

Research In Action: Current Projects

This summary presents highlights from a study in progress entitled “*Workforce Integration of New Nurses: Exploring Employment Goals, Expectations, and Intent to Migrate of Nursing Graduates in a Canadian Border City.*” On completion of the study, the full report will be available on our website www.nhsru.com.

Workforce Integration of New Nurses: Exploring Employment Goals, Expectations, and Intent to Migrate of Nursing Graduates in a Canadian Border City

Student nurses who attend university nursing programs in communities along the United States (U.S.) - Canada border have access to jobs both in Canada and in large American health care systems. They commute across the international border each day to work. Although these nurses live in Canada and contribute significantly to the economy, they still represent the loss of valuable nursing human resources to Canada.

Research:

The purpose of this study is to describe the pre-employment profile, employment goals, and intent to migrate of a class of 281 nursing students who graduated from a university in a Canadian border community in 2011. It also explores the job factors these nurses value and their perception of whether their first job will fulfill their expectations.

Eight categories of job factors that influence nurse migration were identified from the literature:

- Economic rewards
- Professional development
- Healthy work environment
- Safe living and working environment
- Opportunity for adventure
- Autonomy in choice of workplace
- Social support
- Support of ethical practice

This study will examine how nurses make decisions about migration based on their employment goals and their expectation of meeting them in Canada and abroad.

Research Background

Canada has recently invested in greater numbers of students to address the nursing shortage (Baumann, Yan, Degelder, & Malikov, 2006), but this investment will have little impact on shortages in Canada if large numbers migrate for work in the United States and elsewhere.

There is a gap in our understanding of the migration intentions of recently graduated nurses and the factors influencing their decision making. A review of the literature found only one study on the intent of nursing students to migrate (Nguyen et al., 2008) and no studies of Canadian nursing students' intent to migrate.

Implications:

- The migration of nurses from Canada will exacerbate the predicted nursing shortage.
- Nurses who leave Canada in search of employment represent a “brain drain”.
- This research will :
 - Provide insights into the intentions of recently graduated Canadian nurses to migrate and the job factors which are “pushing” and pulling them.
 - Contribute to an understanding of the extent to which this group of new graduate nurses will be integrated (and retained) in the Canadian workforce.

Future Steps:

- An on-line survey has been developed and tested. Students were invited to participate and there was an (approximate) 41per cent response rate.
- Semi-structured interviews have been completed.
- Data analysis is underway.

References:

- Baumann, D., Yan, J., Degelder, J, & K., Malikov, K. (2006). Retention strategies for nursing: A profile of four countries. Human Health Resource 5. Hamilton: Nursing Health Services Research Unit, McMaster University.
- Nguyen, L., Ropers, S., Nderitu, E., Zuyderduin, A., Luboga, S., & Hagopian, A. (2008). Intent to migrate among nursing students in Uganda: Measures of the brain drain in the next generation of health professionals. Human Resources for Health, 6 (5). doi: 10.1186/1478-4491-6-5.

Related Research:

Cameron, S., Armstrong-Stassen, M., Rajacich, D., & Freeman, M. Working in Canada or the United States: Perceptions of Canadian nurses living in a border community. Nursing Leadership, 23(3), 30-45. 2010

Abstract: Recruitment and retention of registered nurses (RNs) is a critical issue facing nursing leaders. A global shortage of nurses has been projected for the next decade. This study used a framework of push and pull factors to identify influences on nurses’ decision to select work in their home community or a cross-border community. RNs living along the southwest border of Ontario were identified with the assistance of the College of Nurses of Ontario (CNO) and surveyed to determine factors that influenced their decision to work in Canada or the United States (U.S.), as well as their intent to remain in their current workplace. Measures included demographic information, reasons for selection of employment, and work environment factors relating to nurses’ jobs, work relationships, scheduling/staffing, workload and attachment to their current place of employment. Nurse identified fulltime employment as the greatest pull factor. Nurses working in the U.S. were also more satisfied with the pull factors of development opportunities, relationships with physicians and supervisors, and scheduling congruence. Recommendations for recruitment and retention are discussed.



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