

To Be a Nurse in Turkey: A Comparison Based on International Labour Organization's Nursing Personnel Recommendation

Authors : Arzu K. Harmanci Seren, Feride Eskin Bacaksiz

Abstract : The shortage of nursing personnel is considered one of the most important labour force issues in health sector of developed countries since early 1970s. International Labour Organization developed standards for working conditions of nurses in collaboration with World Health Organization with the aim of helping to solve nursing shortage problem all over the world. As a result of this collaboration, ILO Nursing Personnel Convention (C. 149), and the accompanying Recommendation (R. 157) were adopted in 1977. Turkey as a country that has a serious nurse shortage problem, has been a member of ILO since 1932, and has not signed this convention yet. This study was planned to compare some of the working standards in Convention with the present working conditions of nurses in Turkey. The data were collected by an on line survey between 19 January-16 February 2015 for this cross-sectional study. Participants were reached through social network accounts in collaboration with nursing associations. Totally 828 nurses from the 57 provinces of Turkey participated in the study. Survey was consisted of 14 open ended questions related to working conditions of nurses and 34 Likert statements related to nursing policies of the facilities they are working in. The data were analysed using the IBM SPSS 21.0 (licensed to Istanbul University) software. Descriptive and comparative statistics were performed. Most of the participants (81.5%) were staff and 18.5% of them were manager nurses. Most of them had baccalaureate (57.9%) or master (27.4%) degree in nursing. 18.5% of the participants were working in private hospitals, 34.9% of them in university hospitals and 46.6% of them were in Ministry of Health Hospitals. It was found that monthly working schedules were announced mostly 7 days ago (18%), working time of nurses was at least 8 hours (41.5%) and at most 24 hours (22.8%) in a day and had time for lunch or dinner 25.18 (SD=16.66), for resting 21.02 (SD=29.25) minutes. On the other hand, it was determined that 316 (43.2%) nurses did not have time for lunch and 61 (7.9%) of them could not find time for eating anything. It was also explored they were working 15-96 hours in a week (mean=48.28, SD=8.89 hours), 4-29 days in a month (mean=19.29, SD=5.03 days) and 597 (72%) nurses overworked changing form 1 hour to 150 hours (32.80, SD=23.42 hours) before the month in which surveys were filled. Most of the participants did not leave the job due to the sickness (47.5%) even if they felt sick. Also most of them did not leave the job due to any excuse (67.2%) or education (57.3%). This study has significance because of nurses from different provinces participated in and it provides brief information about the working conditions of nurses nationwide. It was explored that nurses in Turkey were working at worse conditions according the International Labour Organization's recommendations.

Keywords : nurse, international labour organization, recommendations for nurses, working conditions

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