

FACTORS AFFECTING NURSING PRODUCTIVITY

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## ABSTRACT

Reports of substandard care, negligence, public vigilance, demands for standardised care, and the shortage of resources calls attention to the need for human resources within the health system to be productive at their maximum potential. Working within the current system may give rise to stress, low job satisfaction, lesser commitment to work, and burnout. It is recognised that nurses occupy a large percentage of the labour source, and nurses encounter patients on a 24 hour basis. Nursing productivity has been associated with measuring input/output ratios in terms of hours spent in nursing care, supply and demand ratios, what is negotiated with the client, and the provision of high quality care in a cost effective manner. However, no study had been conducted to examine factors that affect nurses productivity, with reference to working processes/conditions and organisational climate. Quantitative and qualitative approaches were used in this study to determine factors affecting nurses productivity as perceived by nurses within an accident service of a premier teaching hospital in Sri Lanka.

Sixty four nurses voluntarily participated in this study from diverse nursing professional, and educational backgrounds, and varying lengths of experiences. Data was gathered through Likert-type questionnaires, focus group discussions, interviews, direct observations, maintaining a reflective journal, and taking photographs, and analysed using SPSS version 10, and narrative analytical techniques. Three, conclusions were drawn from this study: First, a melange of factors affect nurses productivity, ranging from factors at unit level and organisation level, that cannot be isolated from socio-cultural, historical, economical, and political contexts. Second, studying nurses productivity using primarily quantitative data risks limiting and constraining the definition of nursing productivity, and this can have profound implications for management and policy planning at unit, organisation and national level. The factors that affect nurses productivity ranged from increased patient numbers, shortages of human resources and resources for nurses in terms of facilities provided to function at an optimal level, and devaluing of their contributions to decision making. Third, reveals that nurses can be empowered by leaders who are open to ideas and give support, encouragement, and job-related information. Further, it is suggested that managers have less of a beauracatic approach to prevent nurses negative experiences going un-recognised, nurses becoming frustrated, and their job satisfaction lessening.