

What is the research telling us about the quality of work-life for nurses and its implications for their retention and recruitment?

Breakfast with the Chiefs

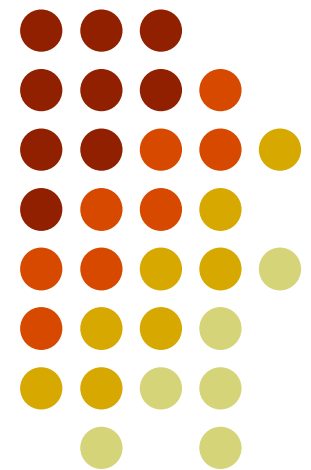
with

Linda O'Brien-Pallas

and Tom Closson


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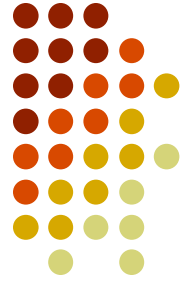
Objectives of Session



 Review what the research is telling us about how work environments of nurses are impacting their health.

 Examine nurses' perspectives by age cohort of what should be done to enhance nurse job satisfaction and retention.

Part One



Objective:

To review what the research is telling us about how nurses' work environments are impacting their health.

Nurses' Physical Health



- Prevalence of the various health problems are high in nurses relative to all employed people (*2005 National Survey on the Work and Health of Nurses*)
- Nurses will work when they are sick and put themselves at risk by continuing to work (LOBP, 2004)

Nurses' Mental Health



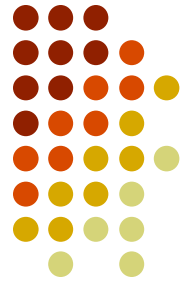
- Of all employed women, 7% had experienced depression, and of employed men 4%. These figures compared with 9% of both female and male nurses (NSWHN)
- Nurses aged 35 to 44 were more likely than those aged 55 or older to have experienced depression in the past year (NSWHN).
- Larger percentages of younger nurses reported missing days for mental health reasons than older age cohorts. Conversely, larger percentages of older nurses missed work due to physical illness than younger cohorts (Sector Study).

Nurses' Work-Related Injury



- More than 40% of nurses report back/buttock or neck/shoulder pain at least some of the time
- 25% of nurses are working with pain most or all of the time
- About 9% of nurses reported having been injured on the job in the past year.
- Work injuries were much less common among nurses in community health.

(2005 National Survey on the Work and Health of Nurses)



Risk of Exposure to Disease

- The risk of exposure to contagious diseases concerned substantial proportions of nurses who provided direct care.
- An estimated 15% believed that their employer was not taking adequate precautions to prevent the spread of diseases.

(2005 National Survey on the Work and Health of Nurses)

Hours Worked & Nurses' Health



- There is almost a perfect correlation between sick time and overtime (WSIB)
- Nurses were less likely to be physically or mentally healthy when they worked involuntary overtime or preferred to decrease their work hours (Sector Study)
- Nurses who had frequent shift changes (>3 over 2 weeks) were the most unhealthy (Sector study)
- Unpaid overtime was more common than paid overtime. Nearly half reported usually working unpaid overtime at their main job, for an average of 4 such hours per week (NHWSN 2005).

Work Environment Factors Associated with Poor or Fair General Health



- Job stress
- Low support from supervisor or co-workers
- High job insecurity
- High physical demands (ex. lifting)
- Low autonomy
- Poor nurse-physician relationships
- Violence in the workplace
- Physical and biological hazards
- Working without appropriate & functioning equipment including personal protective equipment
- Frequent shift changes


Importance of Nurses' Health



- Nurses who had been absent from work (in past year) missed an average of 23.9 days. When including those who had not missed any time, the average missed days was 14.5 days (NSWHN)
- About 1 in 7 of all nurses (14%) had been absent for 20 or more days during the previous year (NSWHN).
- Over 70% of nurses in Canada reported missing work days in past year due to short term illness (Sector Study)
- There is a link between nurse health & patient outcomes (EBS Study)
- Nurses' health is crucial for long-term retention of nurses in the workforce in all sectors and for Health Human Resource planning in nursing.

Questions



 Are leaders of healthcare organizations doing enough to address the issues raised?

 What more could they do?

 Why aren't they doing more?

Part Two



Objective:

To examine nurses' perspectives by age cohort of what should be done to enhance nurse job satisfaction and retention.

Health Human Resource Program

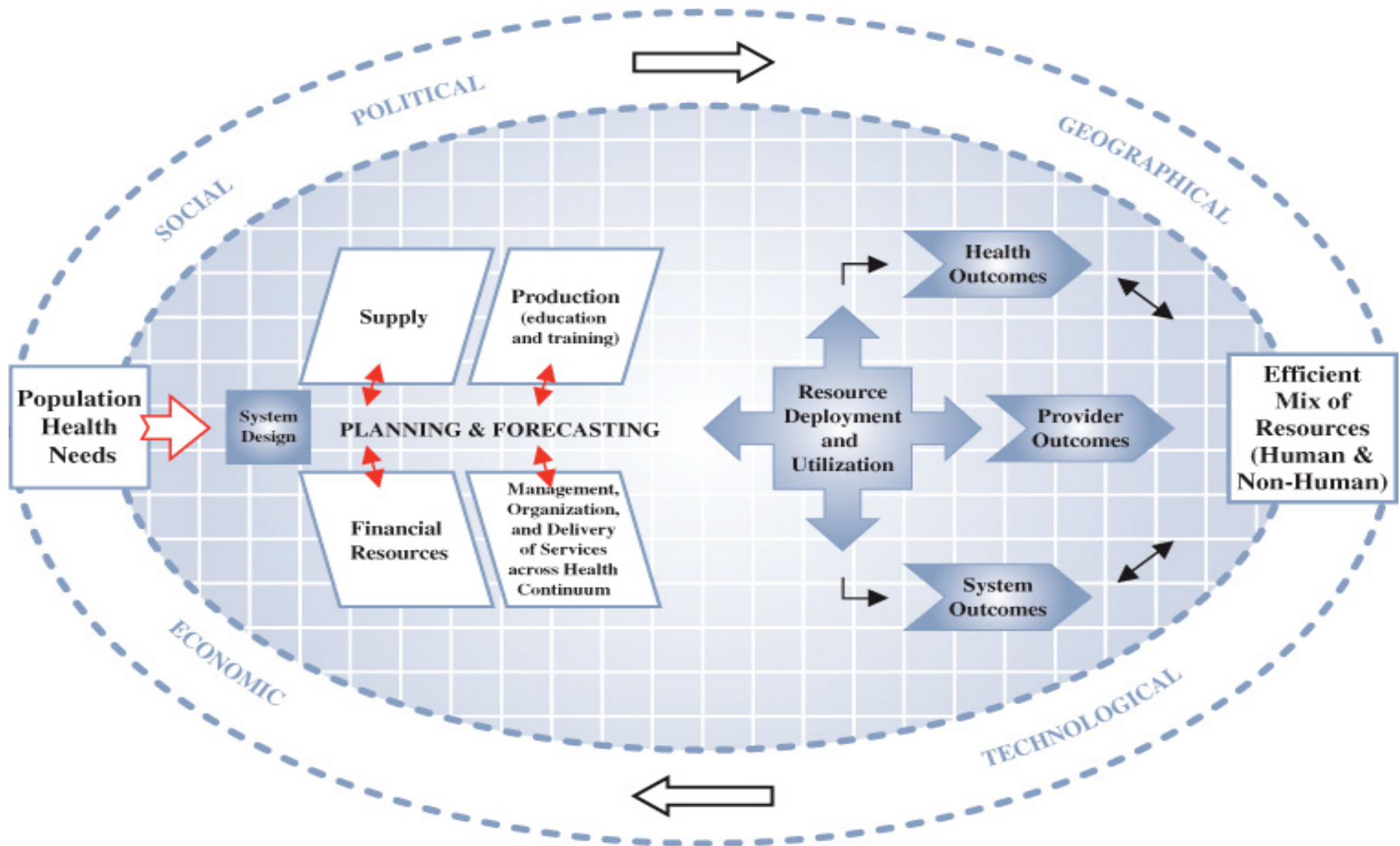
Health Human Resources Modelling: Challenging the Past, Creating the Future (www.hhrp.ca)

- Co-PIs: O'Brien-Pallas & Tomblin Murphy



- The goal is to expand existing demographic-focused approaches to **health human resources planning** by moving beyond considerations of supply and utilization by examining the broader factors that influence the health system such as the social, political, economic, and technological influences.
- Comprises three projects:
 - Project 1, *Population Health*
 - Project 2, *Nursing and the Healthcare Production Function*
 - Project 3, *Nurse Retention*

**Health System and Health Human Resources
Planning Conceptual Framework¹**



¹ O'Brien-Pallas, Tomblin Murphy, Birch, 2005 (adapted from ¹ O'Brien-Pallas, Tomblin Murphy, Birch & Baumann, 2001, and O'Brien-Pallas & Baumann, 1997)

Retention of Practicing Nurses



Project 3 Objective:

- To understand *nurses' decisions to leave or remain* in the nursing workforce in order to aid in the identification of *efficient & effective strategies for nursing retention*



Approach

- The study used a cross-sectional survey design, which sampled three different groups:
 - ✂️ Former RNs who have left nursing & do not maintain registration
 - ✂️ RNs who maintain registration but are unemployed or do not work in nursing; and
 - ✂️ RNs who remain in practice, with special attention to over sampling nurses in the under 35 age cohort

RN=Registered Nurse, LPN=Licensed Practical Nurse

Overall Sample (RN/LPN combined)



- Mailed surveys: PEI, NS, NFLD, NB, ON, SK
- Response rate: 41.6%
- Snowball sample to recruit 'former' nurses
- N = 6453
- 96.7% female
- Average age: 43.8 (SD = 12.7)
- Marital status:
 - 11.8%: single
 - 78.6%: married/common-law/partnered
 - 9.6%: widowed/separated/divorced

Paths – Defined



Stayers	Nurses who work or are unemployed in nursing , but who have not left the profession	N=4700
Stayers – At Risk of Leaving	Nurses who are <u>at risk</u> of leaving nursing as a career	N=730
Stayers –Early Retirees	Nurses over age 50 who intend to retire before age 65	N=870
Leavers	Nurses who have left nursing as a career	N=563

Among those still in the profession, RN satisfaction with ...



	<35	35-49	50+
Overall nursing career	2.9	2.9	3.2
Nursing job	2.9	2.9	3.1
Nursing employer	2.7	2.6	2.8

(1=very dissatisfied, 2=dissatisfied, 3=satisfied, 4=very satisfied)

Stayers



What policy initiatives are important to retaining those who:

- a. Currently plan to remain in nursing?
- b. Are at risk of leaving nursing?
- c. Are thinking of taking early retirement?

Top Policies: Ontario RNs who intend to stay



<35	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Better salary● Improved work environment● Appropriate workload● Benefits package● Support for continuing education
35-49	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Appropriate workload● Improved work environment● Support for continuing education● Better salary● Availability of type of position wanted● Preferred shifts
50+	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Appropriate workload● Benefits package● Managerial support● Better salary● Improved work environment

Top Policies: Ontario RNs at risk of leaving



<35	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Better salary● Preferred shifts● Availability of type of position wanted● Support for continuing education● Managerial support● Tuition payback
35-49	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Availability of type of position wanted● Support for continuing education● Improved work environment● Appropriate workload● Safe work environment
50+	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Appropriate workload● Availability of type of position wanted● Managerial support● Improved work environment● Benefits package

Top Policies:

Ontario RNs 50+ who intend to retire early (<65)



- Benefits package
- Appropriate workload
- Better salary
- Managerial support
- Improved work environment
- Shorter work week with full pension contribution



Leavers

1. What is the scope of their career paths outside of nursing?
2. What nursing skills help achieve non-nursing positions?
3. Among leavers who remain registered, what factors explain decisions to maintain registration?
4. What policy initiatives will attract back those who have left nursing?

1. Scope of Career Paths Outside of Nursing



	Leavers
Health Care & Social Assistance	31.8%
Educational Services	11.5%
Other Services (e.g. childcare-related positions appeared frequently)	10.0%
Scientific Research & Development Services	5.1%
Retail Trade	3.9%
Finance & Insurance	3.0%



Education Level Required for Positions Outside of Nursing

	Leavers
On the Job Training	37.1%
University Education	34.8%
College Education	21.9%
Secondary School	5.0%
Apprenticeship	1.2%

2. Nursing Skills that Help Achieve Non-Nursing Positions

(items where >60% said Very Important)



Multi-task	70.6%
Be accountable for actions	69.8%
Relate to people	69.8%
Understand people	67.4%
Communicate effectively	67.3%
Work under Pressure	66.8%
Use time effectively	65.6%
Adapt to Change	64.2%
Work with the Public	63.9%
Have a professional demeanor	63.7%
Make assessment of needs/situation	63.4%
Work Autonomously	62.8%
Get things done	62.2%



3. What are the main reasons that leavers still maintain registration?

	Leavers
I may want to return to nursing	59.3%
I want to keep my professional status	30.2%
*Other	8.0%



Among leavers, satisfaction with ...

	<35	35-49	50+
Nursing career in hindsight	2.6	3.0	3.3
Overall nursing career at time left	2.3	2.8	3.0
Last nursing job	2.1	2.5	2.7
Last nursing employer	2.2	2.4	2.4

(1=very dissatisfied, 2=dissatisfied, 3=satisfied, 4=very satisfied)

Would you consider coming back to work in nursing?



	Leavers
Undecided	25.4%
Yes	34.1%
No	37.6%


4. Top 5 Policies Ranked by Leavers – Ontario




- Improved work environment
- Appropriate workload
- Availability of type of position wanted
- Better salary
- Preferred shifts



Questions

 What should be done to increase nurses' job satisfaction and intent to stay in nursing?

 How could policy initiatives within healthcare organizations be directed to different age cohorts of nurses?

Thank-you



For your attention and participation

It was a pleasure to speak with you
this morning and have a great day!

Linda O'Brien-Pallas

Tom Closson