SURVEY ON THE ATTITUDES OF THE BULGARIAN NURSES TO LEAVE THEIR CURRENT WORKPLACE

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ABSTRACT
Nurses' turnover is a serious problem for health organizations. The purpose of this study has been to research the attitudes of nurses to leave their current workplace and factors, which determine this process. The results established high positive turnover attitudes of nurses 24,8% (n=97). Factors that determine them are complex – economic (related to salary policy of health-care establishments and personal motivation), social (related to their social status), demographic (age-related characteristics and educational level) and organizational (work conditions, relationships in the organization and shift work). This justifies the need to analyze the current situation in Bulgarian hospitals in order to be taken adequate measures for retention of nurses.

Key words: turnover, nurses, labor market, attitudes, retention.

INTRODUCTION
Normal functioning and efficiency of each economic entity depends on the quality and quantity of available resources - material, labor and financial, and their management.

Modern researches in the field of labor resources have noted global shortages and chronic deficiency of nurses in recent years. This is a serious obstacle to normal activities of health institutions and is a prerequisite for increasing turnover of such staff.

Motivation and job satisfaction are essential for remain the nurses to practice their profession in a given health care establishment (1-3). That is why it is crucial to establish the factors that influence turnover and targeted to influence them (4, 5).

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The objective of this study is to research the attitudes of the Bulgarian nurses to leave their current workplace and factors, which determine this process.

MATERIAL AND METHODS
The study was conducted between October 2013 and January 2014 among nurses employed on the territory of Bulgaria's South Central Region.

The selection of units was made using two-stage cluster sampling. A determined in advance number of health-care establishments were randomly drawn and then, randomly again, the necessary number of units to survey were drawn. To register the primary information was used the sociological method: anonymous inquiry conducted at the respondents' work places.

The questionnaire included questions relating to the demographic characteristics of the respondents as well as questions relating to the organisation and management, social, economic, and psychological conditions of work. This work does not include the questions used to evaluate the psychological work conditions as the data

needs further processing that has not been carried out so far.

Social and economic and organisation and management factors were determined through assessment of different signs pertaining to such factors (e.g. salary, work conditions, relations with the management and with peers, etc.). The questionnaire included 30 questions aiming at assessing these signs, of which 6 questions were open-ended in view of clarifying the answer to certain close-ended questions.

Attitudes turnover of nurses were measured using a single-component model. This model measures attitudes only through the positive or negative feelings for a person, an item or a question (6).

In our case, the question that measured the attitudes of the respondents was: "Do you plan to leave your current workplace in the next 12 months?" with possible answers: "yes", "neither yes, nor no", and "no".

During the study 500 questionnaires were sent of which 435 were returned after a reminder. The number of validly filled-in questionnaires was 391.

The average age of the respondents was 44,79±11,207. Respondents had an average experience 21,25 ±11,95 years. The average managerial experience was 1,97±4,62 years.

Their socio-demographic characteristics are shown in **Table 1.**

Table 1. *Socio-demographic characteristics and work place of the respondents.*

		N	*%*
Marital status	Married	253	64,7
	Not married	65	16,6
	Divorced	35	9,0
	Widow / Widower	18	4,6
	Domestic partnership	20	5,1
	Total	**391**	**100,0**
Number of children	No child	88	22,5
	One child	161	41,2
	Two children	135	34,5
	Three and more children	7	1,8
	Total	**391**	**100,0**
Educational level	College degree	206	52,7
	Bachelor degree	138	35,3
	Master degree	47	12,0
	Total	**391**	**100,0**
Rank	Nurse	337	86,2
	Senior nurse	44	11,3
	Head nurse	10	2,6
	Total	**391**	**100,0**
Property's form of health organization	State	56	14,3
	Municipal	150	38,4
	Private	123	31,5
	Mixed	62	15,9
	Total	**391**	**100,0**
Activity's area (workplace)	Primary care and emergency	50	12,8
	Hospital	252	64,5
	Other	89	22,8
	Total	**391**	**100,0**
Region	Plovdiv	204	52,2
	Pazardjik	58	14,8
	Smolyan	32	8,2
	Haskovo	59	15,1
	Kardjali	38	9,7
	Total	**391**	**100,0**

The following statistical methods of analysis were used: descriptive, alternative, non-parametric and factor analysis, coefficients of contingency (C) measuring the strength of the connection with the non parametric analysis. The responses of the questionnaire were processed with software SPSS 17.0 and MS Office Excel 2003.

RESULTS
The results have established relatively high attitudes in the surveyed respondents to leave their current workplace. Considerable share (24,8%) and number (n = 97) of nurses are responded positively to the question of attitudes to turnover.

To assess the factors that impact these attitudes we used either non-parametric or factor analysis, depending on the nature of scales.

Nonparametric analysis found that the region where the respondents work (C = 0.284, P = 0.000); the sector of activities (C = 0.159, P = 0.038) and healthcare organizations' ownership (C = 0.204, P = 0.009), influence the attitudes of nurses to leave their current workplace. Other demographic characteristics such as marital status, number of children in the family, education level and position had not influence these attitudes.

The other features were processed with factor analysis, the results of which are presented in **Table 2.**

Table 1. *Factors affecting nursing turnover*

Evaluations concerning:	Factors					
	1	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**
1. Salary/Duties ratio	0,866					
2. Distribution of the salary fund	0,852					
3. Payment method	0,841					
4. Remuneration compared to that of other professions	0,624					
5. General satisfaction with the remuneration	0,621					
6. Living conditions at work		0,812				
7. Relations with the management		0,801				
8. Safety		0,771				
9. Relations with peers		0,721				
10. Prestige of the profession		0,696				
11. . Motivation to increase the number of rendered medical services			0,792			
12. Motivation to increase the quality of rendered medical services			0,790			
13. Motivation to increase one's professional qualification			0,691			
14. Social evaluation on the scale "I deprive myself of everything/nothing"				0,904		
15. Social evaluation on the scale "Poor/Rich"				0,899		
16. Experience as a nurse					0,914	
17. Age					0,874	
18. Shift work						0,851

Application of the factor analysis is acceptable, because:
♦ Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure of sampling adequacy is 0.770 (i.e. > 0.5).
♦ Bartlett's Test of sphericity is Sig.=0.00.

The results from factor analysis have shown that there are six factors that affect the attitudes of nursing turnover. Conditionally we can define them as follows:
1.   Salary policy of health-care establishments;

2. Work conditions and relations within the organisation;
3. Personal motivation;
4. Social status;
5. Age-related characteristics;
6. Shift work;

CONCLUSIONS

The study found relatively high attitudes by nurses to leave the health-care establishments where they work. The reasons for this are complex, although the issues concerning the payment stand out as a major factor in turnover.

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