Research paper

Nursing: Staffing Shortage in Nursing

Student's Name
University
Instructor
Course
Date

Within the complex fabric of the American workforce, a crisis of considerable magnitude jeopardizes the fundamental underpinnings of its industries and services—an epidemic characterized by a shortage of staffing. Shortages persist in nursing, driven by a scarcity of potential educators, elevated turnover rates, and an uneven workforce distribution. Critical sectors like healthcare, education, and technology are grappling with a shortage of skilled professionals, resulting in numerous vacancies and compromised services. As the nation propels itself into the 21st century, the urgent matter of staffing shortages casts an extensive shadow over its economic and social landscapes. Accordingly, it is imperative to plunge into the core of the nursing predicament, examining the context, untangling its repercussions, and contemplating potential remedies to address the pervasive workforce deficit reverberating throughout the nation.

Analysis of Staffing Shortage in Nursing

The nursing staffing shortage in the United States (US) has been a persistent and complex issue. For instance, there is a severe shortage of nurses in the US, where the country needs around three million nurses to curb the issue (Tamata & Mohammadnezhad, 2022). The demand poses a crucial challenge, whereby in 2035, there is an anticipated discrepancy of around 12.9 million competent midwives and nurses (Tamata & Mohammadnezhad, 2022). The shortage stems from imbalances between the current number of practicing nurses and the insufficient influx of new professionals into the nursing field, creating a gap in meeting the escalating demands for patient care. For instance, numerous studies have identified disparities in the supply of nurses, creating challenges in sustaining an adequate nursing workforce. The discrepancies arise in response to aspects such as the geriatric population, new nurse recruitment, retirements, and difficulties maintaining the existing nursing personnel (Tamata & Mohammadnezhad, 2022). Unfortunately, the stated challenges collectively make it challenging to respond effectively to the evolving demands in the healthcare system.

Context and Elements of Staffing Shortage in Nursing

Nurses are pivotal in delivering quality patient care and improving health outcomes. However, with the looming staffing shortage in the US, the stated role is being compromised. The profession faces numerous challenges contributing to the need for more nursing staff. For instance, demographic trends such as aging contribute to the nurse shortage. In the US, the aging population has significantly increased the demand for healthcare services, including nursing care. As people age, individuals often require more medical attention and nursing care, which strains the existing healthcare workforce. Tamata and Mohammadnezhad (2022) determined that numerous studies have identified disparities in the supply of nurses, hindering the maintenance of an adequate nursing workforce, especially in the aging population,

making it challenging to respond to the increasing demand for nursing services. Similarly, the nursing workforce is aging, leading to retirements and a loss of experienced professionals. According to research, older nurses often exit the workforce before retirement age, citing health conditions and limitations in adapting to new technologies as key factors contributing to turnover (Tamata & Mohammadnezhad, 2022). The stated factor further exacerbates the shortage as new nurses may not be entering the profession at a rate that matches the retirement of older nurses.

Poor workload conditions leading to stress and burnout also result in staffing shortages in nursing. Nurses frequently experience high workloads, long hours, and high-stress environments, prompting the staff to leave due to burnout. A recurring shortage of nurses in a healthcare system essential for the delivery of services can lead to increased stress and burnout among nursing personnel, influencing nurses' productivity and enhancing the risk of patient safety incidents (Tamata & Mohammadnezhad, 2022). Research has also revealed that the primary obstacles contributing to the nursing shortage are the limited enrollment of new nurses and inadequate training for incoming nursing recruits (Tamata & Mohammadnezhad, 2022). Lastly, ineffective policies and poor approaches have also contributed to nurse shortages in the US.

Why the Issue is Important to Me

Comprehending the nurse shortage is vital because it can directly affect my work environment, job satisfaction, ability to provide quality care, and opportunities for professional growth. For instance, if I comprehend the challenges and actively engage in efforts to address nurse shortages, I can contribute to positive changes in the healthcare system. Similarly, being aware of the nurse shortage will prevent the issue's challenges, such as patient safety, poor quality care, poor health outcomes, and lack of job satisfaction.

Populations Affected by Staffing Shortage in Nursing

The shortage of nurses in the US can have widespread effects across various populations and healthcare settings. However, specific people may be more significantly affected due to factors such as geography, socioeconomic status, and specific healthcare needs. For instance, as the population ages, there is an increasing demand for healthcare services, particularly in long-term care facilities and home health. With the aging of the US population and the prevalence of chronic illnesses, there is a corresponding rise in the number of surgeries (Beitz, 2019). A shortage of nurses can impact the quality and availability of care for older adults. The nurse shortage may affect children and adolescents, especially individuals with chronic health conditions. Pediatric healthcare settings may need adequate nurses to provide specialized care.

Potential Consequences of Ignoring the Issue

Ignoring the issue of nurse shortage could lead to a cascade of problems that can negatively impact the healthcare system and the population's well-being. Research has shown that the global deficit in the nursing workforce poses a barrier to the provision of advanced healthcare services to the public, hindering efforts to achieve comprehensive coverage for all and improve health and overall well-being (Tamata & Mohammadnezhad, 2022). The need for more nurses has resulted in numerous adverse effects on patient health outcomes and has presented challenges in combating diseases and promoting overall health.

Considering Options

Nurse shortage can be addressed by improving working conditions to create a positive work environment by addressing nurse-to-patient ratios, burnout, and stress. Staffing shortages in nurses result in workloads that prompt burnout and anxiety, affecting work performance (Tamata & Mohammadnezhad, 2022). Providing support services like counseling can contribute to job satisfaction. Additionally, adapting digital health in nursing can reduce workloads, preventing burnout and stress, thus addressing nurse shortages. Similarly, training nurses on new technology can ensure low turnover rates. Technological advancements contribute to the nurse shortage (Tamata & Mohammadnezhad, 2022). The healthcare system can also foster partnerships between healthcare organizations and educational institutions to ensure that nursing programs are aligned with the needs of the healthcare industry.

Advocating for government support and funding to address the nurse shortage, including grants for education programs and workforce development initiatives, can also address the issue. The government can also change or implement new policies that support nurses' needs, which can help address the staffing shortage in nursing. Tamata and Mohammadnezhad (2022) posit that poor policy, insufficient staff planning and recruitment, and incompetent implementation contribute to nurse shortage. Lastly, enhancing education and training programs can address the healthcare issue. Hospitals can gain advantages through collaborations with academic nursing departments, such as contributing to student education by providing opportunities like perioperative clinical rotations (Beitz, 2019). Subsequently, competent students as perioperative staff members can alleviate financial burdens for hospitals and address the shortage of perioperative nursing staff.

Solution

Unless the staffing shortage in nursing is promptly and effectively addressed, the provision of quality nursing care to patients will persistently be compromised. Consequently, the most effective solution to the nurse shortage would involve substantial investments to expand nursing education programs and enhance nurse competency. The approach aims to increase the number of individuals undergoing training and education to qualify as nurses, thereby addressing the escalating demand for

healthcare services. Nursing schools have the flexibility to employ diverse strategies for enhancing nursing faculty proficiency in social determinants of health, health equity, and public well-being (Sumpter et al., 2022). Advancing nursing education can increase the workforce and diverse skill sets, create more jobs for nurses, and build collaborations between educational institutions. Nonetheless, it can be time-consuming for the nurses, requires more resources, and rapid education expansion can compromise the quality of patient care. Sumpter et al. (2022) postulate that program policies governing resource allocation should prioritize public health as a critical curriculum component and institutional resources should align with the priority.

Implementation

Expanding nursing education programs to address nurse shortage involves a comprehensive approach considering various factors. During implementation, one should assess the projected demand for nurses. Secondly, one should collaborate with stakeholders such as the government, hospitals, professional organizations, and educational institutions to gain support and resources and expand the existing education nursing programs. Thirdly, one should invest in infrastructure, resources, financial aid, and incentives for continuing nursing students. Financial support enables nursing students to be educated on public health pedagogy, social determinants of health, and technological initiatives to be involved in people's well-being and health equity (Sumpter et al., 2022). Also, it is necessary to provide flexible education programs to accommodate nurses with varying schedules. However, it is pivotal to formulate strategies to advocate for hospitals to provide professional development opportunities for existing faculty to enhance nurse teaching and clinical skills. Furthermore, one should work with government agencies to advocate for policies supporting expanding nursing education programs. Current guidelines should be scrutinized based on outcomes broken down by diversity. Sumpter et al. (2022) allude that the examination serves the dual purpose of recognizing inadvertent inequalities and securing equitable access to technology for economically and geographically disadvantaged students to facilitate effective participation in virtual learning. Lastly, it is essential to develop mechanisms for ongoing evaluation of the effectiveness of the expanded program.

Ethical Principles

When implementing educational nursing programs to address the nurse shortage, it is essential to consider and adhere to fundamental ethical principles to ensure that it is fair, just, and respectful of the individuals involved. If the program was implemented, the beneficence principle should be considered. Beneficence is doing what is good; thus, physicians are responsible for promoting patients' well-being through program implementation (Cheraghi et al., 2023). The implementation of nursing education programs should focus on the well-being of both the community and the prospective nursing students. Non-maleficence accentuates not harming and promoting patients' health (Cheraghi et al., 2023). Careful

consideration should be given to the potential negative consequences of the implemented solution. For example, efforts to expand nursing programs should ensure that the quality of education and clinical training is maintained and that there are adequate resources to support students. Autonomy recognizes and respects an individual's right to decide. The focal point of ethical decision-making should always revolve around the patient's well-being (Cheraghi et al., 2023). Consequently, during implementation, one should promote nursing education programs that respect students' autonomy by offering diverse program options, recognizing individual learning styles, and providing information to make informed decisions about individuals' education and career paths. Lastly, it is vital to consider Justice, which Cheraghi et al. (2023) posit plays an essential role in establishing a connection between the significance of individual health and the obligations associated with advancing the health of society. Accordingly, expanding nursing education programs should address disparities and strive for equal access to educational opportunities.

Conclusion

Nurse shortage has been looming in the US for decades. Without intervention, nurse shortage contributes to poor quality patient care, high mortality rates, poor health outcomes, and poor job satisfaction. Accordingly, addressing the nursing staffing shortage through expanding education programs is pivotal to ensuring competency and professional development. When implementing the solution, one should consider the ethical principles and include stakeholders who can provide resources, incentives, policy change, and institutions for the education programs.

Source Analysis

Beitz (2019) is credible as it was published by the Association of periOperative Registered Nurses (AORN) journal. The AORN journal is increasingly reputable, providing credible sources. The information is also relevant to my research as its main focus is addressing the nursing shortage, especially perioperative nurses handling surgery for patients. Cheraghi et al. (2023) article is highly credible and has current data on ethical principles in nursing. Recent sources are more reliable for rapidly evolving fields, such as healthcare ethics. The article contributed to the review by providing reliable data on the four ethical principles of nursing. Sumpter et al. (2022) research is also very current, providing credible data in nursing education programs based on emerging trends in the healthcare system. The article is peer-reviewed and was published by Nursing Outlook, a well-regarded journal in the profession. Lastly, the Tamata and Mohammadnezhad (2022) source is recent, published by a reputable Nursing Journal (Nursing Open), peer-reviewed, and provides relevant data about the research, making it very credible. The article provided timely data on factors contributing to a staffing shortage in nursing, how to address the problem, and the consequences of not addressing the issue, making it highly relevant to the topic of interest.

References

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