
Over Rushed and Occupational Accident Among Nurses

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ABSTRACT

Occupational accidents and injuries among nurses are a significant concern, with over-rushed work environments contributing to increased risks. This review explores the relationship between over-rushed work environments and occupational accidents among nurses. By examining the factors contributing to over-rushing in nursing practice and the impact on occupational safety, this review aims to identify strategies for preventing occupational accidents and improving workplace safety for nurses.

Introduction

The heavy workload of hospital nurses is a major problem for the American health care system. Nurses are experiencing higher workloads than ever before due to four main reasons: (1) increased demand for nurses, (2) inadequate supply of nurses, (3) reduced staffing and increased overtime, and (4) reduction in patient length of stay. First, the demand for nurses is increasing as a result of population aging. Between 2000 and 2020, the United States population is expected to grow by 18 percent (31 million), but the over-65 population, with more health care needs, is expected to grow by 54 percent (19 million)(1)(2). Second, the supply of nurses is not adequate to meet the current demand, and the shortage is projected to grow more severe as future demand increases and nursing schools are not able to keep up with the increasing educational demand(3)(4). When a nursing shortage occurs, the workload increases for those who remain on the job(5). Third, in response to increasing health care costs since the 1990s, hospitals reduced their nursing staffs and implemented

mandatory overtime policies to meet unexpectedly high demands, which significantly increased nursing workloads. Fourth, increasing cost pressure forced health care organizations to reduce patient length of stay. As a result, hospital nurses today take care of patients who are sicker than in the past; therefore, their work is more intensive(6). There are several important consequences of high nursing workload. Research shows that a heavy nursing workload adversely affects patient safety(7). Furthermore, it negatively affects nursing job satisfaction and, as a result, contributes to high turnover and the nursing shortage(8). In addition to the higher patient acuity, work system factors and expectations also contribute to the nurses' workload: nurses are expected to perform nonprofessional tasks such as delivering and retrieving food trays; housekeeping duties; transporting patients; and ordering, coordinating, or performing ancillary services(9). A 1998–1999 survey of more than 43,000 nurses in five countries found that 17 percent to 39 percent of respondents planned to leave their job within a year because of job demands.⁹ Heavy nursing workload increases burnout and job dissatisfaction, which in turn contributes to high nurse turnover(10). Nursing is a demanding profession that often requires nurses to work in fast-paced and high-pressure environments. Over-rushed work environments, characterized by excessive workload, time pressures, and inadequate staffing, can increase the risk of occupational accidents and injuries among nurses. This review explores the relationship between over-rushed work environments and occupational accidents in nursing practice.

Over-Rushed Work Environments and Occupational Accidents

1. Excessive Workload

Over-rushed work environments often result from excessive workloads, with nurses facing high patient-to-nurse ratios, increased administrative tasks, and limited time for patient care(11).

2. Time Pressures

Time pressures and tight deadlines can lead to rushed and hurried work practices, increasing the risk of errors, accidents, and injuries among nurses.

3. Inadequate Staffing

Inadequate staffing levels can exacerbate over-rushed work environments, as nurses are required to do more with fewer resources. Understaffing contributes to increased workloads, stress, and fatigue, further increasing the risk of accidents and injuries(12)

Impact on Occupational Safety

1. Increased Risk of Accidents

Over-rushed work environments increase the risk of occupational accidents and injuries among nurses, including needlestick injuries, musculoskeletal disorders, and slips, trips, and falls(13).

2. Impact on Patient Safety

Over-rushing in nursing practice can also compromise patient safety, leading to medication errors, missed assessments, and delayed treatments. Occupational accidents among nurses can have serious implications for patient care and outcomes(14).

3. Psychological Impact

Over-rushed work environments can take a toll on nurses' mental health and well-being, leading to increased stress, burnout, and job dissatisfaction(15).

Strategies for Prevention

1. Improving Workload Management

Healthcare organizations can implement strategies to better manage nurse workloads, including optimizing staffing levels, streamlining administrative tasks, and providing support for time management and prioritization(16).

2. Enhancing Workplace Safety: Implementing measures to improve workplace safety, such as providing ergonomic equipment, safety training, and regular safety audits, can help reduce the risk of occupational accidents and injuries among nurses(17).

3. Promoting Work-Life Balance: Supporting nurses in achieving a healthy work-life balance is essential for reducing stress and preventing burnout. This may include offering flexible scheduling options,

providing access to employee assistance programs, and promoting self-care and resilience(18).

Conclusion

Over-rushed work environments pose significant risks to occupational safety and well-being among nurses. By addressing the factors contributing to over-rushing in nursing practice and implementing strategies to improve workload management and workplace safety, healthcare organizations can help prevent occupational accidents and injuries, protect the health and safety of nurses, and ensure high-quality patient care.

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