

Exploration of the relationship between workplace stresses and nursing staff retention within a hospital emergency department in the United Kingdom

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PROBLEM

- Significant level of sickness and inability to fill vacancies within the Emergency Department.
- Aim to explore factors that can influence and reduce the stress on individual nurses in the emergency department and offer solutions.
- The type and cause of stress were considered alongside understanding solutions and recommendations to reduce stress.

METHOD

- Primary data was collected using seven focus groups with nurses based in the emergency department.
- Secondary data was used to establish staffing profile over the last 3 years (2015-2018) and the results from a patient safety questionnaire which explored links to team safety and stress.

FINDINGS

Data identified key themes for nurses leaving the emergency department and causes of stress including staffing shortages, lack of education and development opportunities, career progression, leadership and peer support.

- 92% of staff interviewed suffered from stress
- 90% more staff employed since 2017

What causes stress?



What makes you want to leave?



What makes you want to stay?



RECOMMENDATIONS

A range of immediate initiatives to reduce any further workforce shortages with a clear focus on retention and flexible working have been recommended and introduced in the emergency department.

THEME	ACTION	OUTCOME
Staffing	Review of staffing requirement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Board supported investment • Review of staffing requirement and investment into ED took place • 91% increase in staffing across all groups, especially nursing • Increase in consultant establishment
Education	Education plan designed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Education team appointed • Mandatory training compliance increased from 40% to 90.1% for all staff groups • 60% increase in trauma training
Stress	Support from psychology Schwartz round and debriefs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Schwartz rounds were implemented in January 2019 (had 3 rounds YTD) • Weekly trauma of the week discussion and debrief are in place since 2018
Leadership and support	Appointed senior nurses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase in Band 6 establishment • Increase in staff attending leadership and development courses • Increased the number of mentors in ED
HR process	Weekly sickness meeting – ensure that procedures are followed and staff supported with OH / Psychology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support from HR business partners pivotal to this • Staff sickness reduced from 6.8% to 3.6% YTD
Peer support	Staff forums Team working	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Matron and band 7 team responsible for individual staff • Regular by-monthly staff forums and senior sister / change nurse on every shift