnout Syndrome levels that exceed those of other healthcare workers**
- **Job dissatisfaction among hospital nurses is four times greater than the average for all US workers**
- **20% of hospital nurses reported that they intended to leave their current jobs within a year**

# Results

- **The American Nurses Association reported that the four most common responses from nurses finishing a shift comprised:**
  - 50% being extremely exhausted
  - 44% feeling discouraged and dissatisfied for not being able to completely provide the care they thought their patients needed
  - 40% thought changes were needed for safe quality care for patients
  - 26% went home feeling worried for their patients

# Results

- **California was the first state which passed legislation requiring exact patient-to-nurse ratios**
  - Six to one patient-to-nurse workload in psychiatric
  - Five to one patient-to-nurse in medical-surgical units, telemetry, and oncology
  - Four to one in pediatrics
  - Three to one in labor and delivery
  - Two to one in intensive care units

# Results

- **A survey of over 10,000 nurses across the U.S. found that**
  - **73% of nurses stated that the staffing on their floor and shift was insufficient**
  - **60% of nurses conveyed personally knowing nurses who had left because of fears about safe staffing, and 54% of nurses indicated that they themselves were considering leaving their current job**
  - **43% of those 54% said that inadequate staffing was the main reason for leaving the profession**

# Results

- **Recruitment of RNs is costly for any hospital: total cost to replace a single RN was estimated to be between \$62,100 and \$67,100**
- **Factors that affect recruitment include the hospitals reputation, salary, inclusion of staff in making decisions, management's respect of workers, work load, and shifts worked**

# Discussion

- **The results of this study suggest that poor work environments and an increased nurse-to-patient ratio have contributed significantly to Burnout Syndrome in hospital nurses, and are a costly to hospitals recruiting new staff due to the high turnover rate caused by Burnout Syndrome**

# Discussion

- **Hospitals should make available stress management programs that address symptoms of Burnout Syndrome and assure safe nurse staffing patterns are in place**
- **These practices would ensure that Burnout Syndrome in hospital nurses was kept to a minimum, having a positive effect in eliminating the national nursing shortage and helping hospitals eliminate costly expenses in recruiting nursing staff**

# Conclusion

- **The findings of this literature review suggest that lower patient to nurse ratios, a better work environment created by better management, higher pay, and shorter working shifts, would make the nursing field more desirable and attract more people to train in the field**
- **Ultimately, implementing these findings will reduce the national shortage caused by Burnout Syndrome and save hospitals money in recruiting new staff and retaining them**

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