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Restructuring staffing pattern of Nurses in a Tertiary Care Hospital Lt Col Indira Das¹ and Lt Col Kabita Jana²

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Abstract

Introduction - Increasing accountability, technical complexity, unequal distribution of work, lack of clarity between conventional and extended nursing task leads to interpersonal conflict, overburden, burnout, low job satisfaction among nurses, decreased quality of care, increased chance of medical errors and less patients' satisfaction, which creates a need for reviewing and streamlining the clinical role of nurses. Methodology — A quasi-experimental study was conducted to compare the impact of staffing pattern on quality of nursing care, nurses' job satisfaction and patients' satisfaction between existing and proposed staffing pattern of nurses at a tertiary care hospital. Results — The quality of care and job satisfaction reported by nurses were significantly increased in the proposed staffing pattern. However, patient satisfaction level was unchanged. Conclusion - Restructuring and clarifying role of nurses in clinical area have potential to improve quality of care, enhance nurses' job satisfaction and patients' satisfaction with nursing care provided

Key-words – Staffing, Job satisfaction, Patient's satisfaction

Introduction

Nurses in the clinical area handle a diverse array of responsibilities ranging from direct patient care to management of human resource, maintenance of inventory, equipment and supply, supervision of diet, facilitating ward rounds, coordinating interdepartmental services, ensuring protocols of patient safety and waste management, educating patients and subordinate staff including grief counselling and lactation consultation. With increasing workload and technical complexity in the healthcare delivery, unequal distribution of workload may cause overwork and burnout among nurses which in turn leads to low job satisfaction¹. Besides, it may also



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lead to decreased quality of care, increased chance of medical errors and less satisfaction of patients.

The aim of the present study is to compare the impact of staffing pattern on quality of nursing care, nurses' job satisfaction and patients' satisfaction between existing and proposed staffing pattern of nurses at a tertiary care hospital.

Methodology

A pre-test was administered to 30 Nurses through Purposive sampling working in existing staffing pattern where 2 to 3 nurses deployed in an acute ward handle a wide array of clinical responsibilities ranging from direct patient care, ward management, human resources, equipment management, coordination of clinical consultation and grief counselling. The tool consisted of 20 items Rating scale to assess reported Quality of Care (Mod QI by NABH)² and 20 items Rating scale to assess Job Satisfaction (Mod Mueller & McCloskey's Scale)³. Also, 30 patients from the same wards were administered 20 items Rating scale to assess Patients' Satisfaction (Mod PSNCQQ).⁴

Thereafter, the proposed model was implemented for one week in which 4 new portfolios out of existing staff were introduced namely Resource Management Nurse, Clinical Liaison Nurse, Pain Management Nurse and Bereavement Support Nurse centrally to give cover to entire hospital, so that clinical nurses have more time to render direct patient care.

A same group post-test was administered to the nurses which had a dichotomous opinionnaire on inclusion of new portfolios (Self structured) along with previous tool. The same patients were re-assessed for satisfaction with the new staffing pattern, however 3 were discharged to home, hence counted in attrition.

Results

Reported quality of care - Mean scores in pre-test & post-test are 49.77 & 52.47 respectively. At 95% confidence interval and degree of freedom 29, the value of paired t test is 6.6296, which is statistically highly significant. Hence proved, the reported quality of care by nurses were significantly increased in the proposed staffing pattern.



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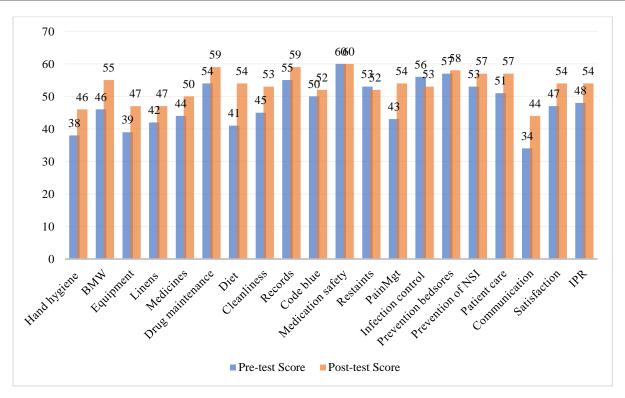


Figure 1: Comparison between Pre and Post test score of Reported Quality of Care **Job satisfaction -** Mean scores pre-test is 49.17 and post-test is 52.93 respectively, at 95% CI and Df = 29, the Paired t test value is 7.6783, which is statistically highly significant. It indicates the proposed staffing pattern was helpful in enhancing job satisfaction among nurses.

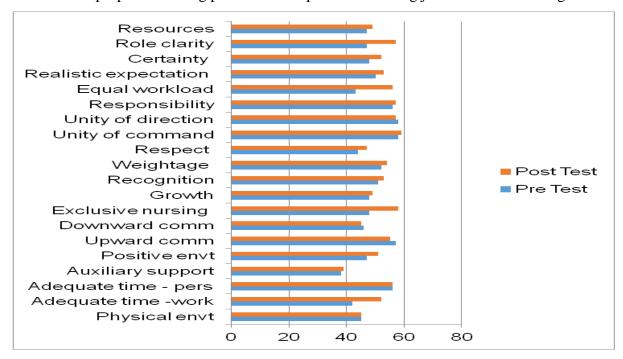


Figure 2: Comparison between Pre and Post test score of Job satisfaction



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Patients' satisfaction - Mean scores in pre-test & post-test are 47.70 & 49.04 respectively. At 95% CI & with df 58, value of unpaired t test = 1.6503, which is not significant. This reflects that the patient satisfaction level is unchanged.

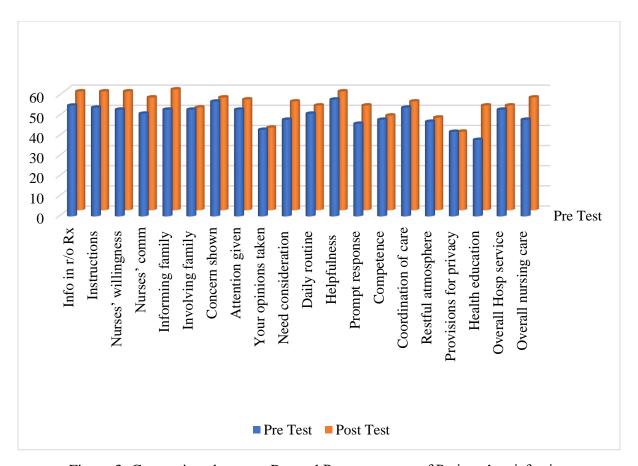


Figure 3: Comparison between Pre and Post test score of Patients' satisfaction

Opinion on Specialized Nurses inclusion – 27 out of 30(90%) nurses opined inclusion of Clinical Liaison and Resource Management Nurse were effective, closely followed by 26(86.66%) thought Bereavement Counselling Nurse was effective. Only 12(30%) nurses thought the inclusion of Pain Management Nurse was effective.

Conclusion

Restructuring and clarifying role of nurses in clinical area have potential to improve quality of care, enhance nurses' job satisfaction and patients' satisfaction with nursing care provided. All it needs are augmentation of manpower, meticulous planning, realistic flexibility and a willingness for calculated risk taking. Our patients & Our nurses deserve no less.



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