

Satisfaction among nurses working in labour and postnatal units in the Capital Province of Sri Lanka

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It is widely acknowledged that job satisfaction among healthcare workers influences patient safety and quality of care. Among those groups, hospital nurses' job satisfaction is especially significant for patient safety and it is reported as being closely related to job-related stress and conflict. Although empirical research on nurses' job satisfaction is scarce in low-middle income South Asian settings such as Sri Lanka, news reports have alluded to high job stress and interprofessional conflicts within healthcare teams in labour and postnatal units. This paper presents findings of a cross sectional descriptive study which was aimed at understanding nurses' perception of job satisfaction and factors associated with it in labour and postnatal units at tertiary care hospitals in the Capital Province of Sri Lanka.

All nurses currently working in labour and postnatal units in five of the main tertiary care hospitals in the Capital province were invited to participate in a postal survey. Information about the study, a consent form, and a pre-tested self-administering questionnaire was mailed out to 428 nurses including, 224 Midwifery Trained Registered Nurses (MTRNs) and 128 Registered Nurses (RNs). The questionnaire gathered information about their work environment, workplace facilities and overall job satisfaction. A stamped envelope was provided to return the completed surveys. Reminders were sent to increase the response rate. Once the questionnaires were returned, data were entered and analyzed using SPSS version 20; descriptive statistics were calculated. Chi-Square test was used to determine statistical significance in observed relationships between socio-demographic factors and job satisfaction.

Out of the 428 surveys sent, 352 (82%) were returned. All of the respondents were female, and out of them, 93% were Nursing Diploma holders, while others were BSc. Nursing Degree holders. The mean age of respondents was 37.31 years (SD-8.58years). Overall, only 47% of respondents reported being satisfied with their job, 43% were dissatisfied, the rest was neutral. More MTRNs (48%) than RNs (38%) reported being dissatisfied with their job. The main reasons for job dissatisfaction among respondents included, 'not being appreciated by other healthcare professionals (86%), and interprofessional conflicts (68%). Participants' age, marital status, educational level, and work experience were not associated with job satisfaction.

When more than half the MTRNs and RNs lacked satisfaction with their job, it raises concerns about the quality of care provided and patient safety. As the main reasons for lack of satisfaction were related to interprofessional collaboration and conflict, identifying the reasons for such conflict and finding ways of improving teamwork is needed to raise the quality of care provided in these settings.

Key words: Job satisfaction, nurse, quality care