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Challenges with Nurse Licensing and Mobility

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www.mcgillishall.com

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Context

- Recruitment of internationally educated nurses (IENs) is a strategy commonly used to meet patient care and nurse staffing demands during nursing shortages
- Utilization of IENs in Canada is expected to grow as the shortage continues
- Little information to guide the development & integration of IENs in Canada

Objective

- The *objective* of this research study was to gain a better understanding of the employment practices of IENs in Canada and their experiences with integration into healthcare work environments

Method

- Comparative cross-sectional approach including surveys of a random sample of IENs and CENs who are currently employed in Ontario health care organizations w open ended question
- Responses were received from 2,017 IENs and 1,172 CENs from across the province
- Survey adapted from previous work on nurse migration
(McGillis Hall et al, 2009)

Conceptual Framework

- Push-pull theory of migration (*Kingma, 2006*)
- *Push factors* – conditions in origin country that drive nurses to seek employment elsewhere (lack of job availability, poor wages/working conditions, economic instability, etc) ;
- *Pull factors* – conditions drawing nurses to country of immigration (higher wages, improved work conditions, better lifestyle, etc)

IEN Demographics

- Female 95%
- Married 80%
- Age 51% (35-50 yrs mid career)
3% (under age of 30 yrs)
- Origin country:
 - Philippines 49%
 - Europe 15%
 - Other (Asia, UK, Africa, Caribbean)

IEN Demographics

- Education

Diploma 64%; Baccalaureate 36%

- Experience

5-10 years 63%

- Full-time 72%

- Staff nurse roles 91%

- Less than 10 years in Canada 48%

Results

Professional Reasons for Migration to Canada:

- Salary and benefits
- Working conditions
- Professional/career development
- Educational advancement
- Access to resources to care for my patients
- Organizational reputation
- Specialty certification opportunities

Professional Reasons for Migration

- “Canada is one of the best places for nurses. The money is good.”
- “As RN in Canada, nurses have independent clinical skills and critical thinking. Canada gives nurses more autonomy to work.”

Results

Personal Reasons for Migration to Canada:

- Quality of life
- Become a permanent resident
- Moved with family member who got job
- Safer living environment
- Live in politically stable country
- Bring my family to Canada
- Financial support for family back home

Personal Reasons for Migration

- “I needed to support my family and nursing is the only profession I possess. And for my children’s benefit – I wanted the free education for elementary to high school.”
- “We moved to Canada to bring our teenagers away from a violent country. I don’t ever want to leave here. Canada has been good to me/my family.”

Supports Provided to Migration

- “No soul in Canada helped me when I came to this country.”
- As a matter of fact the [regulatory college] was not very welcoming or helpful facilitating my entering nursing in Canada.”
- “No one helps you. You have to be brave and face the new world yourself. It’s about survival and it’s a challenge.”

Supports Provided to Migration

- “I came through a private nanny recruitment agency. I paid ++ money to get them to process my papers.”
- “We needed to pay 4500\$ US to an agency to help us find an employer.”
- “The processing (\$) fee that the [regulatory college] requires to assess our qualifications is too expensive to us who are just starting to live in Canada.”

Discussion: Pull Factors

- *Professional Reasons:*

salary and benefits identified as key facets in their decision to migrate

- *Personal Reasons:*

improved quality of life

potential to live in Canada permanently

Discussion

- IEN experiences of migrating to Canada and obtaining employment in this study were somewhat disheartening,
- Could be considered '**push**' factors that may keep them from entering the country

Discussion

- Inadequate availability of information about licensing and regulation in Canada may be interpreted as '**push**' factor
- Those who do migrate are highly qualified, mid-career nurses whose experience should be of great benefit to the Canadian health care system.

Conclusions

- Study provides important information about IENs' perceptions and experiences of coming to Canada to obtain work in nursing.
- Study participants identified challenges with licensure as the key barrier to coming to Canada to work

Questions

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Study report and further information
available at www.mcgillishall.com