

Unfair Labour Practice on Staff in Primary Health Care Facilities, Northwest Province, South Africa: A Qualitative Study

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Abstract : Background: Unfair labour practices on staff is a worldwide concern, which creates conflicts and disharmony among health workers. It is found that nursing staff members are unfairly treated without a valid reason in primary health care (PHC) facilities and predominantly in developing countries, and South Africa is not excluded. Objectives: The purpose of the study was to explore and describe the experiences of operational managers regarding unfair labour practices on staff by their local area managers and describe the perceptions of operational managers towards such treatment. Methods: A qualitative, descriptive, exploratory, and contextual research approach was considered appropriate for the study. In this study, the population comprised operational managers working in the PHC facilities of Northwest Province, South Africa. Purposive sampling was used to select participants for the study and focus group interviews were used to interview 23 operational managers. Ethical measures were applied throughout the study. Findings: The six phases of thematic analysis were used to analyze data collected for the study. Two themes that emerged are experiences of factors related to unfair labour practices in the PHC facilities and perceptions regarding how to improve their working conditions. The categories that were found in the first themes were favouritism and discrimination. In the second theme, in-service training and transparency regarding staff training and development emerged. Recommendations comprised, among others, training on the concepts of quality in the workplace and reinforcement of transparency regarding granting of study leave and attending workshops. Conclusion: Operational managers in the PHC facilities experienced unfair labour practices as evidenced by favouritism.

Keywords : unfair labour practices, primary health care facilities, operational managers, North West Province

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