

## THE MANAGEMENT OF OPEN AND HONEST COMMUNICATION - A FACTOR INFLUENCING NURSE TURNOVER

Mariana Dimitrova

*Department of Health Care, Faculty of Public Health, Medical University of Varna*

### ABSTRACT

**INTRODUCTION:** Effective management of turnover depends both on leadership skills and the competence to manage it. An important prerequisite for efficient operation is open and honest communication between managers and staff. Management support includes important skills for adequate communication approaches - open and loyal relationships. The purpose of this paper is to examine the impact of the management options for available and open communication on the turnover of nurses.

**MATERIALS AND METHODS:** For the purpose of the study an anonymous survey was conducted from February to April 2014. The study was on the opinion of nurses and experts from university hospitals and hospitals including 11 types of wards and clinics, characterized by intensive workflow. The data were processed statistically by SRSS v. 20.0 for Windows.

**RESULTS:** Evidence suggests that an important and necessary condition for effective operation is open and honest communication between managers and subordinates. A significant proportion of nurses who would not choose the same hospital said that their leaders are „almost never“ or „never“ open and honest in their communication with them (60.70%). Among the influencers about the choice of hospital is the presence of a loyal and accessible relationship with the managers (53.60%) ( $p < 0.001$ ). Over 60% of respondents who intend to leave within a year, respond with „almost never“ (30.40%) and „never“ (30.40%) on whether they have seen openness and loyalty in managers.

**CONCLUSION:** The survey data show that for the effective management of turnover an important and necessary condition is open and honest communication between managers and subordinates.

**Keywords:** turnover, management, attitudes, nurses

---

#### Address for correspondence:

Mariana Dimitrova  
Department of Health Care  
Medical University of Varna  
55 Marin Drinov St  
9002 Varna  
e-mail: mariana.nikolova@bad.bg

### INTRODUCTION

The problem with turnover of nurses is growing in importance in modern conditions due to the expressed tendency of the constant reduction in number. The profession loses its appeal, resulting in a growing number of those who want to devel-

op a career outside the country. A significant part of health care professionals are moving to better paid and more prestigious professions. Furthermore, age characteristics of medical professionals in the system deepen the problem of human resources. All this is a serious precondition for an increasing turnover in the future.

The extreme importance of the problem „turn-over“ has provoked researchers for decades to develop and expand models examining turnover in nurses. Turnover is defined as internal when there is movement of staff from one structure to another within the same organization, and external when it relates to leaving the profession, organization, city or country. The significance of this problem requires a thorough study of the factors that cause it and their consequences. Countless are the links and interactions between factors associated with turnover. The majority of the studies on turnover are aimed at exploring the organizational and managerial factors.

Quality of management and knowledge of proper management are key components for attracting and retaining staff. The success or failure of any health organization depends on leadership and managerial competence (1). The expected turnover or trends largely depend on the management skills (2) and the reformative style of management (3).

Numerous authors prove that turnover is strongly influenced by the relationship with the manager, his experience and communication skills (4). Effective management turnover includes skills for adequate communication approaches to organizational performance and teamwork. Creating and maintaining effective relationships between manager and subordinate suggests that managers are available, loyal and grateful to their employees (5), respect their rights and interests and take notice of their opinion (6).

According to Marinova P. controversy in an organization arises mainly from the lack of dialogue between the different levels in the hierarchy and the lack of feedback between the lowest and highest levels (7). The awareness of the staff leads to increased confidence in management, improvement of the microclimate in the organization, which inevitably affects the quality of health care and employee satisfaction. Furthermore, transparent and open communi-

cation with the staff provides better clarity of tasks, motivates and reduces the level of turnover.

Researchers emphasize the importance of the psychosocial and organizational climate of the working environment and that turnover occurs at lower rates in organizations run by leaders who respect and accept the views of the staff or organization characterized as „united team“ (6,8). Managers who take into consideration major socio-psychological needs such as the need to belong, respect and recognition, create opportunities for subordinates to feel important and beneficial to the organization as well as motivate the staff to cooperate to achieve the objectives of the organization.

### AIM

The aim of this paper is to examine the impact of the management's options for available and open communication on the subject of turnover.

### MATERIALS AND METHODS

For the purpose of the empirical survey on satisfaction with the management skills of leaders in health care and turnover of nurses, a direct anonymous survey is held during the months of February to April 2014. The opinion of 413 nurses from university hospitals and hospitals for active treatment in Varna, Ruse, Shumen, Targovishte and Dobrich is studied. The highest relative share of surveyed nurses is from multi-profile hospitals for active treatment (74.10%; n=306), which is due to the fact that most MIs in the country have moved to a multifarious focus after the healthcare reform. Respondents from university hospitals occupy almost a quarter (23.20%; n=96) of the total sample, with the smallest proportion of nurses being from specialized hospitals (2.70%; n=11).

A total of 11 types of wards and clinics, characterized by intensive workflow were surveyed. The questionnaire includes 25 questions divided into 7 sections - demographic indicators for turnover, satisfaction, organizational capabilities, role conflict and degree of ambiguity, workload and stress. Statistical data processing was carried out with the statistical program SPSS v. 20.0 which includes variational, comparative, correlational and multiple regression analysis.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The aim of the analysis in this paper is to establish the importance of managerial capabilities for effective communication with subordinates and the influence on the turnover of nurses. The focus of managerial skills is open and honest communication, accessible and loyal relationships with subordinates in accordance with external and internal turnover.

- ◇ willingness to choose the same medical centre;
- ◇ willingness to work in another department of the same medical centre;
- ◇ willingness to work in a similar structure of another medical centre;
- ◇ willingness to practice abroad;
- ◇ desire to abandon the profession.

The analysis of the results shows that the opinion of nurses on their choice of hospital is influenced by open and honest communication between managers and subordinates ( $\chi^2=104.27$ ;  $p<.001$ ). A significant proportion of nurses who would still prefer the same hospital reported that their leaders “very often” and “always” are open and honest in their communication (50.90%). The impact of this indicator is confirmed among nurses who would not make the same choice as 60.70% of them reported that they “never” and “almost never” encountered open and honest communication from their management. Among those nurses who were willing to change workplace there were almost no positive responses (7.10%). A correlation was found, indicating that increasing the opportunities for open and honest communication increases the desire to choose the specific medical center ( $r=0.307$ ;  $p<0.001$ ), (Fig. 1).

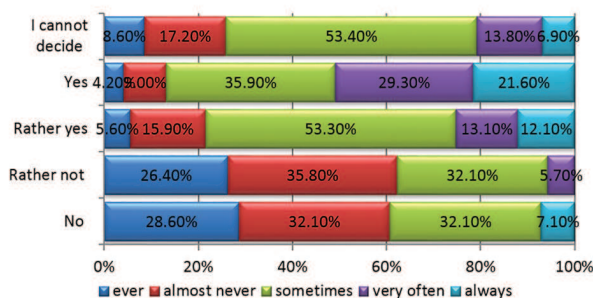


Fig. 1. Management skills for open and honest communication with subordinates and attitudes on the selection of the same hospital

No matter how nurses assess their relationship with the management, the majority of them would not leave the ward they are already in to transfer to another one of the same hospital (57.50%), ( $\chi^2=35.68$ ;  $p<0.01$ ). However, growing opportunities for open and honest communication influence the decision of staff to remain in their wards (38.90%), ( $r=-0.118$ ;  $p<0.05$ ).

The analysis results indicate that one of the reasons nurses prefer working in a similar structure in another medical centre is the lack of open and honest communication with the management (40.00%), ( $\chi^2=45.15$ ;  $p<0.001$ ). There is a tendency of increasing the desire to work in another hospital due to reduced opportunities for open and honest relationships with the management ( $r=-0.211$ ;  $p<0.001$ ).

Although a significant proportion of respondents stated a desire to emigrate abroad, almost half of nurses who will remain in the country, said that managers are “very often” and “always” open and honest in their communication (48.70%), ( $\chi^2=37.15$ ;  $p<0.01$ ). There is a much smaller proportion of nurses who, despite their frustrations, would not leave the country (10.80%). Attitudes towards emigration increased with reduced opportunities for open and honest communication (34.60%), ( $r=-0.205$ ;  $p<0.001$ ), (Fig. 2).

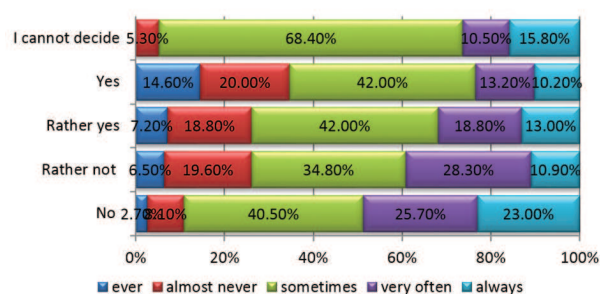


Fig. 2. Managers who are open and honest in their communication and attitudes to practice abroad

According to most authors the main reason why nurses seek opportunities abroad are better pay, autonomy, and opportunities for professional development and realization. Our results complement the palette of factors due to the fact that management of open and honest communication also has an impact on attitudes to practice abroad.

As for how long they would like to work in the medical center they are already at, a significant difference was observed in the proportion of nurses who would work up to 1 year ( $\chi^2=60.76$ ;  $p<0.001$ ). The lack of open and honest communication is a prerequisite for turnover as a significant share of nurses said they would remain on the job up to one year if poor communication is present (56.50%). This particular group lacks nurses with a positive attitude regarding the communication skills of managers. There is a trend to reduce the percentage of those willing to leave their workplace when the communication process is improved ( $r=0.269$ ;  $p<0.001$ ), (Fig. 3).

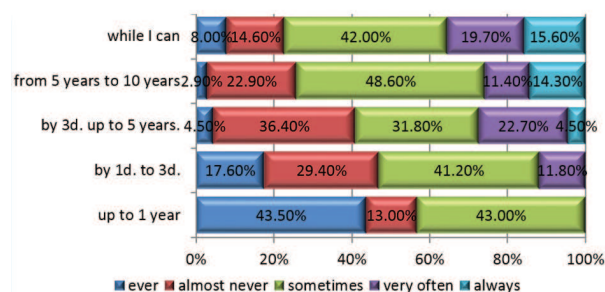


Fig. 3. Managers who are open and honest in their communication and duration of work at the same hospital

The effective functioning of an organization is based on building a good relationship between the manager and his subordinates. The relationships between managers and subordinates should be based on mutual respect and understanding. This can be achieved through open sharing of views and ideas on workflow as a whole or for a specific task. Open discussion of issues concerning the organization of work creates a sense of importance and is a strong motivator for staff retention.

Another factor analyzed in this paper is whether managers are accessible and loyal to staff.

The results from the comparative analysis showed that the choice of hospital is influenced by the absence of fair and affordable relationships with managers ( $\chi^2=84.95$ ;  $p<0.001$ ). The majority of respondents who would not repeat their initial choice, say that their leaders "never" (28.60%) and "almost never" (25.00%) were available and loyal to them. Only 10.70% percent would not continue to work in the same medical center despite positive assess-

ment. The significance of the research indicator is evidenced by the sample of nurses with a positive attitude towards selecting the same medical center as 53.90% of them give positive evaluation. The established correlation is evidence that with the increase in opportunities for fair and accessible relationships the desire to work in the same medical centre grows ( $r=0.244$ ;  $p<0.001$ ), (Fig. 4).

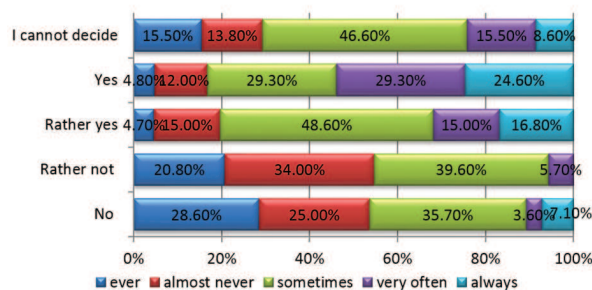


Fig. 4. Management with accessible and loyal relationships with subordinates. Attitudes and choices in the same hospital

Although the vast majority of nurses do not tend to change within the organization, open and fair leaders manage to keep their subordinates in their structure (43.90%), ( $\chi^2=30.59$ ;  $p<0.05$ ). There is also an increasing trend of desire to work in another department of the same hospital where negative qualities are not inherent to their heads ( $r=0.149$ ;  $p<0.01$ ).

In confirmation of previous results accessible and fair leader manage to keep their staff not only in the same structure but also in the hospital as a whole. Almost half of nurses who would not leave the same medical centre, believe that the leaders "very often" and "always" are available and loyal to their subordinates (49.50%), ( $\chi^2=40.71$ ;  $p<0.001$ ). The desire to work in another medical center increases in nurses, who gave negative responses (42.50%), ( $r=-0.214$ ;  $p<0.001$ ).

The mobility of nurses with a pronounced positive attitude towards emigration abroad is one of the leading aspects determining the turnover in the country. The results show that the proportion of nurses who intend to leave the country remains high, despite the respect and loyalty of their leaders. However, the difference in the answers of the respon-

dents demonstrates the influence of this parameter ( $\chi^2=27.63$ ;  $p<0.05$ ). The group of nurses with positive attitudes to work abroad is dominated by those according to which managers have “never” and “almost never” been open for contacts and loyal relationships (33.70%). There is a tendency in which these attitudes decrease by increasing acts of loyalty by management ( $r=-0.172$ ;  $p<0.001$ ).

The results of the analysis indicate differences in attitudes towards practicing the profession in the future depending on opportunities for accessible and loyal relationships with managers LZ ( $\chi^2=36.10$ ;  $p<0.05$ ). Nurses who express willingness to abandon the profession in 42.80% of cases reported that their leaders “almost never” and “never” were available and loyal to them. While managers who are open to talk and show loyalty to their subordinates will retain staff not only in the organization but also in the profession (39.20%), ( $r=0.187$ ;  $p<0.001$ ).

Deciding how long a nurse would like to work in their current hospital depends on how open leaders are to contacts and show loyalty to subordinates. A significant difference in opinions is expressed by the group of nurses who intend to leave the hospital within a year ( $\chi^2=35.71$ ;  $p<0.05$ ). Over 60% of respondents who intend to leave within a year, “almost never” (30.40%) and “never” (30.40%) have met openness and loyalty from managers. The proportion of nurses in terms of negative responses to this indicator remains high in the group of nurses with attitudes to leave the workplace in up to three years time (47.00%). Both groups of respondents lack a positive assessment of their leaders. A weak correlation between both indicators is also established ( $r=0.224$ ;  $p<0.001$ ).

## CONCLUSION

Statistically, significant correlations have indicated the positive effect of managerial communication skills on the attitudes of turnover in nurses. A synthesized information is presented proving a causal relationship with turnover, outlining the need to implement adequate communication approaches for maintaining effective relationships between managers and subordinates.

## REFERENCES

1. Dimitrov D. Managerial competence of chief departments and senior nurses. *Health Policy and Management*. 2008; 5: 76-79.
2. Gormley DK. Are we on the same page? Staff nurse and manager perceptions of work environment, quality of care and anticipated nurse turnover. *Journal of Nursing Management*. 2011; 19 (1): 33-40.
3. Tontcheva S. Team approach in the activities of the chief nurse. *Health care*. 2011; 3.
4. Raup GH. The impact of ED nurse manager leadership style on staff nurse turnover and patient satisfaction in academic health center hospitals. *Journal of Emergency Nursing*. 2008; 34 (5): 403-409.
5. Dimitrov D. Delegation as a function of the hospital management. *Medical meridians*. 2010; 1 (3): 7-10.
6. Stoyanova R. Determinants of turnover in nurses from southern Bulgaria. *Management and Education*. 2014; 10 (2): 107-113.
7. Duffield C, Roche M, Blay N, Stasa H. Nursing unit managers, staff retention and the work environment. *Journal of Clinical Nursing*. 2011; 20 (1-2): 23-33.
8. Dramaliev C. “Good” in the market. Ethics in the Bulgarian economy. *IM “Economy”*. 2010; 23-31.
9. Marinova P. Fields career nurses. *Social medicine*. 1999; 15 (4): 4-16.
10. Ivanova P. Development of motivational measures in the healthcare organization. *International Conference Stara Zagora*. 2009; (4-5): 106-110.