Why do we have a high turnover of nursing staff on our Acute Medical Unit: Is it related to high burn out? How can this be improved?

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Background

• This project was undertaken on a large Acute Medical Unit (AMU) in a busy inner city hospital.

• Between June 2013 and January 2014 there was a period of high nurse attrition which impacted on the nursing services.
Aim of the project.

To review nurses’ perceptions of their work environment and identify measures that might improve staff retention and morale.
Methodology

• During March 2014 AMU nursing staff were invited to complete an anonymous questionnaire.

• Data collected included demographic information, satisfaction around aspects of their role, the work environment and care delivery.
Results

• Data was included from 67% respondents.
• 62.3% were qualified nurses
• 37.7% were healthcare support workers.
• 43.7% of respondents were aged between 20 - 30 yrs
• 43% of the band 5 respondents were newly qualified preceptees.
Respondents' length of time working on the unit.

- Over 3 years: 50% of respondents
- Between 1-3 years: 20% of respondents
- One year or less: 30% of respondents
Reported Satisfaction with job on the unit.

- 52% Satisfied
- 48% Dissatisfied
Respondents length of time on unit compared to job satisfaction.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Length of Time on Unit</th>
<th>% of Respondents Satisfied</th>
<th>% of Respondents Dissatisfied</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Over 3 years</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>70%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Between 1-3 years</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One year or less</td>
<td>80%</td>
<td>20%</td>
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Central Manchester University Hospitals
NHS Foundation Trust
Job satisfaction reported by healthcare support workers (Band 2) and qualified staff (band 5 and above).
Aspects of the work environment viewed positively

Respondents would recommend AMU as a good place to work.
Respondents would recommend the unit as a place of care for family or friends.
Respondents rated the work environment as 'Good' or 'excellent'

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>80%</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>85%</td>
<td>15%</td>
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<tr>
<td>80%</td>
<td>20%</td>
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Respondents views on working relationships between doctors and nurses.

- **Physicians value nurses’ judgments, assessments and contribution to patient care.**
  - Disagree: 20%
  - Agree: 80%

- **Physicians and nurses have good working relationships.**
  - Disagree: 30%
  - Agree: 70%

- **There is a lot of team work between nurses and physicians.**
  - Disagree: 30%
  - Agree: 70%
Aspects of respondents’ work environment causing Dissatisfaction.

![Bar chart showing aspects causing dissatisfaction]
Aspects of respondents’ role causing disagreement.

- I have time to carry out all my work.
- There are patient care assignments that foster continuity of care.
- I receive praise and recognition for a job well done.
- Staff are involved in the internal governance of the hospital (e.g., link nurses, committees).
- I am asked to do work without adequate resources to complete the work.
- There is enough time and opportunity to discuss patient care problems with nurses.
- I am involved in deciding on the changes introduced that affect my work.
Respondents’ comments on what caused them dissatisfaction.

I do not always feel valued for my work. Clinical judgment is being replaced by tick boxes.

Always shortage of staff and hence causing stress and no job satisfaction.

Some colleagues more supportive than others. Job roles seem to get larger and larger with less support and time.

90% of the time I love my job. Short staffing problems increase pressures/stress the other 10%.

I do enjoy my job. It can be stressful at times but I suppose the same could be said for any ward. Fully staffed it's great.

I would like to do NVQ3.

Very challenging at times!!
Respondents views on staffing levels

- There are enough staff to get the work done. (70% agree, 30% disagree)
- There are adequate support services which allow me to spend time with my patients. (60% agree, 40% disagree)
- There are enough qualified nurses among the staff to provide quality patient care. (80% agree, 20% disagree)
Patient flow data for AMU:
Year on Year comparison of admissions by month.

- **Month**: 4, 5, 6, 7, 8
- **Number of patients admitted**: 2013 vs. 2014

The chart shows the comparison of admissions by month for the years 2013 and 2014.
Staffing ratios

- Respondents reported on average the nurse to patient ratio was 1:8.5
- They recommended that the ratio should be on average 1:5
- These figures may be underestimated as turnover may be higher with nurses having two or more patients per bed in any one day.
Is there a link between dissatisfaction issues and burnout?

Respondents' views on questions related to 'Burnout'.

- I feel emotionally drained from my work.
- I feel used up at the end of the day.
- I worry that this job is hardening me emotionally.
- I feel frustrated by my job.
- I feel I am working too hard on my job.
- Working directly with people put too much stress on me.

% respondent agreement

[Bar chart showing the percentage of respondents agreeing with each statement, with green for 'No' and red for 'Yes'.]
Actions in response to the project findings.

Initiatives have included:

- Setting up Healthcare Assistant (HCA) Forums, chaired by HCA’s to involve them in deciding their role development.

- Encouragement of HCA’s to participate in corporate focus groups.

- A unit based Preceptorship/new staff nurse support programme with a program of skills escalation.

- New Staff Nurse Forum, chaired on rotation by staff nurses as a development opportunity.
Generic support for all staff

- 1:1 support from the matron.
- Coaching on conducting meetings skills through forums.
- Team building events.
- Unit based Newsletter sharing news and celebrating staff achievements.
- Employee of the Month awards.
- Poster signposting staff on support available.
Outcomes

Initial Feedback from implemented actions is positive.

- Preceptorship/new staff nurse support programme and forums have been positively appraised.
- Healthcare support worker forum planning is well under way.
- More openness and staff engagement in forums
- Plan to repeat the questionnaire in twelve months and staff attrition will also be reviewed.
Recommendations

• Promote acute medical nursing as a speciality.

• Look at introduction of rotational contracts across urgent care.

• Look at staffing levels based on nurse to patient ratio rather than nurse to bed ratio.

• The full survey report to be submitted to the trust to be reviewed.

• AMU nurses pay should reflect the demands placed upon them and this needs to be looked at a national level.
References.


Any Questions?