Healthy Work Environments For Critical Care Nurses

Sandra Goldsworthy RN PhD CNCC(C) CMSN(C)
Associate Professor
Faculty of Nursing
University of Calgary, Canada
August 30th, 2015
Seoul, South Korea
1. Describe **why** healthy work environments are an urgent issue for nurses.

2. Discuss the current state of the literature (aka ‘**what**’ is known)

3. Discuss implications of new research findings for practice and **how** this may impact the future.

4. **Where** to from here?
How healthy is your work environment?
Do you ever feel like this at work?
frus-trat-ed:

adj (1641) 1: prevent from attaining; discouraged in some endeavor 2: disappointed

Again?
Have you had many days like this?

I somehow survived another day...and I'll have to do it all over again tomorrow.
Why be concerned about work environments for critical care nurses?

Healthy work environments are directly related to:

- Retention of nurses
- Productivity
- Patient safety
What is the cost of critical care nurse turnover?
Cost of Nurse Turnover

- $$$
- Productivity (proportion of novice to experienced nurses in ICU)
- Quality and safety of patient care
Nurses make the decision to leave their current positions within ___ months of ACTUALLY leaving:

a) 1-3
b) 3-6
c) 6-12
Nurses typically have gradual disengagement and make the decision to leave their positions **6-12 months** before actually leaving.

The majority of nurses leave due to factors within their work environment.
What is a healthy work environment?

“...a practice setting that maximizes health and well-being of nurses, quality of patient outcomes and organizational system performance” (RNAO, 2013).
Nurses are reporting a deterioration of their work environments globally (Aiken et al., 2013, Heinen et al., 2013, O’Brien-Pallas et al., 2010, Van denHeed, 2013).
What factors are the most critical within the work environment for nurses?
Work Environment Factors

- Strong leadership
- Autonomy
- Professional development opportunities
- Accountability and control over the work environment
- Manageable workloads
- Praise and recognition
- Participation in decision making
- Collegial nurse-physician relationships
Strong Nursing Leadership

- **Relational** or transformational managers vs task or transaction-driven leaders
- Leadership style a critical factor to nurse intent to stay
- ‘**good’ leadership** (i.e. shared decision making, being visible, providing praise and recognition) related to increased levels of job satisfaction among nurses and decreased levels of intent to leave
- Authentic leadership
Professional Development Opportunities

- Nurses globally value professional development (PD) opportunities and ongoing educational opportunities and see them as a signal of organizational support.

- Nurses value PD opportunities more than other factors such as pay (Morgan et al., 2009, Shields & Ward, 2005).

- PD opportunities such as: attending conferences, training and formally upgrading staff’s education considered areas to invest in to improve nurse retention (Leurer et al., 2007).
Nurses value PD at all career stages (Chang et al., 2007, Stone et al., 2006)

‘80/20’ Canadian study (Bournes & Pare, 2007)
  - Nurses had 80% of salaried time in direct patient care
  - 20% of time in professional development activities
  - Results showed: increased nurse and patient satisfaction, no sick time increases, decreased turnover
Although PD has been established as a **motivator** for nurses and directly linked to retention, little is known about which type of educational strategy works best for critical care nurses.

In the current study, **high fidelity simulation** was used to examine the impact on retention of critical care nurses and their perception of the work environment (Goldsworthy, 2015).
In a Canadian study, 62% of nurses intended to leave their current position with major reason cited as: **lack of support from colleagues** (Lavoie-Tremblay et al., 2011)

Generational differences have also been explored in relation to retention and work environment factors and results demonstrated **no significant difference** between age groups (Lavoie-Tremblay et al., 2011)
Praise and Recognition

- A strong motivator for nurses
- Perceived organizational support
- A simple ‘thank you’ or ‘job well done’
- Concrete forms of recognition (i.e. professional development opportunities - financial/time support for attending conferences, tuition support)
THE MECHANISMS BY WHICH PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT MAY CONTRIBUTE TO CRITICAL CARE NURSES’ INTENT TO STAY

(Goldsworthy, 2015)
The purpose of this study was to examine the influence of a professional development intervention on critical care nurses’ intent to stay. A theoretical *Critical Care Nurse Retention* model was tested. The intention was to assess whether professional development, part of a healthy work environment, relates to intent to stay as a means to retain critical care nurses and assist in stabilizing the critical care nursing workforce.
Critical Care Nurse Retention Model (Goldsworthy, 2015)

- Work Environment
- Perceived Organizational Support
- Professional Development
- Critical Care Self-efficacy
- General Self-efficacy
- Intent to Stay
- Transfer of Learning
A quasi-experimental longitudinal design

Data were collected from 363 critical care nurses from multiple hospital sites in Ontario, Canada over 18 months.

Comparison group were critical care nurses randomly selected from the nurse registry.

Treatment group received a 324 hour intervention which included online theory, 39 hours of intensive critical care high fidelity simulation and 120 hours of preceptored ICU clinical placement.
Results

- Findings showed the professional development intervention had a direct effect on intent to stay in the profession.
- Furthermore, it was found that POS mediated the relationship between the professional development intervention and intent to stay in the organization, the unit and the profession.
Investment in PD for nurses is a motivator for intent to stay in the ICU and in the nursing profession.

It is also a signal that the organization values nurses.
Healthy work environments for nurses that include: peer support, strong leadership and professional development opportunities are essential for an **optimal climate to apply and strengthen new skills** (transfer of learning) necessary for safe patient care.
The importance of protected sustainable funding for ongoing critical care training cannot be understated.

Cuts to funding for critical care education could negatively impact intent to stay of nurses.

In the short term, cost cutting may seem efficient; however longer outcomes term must be considered such as organizational costs, productivity costs, patient safety and further destabilization of the critical care workforce where turnover is currently the highest.
Where to from here?
Ongoing and Future Research
Program of Research

Simulation

Job Readiness (Undergraduate Nurses)

Transfer of Learning

Competence/Confidence

Intent to Stay/Work Environment

Retention and Recruitment/Transition (Practicing Nurses)

Transfer of learning

Self-efficacy/Competence
Simulation

Confidence

Competence

Patient Safety/Quality Care
An invitation...
Thank you.

Sandra.goldsworthworthy@ucalgary.ca