

Poster Session III
Poster # 20

Why Do We Enter and Why Do We Stay? A Study Of Registered Nurses' Motivation For Entering The Profession, Occupational Commitment, And Intent To Remain With An Employer

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Purpose: The purpose of this study was to investigate the relationship of registered nurses' motivation for entering the profession, occupational commitment, and intent to remain with an employer until retirement.

Theoretical Framework: Identifying and supporting nurses who are strongly committed to their profession may be the single-most influential intervention in combating the nursing shortage. An understanding of the characteristics these individuals possess could lead to a decline in the high attrition rates plaguing the profession and result in higher quality care provided by a healthcare system equipped with an adequate supply of experienced registered nurses.

Method: Using a survey design, registered nurses enrolled at the school of nursing and/or employed at the associated university medical center of a large, not-for-profit state university were polled in 2008. Logistic regression analysis was used to determine how the variables of motivation for entry and occupational commitment could indicate intent to remain.

Results: The strongest indicators of intent to remain were normative commitment and age, with a 70 percent average rate of correctly estimating retention. Exp(B) values for normative commitment (1.09) and age (1.07) indicated that for each one-point increase on the normative commitment scale or one-point increase in age, the odds of remaining with an employer until retirement increased by 1.1 percent.

Conclusion: Transformational changes in healthcare environments and nursing schools must be made to encourage loyalty and obligation, the hallmarks of normative commitment. Retention strategies should accommodate mature nurses as well as promoting normative commitment in younger nurses.