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Exploring the Impact of Structural Empowerment in Long-Term Care

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Purpose:

Nurses employed in long-term care settings (LTC) are more likely to leave their positions within a year when compared to other healthcare workers. A lack of support and job resources contributes to burnout for the nurse and the intent to leave their current place of employment. In contrast, nurses who report increased job resources and support experience fewer feelings of burnout and increased job satisfaction. Despite significant evidence that supports structural empowerment as an effective measure for reducing burnout and turnover in acute care, limited research has been conducted to date examining the effect of structural empowerment in LTC. The purpose of this project was to explore the role of empowerment and the impact it has on the retention of LTC nursing staff.

Methods:

The study was a cross-sectional design with a descriptive approach evaluating the correlation between workplace empowerment and job satisfaction. A non-randomized, convenience sampling was used. LTC nurses who met the inclusion criteria received a structured questionnaire that contained: the Psychological Empowerment Instrument, the Conditions of Work Effectiveness Questionnaire-II (CWEQ-II), and the Job Descriptive Index (JDI). 30 nurses met inclusion criteria and agreed to participate. However, only 25 nurses completed and returned their questionnaires.

Results:

A correlation exists among psychological and structural empowerment and job satisfaction ($r= 0.10$, $P=0.63$, and $r= 0.24$, $P= 0.24$). A Pearson product-moment correlation table was created to understand further which variable within psychological and structural empowerment significantly affected job satisfaction for LTC nurses. Variables were placed in a hierarchical stepwise pattern.

Mediation revealed that structural empowerment had a mediating effect on

psychological empowerment related to job satisfaction (standardized $b= 0.10$, $P= 0.63$, $R^2= 0.11$). When structural empowerment was included in the equation, a reduction was noted in the relationship between psychological empowerment and job satisfaction ($b= 0.10$ to $b= -0.05$).

Conclusion:

Workload and stress directly contribute to burnout. Low job control, coupled with lack of support and resources set the stage for turnover intention. Dissatisfaction in the work environment is the most significant variable associated with turnover, outweighing other predictive measurements such as age, shift, or career advancement. It is anticipated that the implementation of structural empowerment in the LTC setting will cultivate increased job satisfaction.

Empowered nurses are more productive, experience less burnout and turnover, and commit fewer errors. The cost associated with a single nursing turnover event ranges between \$10,098 and \$88,000. Safety is compromised when operating budgets are consumed with nurse vacancy costs. Highlighting areas of strength and weakness within the facility provides administration with critical knowledge on ways to create a sustainable and thriving work culture.

Title:

Exploring the Impact of Structural Empowerment in Long-Term Care

Keywords:

Healthcare Leadership, Organizational Development and Structural Empowerment

Abstract Summary:

Ensuring workforce stability in long-term care (LTC) is a growing challenge for healthcare leaders. Nurses employed in LTC are more likely to leave their positions within a year compared to other healthcare workers. This project explores the role of empowerment and the impact it plays on retention of LTC staff.

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Author Summary: Andrea Reed DNP, MSN, RN is passionate about finding solutions to problems that arise in the clinical setting. With an educational background in leadership and a wide array of patient experiences gained as a travel nurse, Andrea has now dedicated her efforts to creating sustainable staffing environments.