

Sigma's 30th International Nursing Research Congress

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

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Purpose: Accelerating population aging is raising concern over the availability of workers to fulfill essential work roles and responsibilities, but this is a particularly pressing issue for the healthcare sector. Population aging, coupled with an increase in chronic illnesses and also advanced or end-stage chronic illnesses, is increasing the volume of healthcare services. At the same time as the need for healthcare services is increasing, half of all nurses, physicians, and members of most other healthcare professional and paraprofessional groups are expected to retire over the next 10-15 years. Many do not work to their country's statutory retirement age, as early retirement is a common practice; 61-63 is the current median age of retirement in most developed countries now (European Commission Directorate-General for Economic and Financial Affairs, 2018).

Methods: 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. 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.

After consultation with a university librarian, the Directory of Open Access Journals was used to identify open access article and the EBSCO Discovery Service was used 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.

Results: A total of 49 research articles were identified and reviewed; with 89.8% describing quantitative studies. Only four reports focused on healthcare workers; two were studies of nurses (Liebermann, Muller, Weigl, & Wegge, 2015; Maurits, DeVeer, Van deer, Hoek, & Francke, 2015), one of physicians (Gregory & Menser, 2015) and one of generic healthcare workers (Nilsson, Hydbom, & Rylander, 2016). 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. After corrections, the findings were subject to content analysis; a categorization process for identifying and grouping findings. This consolidation was carried out consecutively by two reviewers. Seven early retirement factors were revealed: Ill health, good health, workplace issues, the work itself, ageism, social norms, and having achieved personal financial or pension requirement criteria. Six potential solutions were identified, with none of these tested and proven to be effective: Occupational health programs, workplace enhancements, work adjustments, addressing ageism, addressing social norms, and pension changes.

Conclusion: This review revealed a weak evidence base in relation to understanding why early retirement occurs and to know what to do to encourage and enable longer working lives. Qualitative research is needed to gain an in-depth understanding of early retirement influences and mixed-methods studies are needed to test early retirement 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 people to work longer.

Title:

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Keywords:

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References:

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Abstract Summary:

Most people do not work to their country's statutory retirement age, as early retirement is a common practice. A review of published research was done to identify factors associated with or determined to cause early retirement, and strategies to encourage and enable people to work longer in life.

Content Outline:

Accelerating population aging is raising concern over the availability of workers to fulfill essential work roles and responsibilities, but this is a particularly pressing issue for the healthcare sector. Population aging, coupled with an increase in chronic illnesses and also advanced or end-stage chronic illnesses, is increasing the volume of healthcare services. At the same time as the need for healthcare services is increasing, half of all nurses, physicians, and members of most other healthcare professional and paraprofessional groups are expected to retire over the next 10-15 years. Many do not work to their country's statutory retirement age, as early retirement is a common practice; 61-63 is the current median

age of retirement in most developed countries now (European Commission Directorate-General for Economic and Financial Affairs, 2018).

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This review revealed a weak evidence base in relation to understanding why early retirement occurs and to know what to do to encourage and enable longer working lives. Qualitative research is needed to gain an in-depth understanding of early retirement influences and mixed-methods studies are needed to test early retirement 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 people to work longer.

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Author Summary: Donna Wilson is a Registered Nurse, with a full-time tenured position as a (Full) Professor in the Faculty of Nursing at the University of Alberta. Her program of research focuses on health services and health policy, with most studies conducted on aging and end-of-life care topics.

Second Secondary Presenting Author

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