

Work-related Physical and Psychological Health Concerns of Nurses at University Hospital-Kotelawala Defence University, Werahera, Sri Lanka: A Descriptive, Mixed-method Study

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Abstract

Working environment of nurses may affect their Quality of Life (QoL), quality of patient care and job satisfaction. University Hospital-Kotelawala Defence University (UH-KDU) is a newly established hospital where most of the nursing staff are young and novice. This study aimed to find work-related contributors effecting the physical and psychological health, well-being and QoL of nurses at UH-KDU and to explore their suggestions to improve current working environment, general health and well-being. This was a descriptive, mixed-method study which consisted both quantitative and qualitative approaches. Questionnaire-based data was collected from a random sample of 162 nurses. Nine in-depth semi-structured interviews were conducted with a purposively selected group of nurses from the selected setting. Data gathered from the interviews were analyzed using thematic analysis. Majority of the nurses (76.6%) were in between age of 25 - 30 years (31.5% males; 68.5% females). Participants reported work-related physical and psychological conditions, including work-related stress (48.1%), gastritis (35.2%), back pain or muscle pain (20.4%) and frequently feeling fatigue at day time (25.9%). Forty-two percent reported that their work has negatively affected on their QoL while 44.4% reported poor work-life balance. The themes, 'Stress', 'Exhaustion' and 'Poor satisfaction' were emerged. The current work environment has negatively affected with their meal patterns, nutrition, rest and sleep times and overall psychological health. Participants suggested flexible work hours, adequate staff in a shift, adequate resting and treating with dignity at work to improve current work-related stress. Findings of the current study revealed need of work environment changes in terms of to reduce nurses' work-related stress and improve happiness at workplace. In order to feel good at the work place it is important to have adequate staff and enable more autonomy and job freedom among young nurses.

Keywords: *Physical and psychological health, QoL, Working environment, Nurses, UHKDU*