

The Effects of Absenteeism on Nurses That Remain at Work at the Mankweng Hospital in the Capricorn District, Limpopo Province in South Africa

Authors : Mokgadi Malatji, Tebogo Mothiba, Rambelani Malema

Abstract : Absenteeism is a global problem in the working force and this is no exception in the nursing profession. A lot of attention has been drawn to factors that contribute to absenteeism however little attention has been placed on the effects of absenteeism on the remaining workers/nurses being left behind in the workplace by their colleagues. Nurses absent themselves leaving behind their colleagues to do their work. Nurses who are committed to their work often find themselves working under strenuous conditions due to inadequate staff. These may lead to poor patient care provision, nurses feeling overworked and sick due to the increased workload. The purpose of this study was to investigate the effects of absenteeism on nurses that remained at work at Mankweng Hospital in the Capricorn District, Limpopo Province. A descriptive cross-sectional quantitative research design was conducted to determine if there were any effects of absenteeism on nurses remaining at work. Data collection was done using structured questionnaires. The respondents (n=107), consisted of different categories of registered nurses (professional nurses (n=43), auxiliary nurses (n=40) and staff nurses (n=24)) who participated in this study. The findings indicated that most nurses (76, 6%) are demotivated and they struggle with completion of duties when their colleagues are absent. Patient care that nurses provided when their colleagues were absent was of poor quality as set standards and principles were not adhered to. Individualized patient care was not being implemented due to absenteeism. This simply implies that routine work is being done to cover basic duties. Most nurses (74, 8%) believed that favoritism and lack of appreciation of nurse's skills and capabilities are being displayed by managers and that this contributes to absenteeism. Nurses who are loyal sacrifice their time and work overtime for absent colleagues and this led to fatigue and stress. From the study findings, it is recommended that nurses be trained frequently to upgrade their studies to motivate them to work. The government can provide this training to improve their skills as this will motivate nurses to work harder and be committed to their work. Training can be offered after a stipulated period. For example, after every five years, a nurse can be provided with a new skill. Team building events must be encouraged for the whole hospital to motivate staff. In conclusion, the study revealed that absenteeism poses detrimental effects on nurses, the hospital and patients. More and more nurses end up changing workplace due to these effects.

Keywords : absenteeism, effects, nurses, remaining at work

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