

Nurses' Views on 'Effective Nurse Leader' Characteristics in Iraq

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Abstract : This research explored ward nurses' views about the characteristics of effective nurse leaders in the context of Iraq as a developing country, where the delivery of health care continues to face disruption and change. It is well established that the provision of modern health care requires effective nurse leaders, but in countries such as Iraq the lack of effective nurse leaders is noted as a major challenge. In a descriptive quantitative study, a survey questionnaire was administered to 210 ward nurses working in two public hospitals in a major city in the north of Iraq. The participating nurses were of the opinion that the effectiveness of their nurse leaders was evident in their ability to demonstrate: good clinical knowledge, effective communication and managerial skills. They also viewed their leaders as needing to hold high-level nursing qualifications, though this was not necessarily the case in practice. Additionally, they viewed nurse leaders' personal qualities as important, which included politeness, ethical behaviour, and trustworthiness. When considered against the issues raised in interviews with a smaller group (20) of senior nurse leaders, representative of the various occupational levels, implications identify the need for professional development that focuses on how the underpinning competencies relate to leadership and how transformational leadership is evidenced in practice.

Keywords : health care, nurse education, nursing in Iraq, nurse leadership

Conference Title : ICHMN 2017 : International Conference on Healthcare Management and Nursing

Conference Location : Istanbul, Türkiye

Conference Dates : July 27-28, 2017