

Abstract

Background

Considering the present background of rapidly expanding private and public health sectors, aging population and rising dependency rate, Sri Lanka needs to take proactive measures to overcome impending substantial dearth of a key human resource in the health sector, which is the category of nurses. Re-employment of Nursing Officers following formal retirement can be considered as a solution to address the concern with regard to the shortages in nursing carders. Lack of skilled, knowledgeable, qualified, experienced nursing staff, would lead to adverse health outcomes. Objective of this study is to assess the factors associated with the re-employability of government sector nursing officers (i.e. after formal retirement) in the Western Province of Sri Lanka.

Method

This descriptive cross-sectional qualitative study was conducted in primary, secondary and tertiary care government hospitals. Proportionate to the population, simple random sampling was performed to select the respondents. The data was collected using an interviewer administrated questionnaire and are presented as frequency distributions. In addition, Cross tab, Chi-Square test and for significance testing and Mann-Whitney U tests were used to analyze and interpret data.

Results

Out of the 287 study sample 71.1% were not willing to be re-employed while 28.9% are willing to be back in employment.

Those of who were willing to be re-employed, majority (63.86%) preferred the private health sector than government health sector (25.30%). In addition, 10.84% preferred either or both sectors for re-employment. Positive relationships as well as negative relationships were being confirmed by the study in relation to nine (9) variables studied

under three dimensions. Re - employability was not affected by socio demographic factors and education. Health, experience, ability to use common medical technologies were positive drivers for re-employment. Lack of IT skills, second language skills and attitudes on selected nursing care aspects affected the decision adversely. Personal decisions, expectations, economic status and family commitments were found to be the major determinants affecting re-employability. Claims made by nurses who were not willing to be re-employed indicated the serious impact that had engulfed upon them, due to their demanding work life.

Conclusion

Findings have some similarities to the studies done in other countries. Majority of nurses are not willing to re-employ following retirement. Influences of factors associated with family in making retirement decisions, is a unique feature in the Sri Lankan context. Interventions in skills, attitudes and promotion of re-employment as a retirement plan will further increase the re-employability. Impact of nurses' work life on personal and family, needs further study.

Key words: re-employability, elderly employment, registered nurse, human resource for health