

A study to determine the importance of regular protected break for Registered Nurses and Midwives

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Abstract:

Many hospital policies around the world stipulate that Nurses/Midwives who are scheduled for 12-hour shifts should get a minimum of two to three *15-minute breaks and one uninterrupted meal period*. But the reality of *patient demands* and short-staffed units means they are lucky to get five minutes to themselves. Nurses/Midwives tend to put their patients' needs first before they sit down, go to the bathroom, or grab a bite to eat.

Objectives:

Explore the opinion of Nurses/Midwives in regards to Regular Protected Breaks (RPB)

Discuss whether regular protected breaks improve performance levels

Determine whether regular protected breaks impact staff happiness

Research Questions:

Do Nurses/Midwives regard regular protected breaks as important?

Do regular protected breaks impact performance levels?

Do regular protected breaks impact staff happiness?

Hypothesis:

Null Hypothesis (H0) - Regular protected breaks are not important to Nurses/Midwives

Alternative Hypothesis (H1) - Regular protected breaks are important to Nurses

Null Hypothesis (H0) - Regular protected breaks do not improve performance levels

Alternative Hypothesis (H1) - Regular protected breaks do improve performance levels

Null Hypothesis (H0) - Regular protected breaks do not impact staff happiness

Alternative Hypothesis (H1) - Regular protected breaks does impact staff happiness

Study Design:

Evaluation cross sectional design observational study utilizing a mixed method approach

Background:

Registered Nurses/Midwives are the largest group of health care providers globally. In order to provide 24-hour care, Nurses/Midwives often work long hours and consecutive shifts, without adequate meal or rest breaks. Studies have reported serious declines in functioning related to provider fatigue can lead to safety issues for patients and Nurses/Midwives alike (Witkoski, 2010). Currently Danat Al Emarat Hospital offers regular breaks but they are not protected. This study will analyse these important research questions to see if regular protected breaks would make a difference in outcomes. It will also come up with some suggestions and recommendation for which the study unfolds.

Conclusion, Recommendations and Interventions: Happiness is an important part of nursing mental health, as this reflects in the Nurse's attitude and the work performance. The nursing leadership team could consider to look at the results of this study and work toward a solution on how to provide a system that all Nurses get their RPB.

This study has drawn attention to some favorable suggestions on how to improve staff happiness and to improve patient safety. Mental health epidemiology is a very big important factor in public health and a lot of work related issues and challenges such as exhaustion and wellbeing is affected. This study hopes to illuminate the points of taking good care of Nurses and providing them the rest they require in order to function at peak performance.

References:

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Biography

Dr Tracy Roake is an advanced midwife and general nurse. She is currently the Head of Education and Student Affairs at Danat Al Emarat Hospital, Abu Dhabi. Dr Tracy has been awarded a DBA, MBA, M.Sc. Healthcare management degree, and has a Master of Applied business research; she is a qualified

hypnobirthing instructor and has a diploma in Aromatherapy, Herbalist, Reflexology and Naturopathy. She is a BLS, NRP and PROMPT instructor. She has a great passion for midwifery and pioneered all the first private hospital water births in KZN, South Africa. She is also a facility member of the PROMPT foundation in the United Kingdom.

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