

## Discuss Reasons for Acute and Chronic Problems with The Crisis of Nursing Shortage in Relation to Nursing Education and Review The Strategies and Solutions

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### ABSTRACT

*Nursing practice has been improved and developed by the change of demand in the medical progress since Florence Nightingale created the nursing in 1853 [1]. Today, sophisticated modern nursing practice has been considered and demanded in the field of medicine, which has been complicated 2 Particularly, theoretical aspect of nursing has been considerably emphasised through higher education. A number of universities, which offer range of degree, diploma and master of Nursing, establish to provide more opportunities for highly motivational nurses in the world. On the other hand, nursing is facing a crisis in the recruitment and retention of nurses, and various strategies and solutions therefore implement in countries across the world to overcome the crisis 3 Therefore, this essay will discuss reasons for acute and chronic problems with the crisis and subsequently review the strategies and solutions.*

### Keywords

Nursing practice , Education, Recruitment, Retention.

Higher education system is a crucial aspect for development of nursing. On the other hand, it can be a factor in causing the acute problem with recruitment and retention. Recently, the education in nursing focuses on theoretical knowledge rather than practical training . Therefore, the period of practical training in the educational program for the technical method of caring has been reduced. As a result, the reduced period of practical training has brought the new nurses anxiety for patient care and this period has created the gap concerning the skills of patient care between the experienced nurses and new nurses [4].

The new nurses are discouraged and confused by the accumulative anxiety and the gap. Gradually, the new nurses may lose their consciousness and confidence of being a professional nurse. Consequently, they consider resigning their position [4]. On the other hand, the nurses who already have various clinical

experiences require the education Nursing demands the skills to analyse and evaluate complex researches and new theories in the complicated and progressive medical field [5].

Therefore, the experienced nurses recently tend to leave their professional position to gain the new education. Thus, the diversification of nursing, which requires necessary practical skill and theoretical knowledge has caused acute problem with retention. Moreover, the educational environments such as the amount of time for successful graduates and increasing tuition fee are negatively affecting the number of new students [6]. As another reason for acute problem with recruitment and retention, demographic change is also affecting. For example, In the United states of America, the number of community health centres, home care and long term care have been increased because baby boomers have been aging as well as the number of inpatients, critical and intensive patients have increased in consequence of the development regarding respirator, medical technology and medicine [7].

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Beside, in past decade, the number of nurses who left their professional position reasoning physical damage has increased because the nurse workforce has also been aging [2]. Therefore, the growing demand for nurses in the aging society has seriously caused the nursing shortage. Additionally, the number of new nurses has decreased because negative image against nursing has increasingly been possessed [2].

The negative image may have been caused by the factors in chronic problems, which are dissatisfactions at working environment, low wage and lack of respect and recognition. As the major factors in the dissatisfactions, the insufficient staffing caused voluntary over work and hard shift. The factors cause not only the negative image and the decrease in the number of new nurses but also the increase in turnover rate of nurses because the unreasonable over work and hard shift negatively affect their physical and mental condition [8]. For example, many nurses cannot have their meals and breaks to care for patients. They also reduce their private time, which accommodates their families, church, school and participate in their community service. It might cause them stressful life [9].

Moreover, the insufficient setting brings nurses the dilemma whether to continue patient care or not. In fact, many nurses leave their professional position because they struggle with the fact that even though they wish to deliver the ideal care to the patient, they actually cannot implement it due to the insufficient time [2]. Therefore, voluntary over work and hard shift caused by insufficient staffing have negatively affected retention of nurses. Besides, numerous nurses have felt that their wages are too low and they are forced to perform excessive workload in highly responsible position. The unbalance between the low wage and workload has caused that nurses decide to quite their job [10].

According to Hardesty and Lanford [8], even though the task of nurse and work intensity have been increased and complicated through the progress of medical system, the nurses wage has frozen. It means that the inadequate pay is not merely the strategy to reduce cost by hospital management; the task of nurses has been underestimated. In fact, although the nursing is professional occupation concerning patient care, there is significant lack of recognition and respect for nurses in the decision making processes concerning patient care, and nurses capabilities have not fully been used in clinical area [7]. Therefore, the facts have discouraged the professional nurses, and it has seriously affected the turnover rate of nurses.

Hardesty and Lanford [8] state, "Loss of control in care decisions has increased stress and decreased work satisfaction". The reason for the lack of recognition and respect might have been the unique position of nurses. Roach [11] states that "Caring is an expression of humanity". Granted the caring of Florence Nightingale, the first nursing pioneer was voluntary task and caring in nursing subsumes all the attributes descriptive of nursing as a human and helping discipline [12]. However, contemporary nursing requires not merely the caring like the voluntary task but science as well as art [12]. In other words, the nursing has increasingly been

important function in the medical field. However, the importance of contemporary nursing might not still be as emphasised as the importance of medical curing. As one of the reasons, the social image that shows caring as voluntary task may still exist. Even doctors may not clearly have realised or admitted the change of nursing role and quality.

The old and strong notion concerning caring in nursing may have hindered the establishment of professional position of nurses, and this precarious position of nurses could cause the lack of recognition and respect. Therefore, it is clear that the unique position has caused negative environments such as the low wages and insistence on performing odd jobs, which lead to the over work and discouragement to work [13].

Thus, there are numerous factors and the reasons for problems with the recruitment and retention of nurses. Therefore, various strategies have been implemented to overcome the problems.

First, one of main strategies is higher wage. There is a common belief, which is that increasing nurses wage will help to retain the nurses [14]. In fact, the survey in Solving the Nursing Shortage 15 shows that More than 80 percent of nurse stated that a raise in pay would help retention; only 36 percent felt they were being a fair wage". Granted that higher wage attracts nurses, it is not powerful enough attraction to draw an adequate number of nurses because there is serious and remarkable dissatisfaction at the lack of recognition and respect in their working area. Upenieks [14] states that nursing shortage cannot be solved unless the lack of recognition and respect are solved. To solve the lack of recognition and respect, the improvement of relationship between nurses, physicians and other medical staffs is important because the improvement of relationship could enhance mutual understanding and reciprocal help [16]. As a result, the recognition and respect to nurses can be created and it encourages nurses to work as professional nurses. Therefore, the improvement of relationship is effective strategy to retain nurses. In fact, the survey in Advance for Nurses [16] shows that the turnover rate has decreased by 7 to 10 percent over the last 4 years because of improvement of the relationship.

As another strategy, the American Federation Teachers [17] reported that managers clear understanding of who was leaving nursing and the reason should be emphasised to improve the negative working environment such as overwork and hard shift. The components of this strategy were the provision of daily face to face communication between management and nurse, scheduled staff meetings and nursing debate with chief nursing officer. As a result, scheduling options, including varied shift lengths, flexible hours, more part time availability and sufficient staffing were implemented, and the problem with retention of nurse was partly improved by the improvement of the negative environment.

In addition, the solid support system of management can mentally help nurses [5,15]. Therefore, this strategy positively effects on solving the negative environment, which seriously affects

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the retention of nurses. Next, hospital focused on development of information technology. For example, mobile technology, picture archiving and communication systems, single sign on, thin client computing, computerised provider order entry, virtual reality and electronic healthcare records reduce paperwork and these technologies facilitate to provide adequate and accurate information [16,18].

Complicated and numerous paperwork obstructs the time to provide the sufficient patient care and the endless drain on their time usually pulls the trigger on decision to quit their jobs [9]. Therefore, this strategy through the development of information technology could positively influence the retention of nurses. Next, we have to review unique strategies for recruitment and retention of nurses. One of strategies is loan program and scholarship for education. Recently, a continuing education has been required in the clinical area, which is being more complex and progressive [5]. In fact, many experienced nurses have felt that they are behind new nurses in theoretical knowledge and the lack of theoretical knowledge has caused the difficulty of working in the clinical area [16]. As a result, the experienced nurses tend to leave their professional position to gain the new education [5].

Therefore, the loan program, which is provided by hospital management encourages the nurses to continue the education and back to their hospital [19]. Moreover, the scholarship facilitates the students to obtain higher education in the increasing tuition fee for school of nursing [7]. As another strategy to attract school student and university student, public relations is utilised. For example, in Australia, a documentary filmed by clinical nurses is used to show true face of nursing and an internet based campaign attracts a broad range of group [19]. Similarly, in the United State of America, local media, promotional materials for high school, hospital web site and visitation system to hospital are utilised to describe the benefits of a nursing career [7].

This strategy can extensively appeal for potential employees. Therefore, the utilisation of the public relations can be remarkable for recruitment and retention of nurses in the current and future development of nursing. Finally, as another type of public relations, international advertisement has prevailed in the world to seek nurses. In the United Kingdom and India, the advertisement for nursing jobs on websites have been utilised to provide detailed information for hospital, various departments of hospital, support system, application form as well as salary/rate [20].

According to BBC NEWS [10], the recruitment is slightly progressing to keep staffing levels up in the United Kingdom. However, this strategy is not perfectly acceptable because the United Kingdom has accepted the nurses from overseas such as the United States of America and Australia even Japan and Philippine, which do not use English as official language in their countries. Even though there are the support systems such as the short term training program to learn English and the different care systems for foreign nurses, it is insufficient to work properly at hospital in the United Kingdom because it may have potential problem

concerning patient care caused by misunderstanding of different language. Moreover, frequent change of nursing staffs within a short period may negatively affect the quality of patient care. The patient in their bed sees a different person every day who does not understand their condition, who may not even know much about the hospital they work in [10]. The strategy seems to be just temporal solution. Besides, even though the United Kingdom is slightly progressing to keep staffing levels up, it obviously causes the shortage of nurses in the countries such as the United States of America, Australia, Japan and Philippine. It is only a scramble for the precious human resource.

In conclusion, there are serious factors of acute and chronic problems with recruitment and retention of nurses. The reason for the shortage of nurses is not only the transient phenomenon but also there are the potential reasons for shortage such as the ultimate principle of caring itself and the notion about nursing raised from the historical background based on the caring of Florence Nightingale [21]. Therefore, only temporary strategies and half measures cannot solve the serious problems with recruitment and retention of nurses. Successful establishment of professional position of nurses in the transition from traditional nursing to modern nursing will be the key factor for sweeping reforms of the problems. Nurses should reconsider the importance of the transition for successful establishment of the professional position. In addition, nurses should not depend on only the managerial effort such as the improvement in working conditions and organisational public relations for recruitment and retention of nurses. Nurses themselves should identify their value as nurse practitioners and clinical specialists, and be proud their important functions in clinical area before they decide to leave the professional position.

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