

Human resource management strategies and the retention of older RNs

Authors: Armstrong-Stassen, M

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Abstract

This study investigated the human resource management strategies that are most important in retaining older RNs in the workforce and the extent to which hospitals are currently engaging in these practices. The participants ($n = 361$) were RNs aged 50 and over employed in hospitals across Ontario. Along with flexible work schedules, the human resource practices rated as most important in the decision of these RNs to remain in the workforce involved compensation (improving benefits; offering incentives for continued employment), recognition and respect (showing appreciation for a job well done; recognizing the experience, knowledge, skill and expertise of older nurses; ensuring that older nurses are treated with respect by others in the organization) and pre- and post-retirement arrangements (retirement with callback; partial or phased retirement options). There were significant differences between the importance that RNs attributed to the 34 human resource practices and the extent to which their hospitals are currently engaged in each practice, with the largest discrepancies occurring for those practices that RNs indicated were most important in their decision to remain in the workforce. While some hospitals may have difficulty in implementing strategies that have budgetary implications, all could implement recognition and respect with minimal financial consequences.