

### Traditional nursing uniform: Sri Lankan nurses' perspectives

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**Background:** Uniform could indicate a sense of professionalism, responsibility and allow the public for immediate identification. Worldwide, the traditional nursing uniform has been changed drastically to a smart uniform according to nurses' needs. But, unfortunately, the traditional uniform is remaining in Sri Lanka which consisting the gown, apron, cap and belt.

**Objectives:** To review the current perception among Sri Lankan nurses towards changing the uniform.

**Methods:** A quantitative descriptive design was used in this study. A self-administered questionnaire was distributed among randomly selected 2233 female nurses from all the General and Teaching hospitals in Sri Lanka. Prior to data collection, ethical approval was obtained from Ethics Review Committee of National Hospital of Sri Lanka and informed consent was taken from each voluntary participant. Data analysis was done using SPSS version 20.

**Results:** Majority of nurses (88%) believed that the uniform build-up the trust between the nurse and client while, 35% thought the uniform keeps them away from fashions and makes them loyalty to the management (30%). Results had emphasized, 44.1% nurses preferred for current uniform without changes while 43.4% liked scrub with cap as the future uniform. However, 60.5% agreed to have two uniforms for work and for presentation. Among those who preferred for a new uniform, 89% had foreign exposure. Further, shoes (72%), frock (46%) and cap (38%) were comfortable, but the apron (55%), collar (54%) and belt (35%) were uncomfortable for nurses within the current uniform. Further, regarding future uniform, 62% preferred for blue color, including the cap (85.9%), frock (56.2%), apron (56.6%), collar (51.2%), belt (56.5%), shoes (89.1%) and badge & watch (90.4%). Moreover, 56.4% agreed the future uniform not needed to show the seniority while 51.8% thought a special dress is not required for pediatric wards.

**Conclusions and Recommendations:** Study finding revealed that nurses are willing to not only for the traditional uniform but also for a modern uniform equally. This indicates that, nurses are in a transitional stage between the traditional and modern uniform. Therefore, it is recommended to conduct future studies to identify changing needs of the Sri Lankan nurses' uniform.

**Key words:** *traditional nursing uniform, Sri Lankan nurses, modern uniform*