Burnout and Intent-to-Leave Among Mid-Level Academic Nurse Leaders: An Unfolding Crisis

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Disclosure

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Objectives

◦ Describe the prevalence of burnout within mid-level academic nurse leaders

◦ Identify evidence–based strategies to reduce occupational burnout and improve retention among mid-level academic nurse leaders
Disclosure

- No Conflicts of Interest
- Employer: University of Colorado College of Nursing
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Greetings from the College of Nursing!
Greetings from the State of Colorado!
Conducted in Collaboration with:

National Nursing Education Research Network (NNERN)

Pam Ironside, PhD, RN, FAAN, ANEF
Much attention focused on faculty shortages, which is truly an international concern (Nardi & Gyurko, 2013).

Despite their critical importance, dissatisfaction and attrition among academic leaders is largely overlooked (Emory, et al., 2017).

Yet, AACN 2016–2017 survey reports that compared to overall full-time faculty vacancy rate of 7.9% in U.S. (n = 821 schools), vacancy rate for academic administrative positions (≥ 50% effort) is 9.7% (Li, Kennedy, Fang, 2017).
In a recent study of 3,120 faculty from 269 U.S. schools of nursing, a major predictor of occupational burnout was an academic leadership position of >50% effort:

\( OR = 1.73, \ p < .05 \); (Yididia, 2014).

Nursing education is facing a shortage of mid-level leaders, aspiring to deanships and academic administration, that has reached crisis proportions (Morton, 2014).
Burnout has been consistently associated with job dissatisfaction and intent-to-leave in:

- **International samples of staff nurses** (Aiken, et al., 2012)
- **Educators in other disciplines** (Brunsting, Sreckovic, & Lane, 2014).
Maslach’s Theory of Burnout
(Maslach, 2003; Maslach & Leiter, 2016)

- Occupational burnout is a psychological response to chronic job stress, characterized by emotional exhaustion, job dissatisfaction, and attrition.

- Research supports association between burnout:
  - Impaired physical and mental health (Ahola et al., 2014; Weigel, et al., 2016)
  - Impaired job performance (Bakker & Costa, 2014)
Purpose

- To determine the prevalence and predictors of occupational burnout among mid-level academic nurse leaders.

- To quantify the relationship between burnout and intent-to-leave among mid-level academic nurse leaders.

- Develop evidence-based strategies to increase retention among mid-level academic nurse leaders.
Methods

- Protocol approved by COMIRB

- Faculty from 29 schools of nursing from all regions of U.S.

- Subset of survey items specific to mid-level academic nurse leaders ≥50% effort
  - Assistant Deans, Associate Deans, Department Chairs, Program Directors

- Dillman survey methodology using web-based survey (REDCap)
Instruments / Measures

- Burnout: Emotional Exhaustion subscale of Maslach Burnout Inventory \( (>27 = \text{Burnout}) \)

- Intent-to-Leave School within 1 year (Yedidia, et al., 2014)

- Intent-to-Leave Academic Nursing within 1 year (Yedidia, et al., 2014)

- Satisfaction/Dissatisfaction with multiple dimensions of work life (Yedidia, et al., 2014)
Sample

- Average response rate = 46%
- n = 1,195 faculty
- n = 146 mid-level academic nurse leaders
- All 29 schools represented
Sample Characteristics (n = 146)

- Program Directors 34%
- Associate Deans 30%
- Department Chairs 7%
- Assistant Deans 4%
- Other Leadership 25%
Sample Demographics

- Female: 80.5%
- Caucasian: 93.8%
- PhD / EdD: 51.7%
- MSN: 26.8%
- DNP: 14.1%
- 1–9 years experience: 62.6%
Sample: Age Groups

- 28–37 years old: 4.6%
- 38–47 years old: 19.2%
- 48–57 years old: 27.7%
- 58–65 years old: 32.3%
- 66 years and older: 16.2%
There were no significant associations between demographic characteristics, including age, and:

* intent-to-leave school

* intent-to-leave academic nursing

* burnout
Results: Burnout / Intent-to-Leave

- **37%** of mid-level academic nurse leaders had emotional exhaustion scores >27, indicating burnout.

- This % of burnout is higher than found by Aiken et al. among most hospital staff RNs in 13 countries including U.S.

- **20.8%** of mid-level academic nurse leaders planned to leave school within 1 year

- **18.8%** of mid-level academic nurse leaders planned to leave academic nursing within 1 year
Results: Work Hours

- 50.8% typically worked more than 56 hours per week
- 12.1% typically worked more than 66 hours per week.
- 28.9% were dissatisfied with their workload
- 22.8% were dissatisfied with work–life balance
# Results: Dissatisfaction and Odds on Burnout

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Independent Variable</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>S.E.</th>
<th>OR</th>
<th>CI</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dissatisfaction with workload</td>
<td>2.06</td>
<td>.469</td>
<td>7.84</td>
<td>3.13, 19.65</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dissatisfaction with work–life balance</td>
<td>1.84</td>
<td>.508</td>
<td>6.33</td>
<td>2.34, 17.15</td>
<td>.000</td>
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Nagelkerke R2 = .41  
Hosmer & Lemeshow Test = .982
## Findings: Odds on Burnout

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<th>CI</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Typically works more than 56 hours per week</td>
<td>1.03</td>
<td>.378</td>
<td>2.80</td>
<td>1.33, 5.87</td>
<td>.006</td>
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Nagelkerke $R^2 = .078$; 63.6% correctly classified
## Findings: Burnout and Odds on Intent-to-Leave

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<th>CI</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Burnout / Leave School</td>
<td>1.17</td>
<td>.424</td>
<td>3.23</td>
<td>1.40, 7.42</td>
<td>.006</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Burnout / Leave Academic Nursing</td>
<td>1.29</td>
<td>.442</td>
<td>3.63</td>
<td>1.52, 8.66</td>
<td>.003</td>
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Nagelkerke R2 = .10; 78.8% correctly classified
Conclusions / Recommendations

- Schools of nursing cannot afford to lose 20% of mid-level academic nurse leaders to attrition!

- Findings indicate reasonable workloads are key to retention

- Schools of nursing must act quickly to:
  - Re-examine and redesign responsibilities
  - Ensure sufficient support staff and delegate routine tasks
  - Leverage technology when appropriate
These are challenges experienced by us all, regardless of country or continent!

Findings may be the proverbial canary in the coal mine
Questions / Comments
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References


References