Identifying Contemporary Early Retirement Factors and Strategies to Enable Longer Working Lives

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Introduction

- Population growth and aging, coupled with an increase in chronic illnesses and especially advanced or end-stage chronic illnesses, are increasing the volume of healthcare services.
- Yet half of all nurses and members of other healthcare professional groups are expected to retire over the next 10-15 years.
- Many now do not work to their country’s statutory retirement age, as early retirement is common practice; 61-63 is the current median age of retirement in most developed counties.
WHO Context - Nursing Workforce

“Nurses and midwives account for nearly 50% of the health workforce. Of the 43.5 million health workers in the world, it is estimated that 20.7 million are nurses and midwives, yet 50% of WHO Member States report to have less than 3 nursing and midwifery personnel per 1000 population (about 25% report to have less than 1 per 1000), according to the 2017 Global Health Observatory. The Global Strategy on Human Resources for Health: Workforce 2030, the Global strategic directions for strengthening nursing and midwifery 2016–2020 provides a robust WHO strategic response to develop nursing and midwifery as it outlines critical objectives.”
https://www.who.int/hrh/nursing_midwifery/en/
A scoping review of published research articles published in 2013-2017 was done to identify:

(a) factors associated with or determined to cause early retirement, and

(b) strategies designed to encourage and enable middle-aged or older people to work longer in life.
Scoping Review - Overview

- A **scoping review** is a systematic review of all types of research reports.
- Research articles are not typically eliminated from scoping reviews if research methodology or other quality concerns are identified.
- Instead, the entire body of published research is assessed for an understanding of the state of science, as well as existing research knowledge and evidence gaps.
Review Methodology

- After consultation with a university librarian, the Directory of Open Access Journals was used to identify open access article and the EBSCO Discovery Service to identify print articles.
- The keyword/MeSH terms “early retirement” combined with “research” were used, and the findings were limited to English language (2013-2017) research reports containing an abstract and information on the data collection and analysis methods.
Analysis Methodology

- 49 articles were identified and reviewed; 89.8% describing quantitative studies,
- 4 on healthcare workers; 2 were studies of nurses (Liebermann et al., 2015; Maurits et al., 2015).
- Each article was systematically searched for information by one reviewer who drafted a table of findings, with this information checked for accuracy by two team members.
- Content analysis was done to identify and group findings by two team members working together.
Findings – Early Retirement

- Seven early retirement factors were revealed:
  (a) Ill health,
  (b) good health,
  (c) workplace issues,
  (d) the work itself,
  (e) ageism,
  (f) social norms, and
  (g) having achieved personal financial or pension requirement criteria.
Findings – Retention Solutions

- Six potential solutions were identified, but with none of these tested and proven to be effective:
  
  (a) Occupational health programs,
  (b) workplace enhancements,
  (c) work adjustments,
  (d) addressing ageism,
  (e) addressing social norms, and
  (f) pension changes.
Conclusion

• There is a weak evidence base on why early retirement occurs and also on what to do to encourage and enable longer nurse work lives.

• Needed: Qualitative research to understanding early retirement influences and mixed-methods studies to test prevention programs.

• Until more evidence is available, every healthcare organization should perform an early retirement risk assessment and develop needed policies and programs to encourage and enable more nurses to work longer in life.
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References – Prior Nursing Research
