

Abstract

Absenteeism is defined in many ways. One of the appropriate definitions could be “The state of being absent of an individual’s missing in his or her regular daily activity”. Absenteeism is a major cause for loss of jobs, loss of man-hours, loss of productivity, and loss of lives in the health sector.

Cross sectional descriptive study was carried out from 13th of February to 3rd of March 2009 to describe the level of absenteeism among nursing officers and auxiliary workers and to identify and compare some factors affecting absenteeism among nurses and auxiliary workers in District Hospitals in Colombo and Gampaha districts.

All Nursing officers and Auxiliary workers working in the District Hospitals in Colombo and Gampaha Districts were enlisted in the study and data were collected through self-administered semi-structured questionnaire and Documentary survey.

118 Nursing officers and 224 Auxiliary staff were selected as study samples and data collected

Results in the study saw No respondent had a zero spell of absence in the year 2008 and the minimum spell of the absence of Nurses was 15.5 days and 8 days for Auxiliary workers and maximum spell of leave for Nurses was 112 days and for Auxiliary staff was 176.5 days

Nursing officers are found to be taking more numbers of days of leave in each month and there is an increasing tendency seen in the months of August and December. (Nurses-4 & 4.6 mean days, Auxiliary 3.3& 3.4 mean days respectively). Mean number of leave for the year 2008 also shows a significant difference for both category of study samples which were 45.4 days for nurses and 34.2 for the auxiliary staff. ($t = 6.09, p < 0.001$).

Female Auxiliary workers have more average days of leaves (34.8 days) than male workers (33.4 days)

None of the Nursing officers admitted that they inform about the leave after taking it but 4.9% of Auxiliary workers admitted so.

Majority of Nurses (72%) said they don't carry out any activities to improve their family income, but majority of Auxiliary workers (66%) said they carry out some activities to improve their family income.

Majority of both categories of employees were 36 years to 45 years of age group and this age group was showing higher absenteeism rate than the other age groups.

Illness of the employee has impact on absenteeism as found in our study 1.6% of Nurses and 11.6% of Auxiliary workers stated they absent from the work due to illness with average days of leave of 46 days to Nurses and 42.79 days for Auxiliary workers and 7.1% of Auxiliary workers stated the disease condition become worse due to their duty in hospitals.

Absenteeism is more among the employees who is having family problems and disease of family member.

Working environment, work satisfaction, work stress and the attitude about patient care also contributing the absenteeism of both categories of workers.

Nurses and Auxiliary workers show positive attitude towards their working environment and satisfy with their jobs.