

OP 20 - Impact of Heavy Workload on Quality of Nursing Care among Nurses Working in Medical and Surgical Wards in National Hospital Sri Lanka

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Background: Among the health care professionals, nurses are the majority and essential drivers of quality health care. Their workload is directly related to the quality of nursing care. Understanding workload and its impact on quality patient care particularly from nurses' perspectives, is an urgent requirement in health care today.

Objectives: To identify factors related to increased workload among nurses and to determine the correlation between heavy workload and quality of nursing care.

Methodology: Descriptive cross-sectional study was conducted among 359 nurses from surgical and medical wards of National Hospital of Sri Lanka using a pre tested self-administered questionnaire.

Results and conclusions: Most of the participants belonged to the age 25 to 35 years category (68.8%) with less than ten years of working experience (68%) and completed their professional education with a diploma in nursing (66.6%). Among the participants 288 (80.2%) nurses perceived as having a high workload during their duty shift. Higher number of patient allocation for a one nurse (90.5%), lack of nursing staff allocation for a shift duty (89.7%), engaging non-nursing activities (86.6%), and lack of time management (86.4%) were the major reasons for increasing workload as perceived by nurses. Two hundred eighty-seven (79.9%) nurses perceived that they have to do low quality nursing care to the patient during their shift. Most of the participants (90.8%) accepted that mistakes and ignorance happened during their duty shift and 354 (98.6%) believed that the optimal patient care is not received by the patient due to the nurses' burnout. A negative relationship was found between nurses' workload and quality of nursing care ($R = -0.031$, $p < 0.05$). High workload of nurses' have a significant impact on poor quality nursing care and it is essential to address the issues of nurses' high workload to improve the quality of nursing care.

Keywords: Workload, quality, nursing care, nurses