



INVESTIGATING DIFFERENCES IN NURSE WORK GROUP COHESION BETWEEN SECTORS

BACKGROUND

The purpose of this study is to describe nurse work group cohesion in acute care and home care. Work group cohesion is the degree of attraction that nurses feel towards their work group and their motivation to be a member of that group¹. The quality of nurse work group cohesion and relationships have been found to impact nurse intention to remain employed. Stronger work group relationships have a direct effect on lowering turnover intention in a variety of healthcare sectors^{1,2,3}.

What did we do?

Nurse survey data collected from nurses (Registered Nurses and Registered Practical Nurses) working in Ontario acute care (n = 2705) and home care settings (n = 884) were analyzed for this project. Variables included in this dataset are demographic variables and nurse responses to items included in Riordan and Weatherly's⁴ Work Group Cohesion Scale. This scale is an eight-item instrument used to assess the degree of attractiveness, willingness to work together and commitment to task and goal achievement felt within their work group⁴. Items are scored using a 7-point Likert scale, with response options ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree. Scale scores are calculated out of seven by adding all items and dividing by eight (total number of scale items).

FINDINGS

In the sample of acute care nurses, 95% of participants were female, with a mean age of 42.7 years (SD = 9.96). The majority of acute care nurses reported working full time (68.7%). The mean Work Group Cohesion Scale score for acute care nurses was 5.27 (SD = 1.20), indicating that nurses were in slight agreement that there was work group cohesion among their peers.

The mean age of home care participants was 48.7 years (SD = 11.03), the majority of whom were female (95.2%). Home care nurses reported that they primarily worked full time (49.2%). The mean Work Group Cohesion Scale score for home care nurses was 5.15 (SD = 1.39), indicating that nurses slightly agreed that there was cohesiveness among their work group.



To understand whether or not there was a significant difference in perceived work group cohesion across sectors, a two-sample t test was performed. There was a significant difference in work group cohesion scores between acute care and home care nurses, $t = 2.33$, $p = 0.02$. This indicates that acute care nurses report higher levels of work group cohesion as compared to their home care colleagues.

How can you use this information?

To improve nurse work group cohesion, nurse leaders should focus on fostering positive relationships among nurses both within and outside of the work place. This may be especially important in work environments where interactions among colleagues are limited such as in home care.

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Where can you find more information about this project?

Information regarding this project and other resources is available on www.tourangeauresearch.com and www.nhsru.com

References

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- 4 Riordan, C.M. & Weatherly, E.W. (1999). Defining and Measuring Employees' Identification with Their Work Groups. *Educational and Psychological Measurement*, 59(2), 310-324.