

Listening to New Zealand nurses.

A survey of intent to leave, job satisfaction, job stress,
and burnout,

A thesis submitted to

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Master of Health Science

Anne Daniels

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Attestation of Authorship

“I hereby declare that this submission is my own work and that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, it contains no material previously published or written by another person nor material which to a substantial extent has been accepted for the qualification of another degree or diploma of a university or other institution of higher learning, except where due acknowledgement is made in the acknowledgements.”

Anne Daniels

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Abstract

Background

Human and financial costs generated by nurse shortages, within a context of increasing numbers of patients requiring nursing care, demonstrate the potential significance of this study which aims to identify work related factors contributing to New Zealand nurses' intent to leave the job.

Methods

Two hundred and seventy five usable paper and pencil surveys (Response rate = 68.8%) from a random sample of 400 nurses employed in one New Zealand District Health Board were used to explore intent to leave the job. Three research questions directed the description of levels of job satisfaction, job stress, and burnout found in nurse participants, correlations between the three variables, and the identification of variables predicting intent to leave the job through regression analyses.

Results

Levels of job satisfaction were high, job stress was low, and burnout was average. Specifically, lack of opportunity to participate in organisational decision making, control over work conditions, control over what goes on in the work setting (key Magnet Hospital characteristics) were not evident, and with pay rates, were the main sources of job dissatisfaction. Workload was the most frequently experienced source of stress by nurse participants. Twenty-five per cent of nurse participants reported high levels of intent to leave the job. Correlations suggested that reductions in job satisfaction influenced increases in job stress and burnout. Job stress was associated with increases in emotional exhaustion. Emotional exhaustion was influenced by eight job satisfaction, job stress, and burnout subscales. Five subscales (professional

opportunities, praise and recognition, interaction opportunities, extrinsic rewards, lack of support) explained 26.2% of the variance in nurse participant's intent to leave.

Conclusion

Issues of power and control were associated with job dissatisfaction, job stress and burnout in nursing practice. However, predictors of intent to leave the job suggest a growing realisation by nurse participants that postgraduate education and nursing research may provide the tools to create positive change in the health care environment and make nursing visible, valued and appropriately rewarded.

Keywords: intent to leave, intention to leave, propensity to leave, job satisfaction, job stress, burnout.