

Paper Session A4: Contemporary Issues in RN Staffing

Supplemental Nurses (SRNs), Their Reasons and Perception of Working as a SRN

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Purpose: Many hospitals use supplemental nurses (SRNs) to fill in vacant nursing positions. However, little is known about SRNs. The purposes of this study are to describe SRN demographics, reasons and their perception of working as a SRN.

Methods: A secondary analysis of a random nurse survey conducted in PA, CA, & NJ in 2006. Surveyed nurses who were self-identified as a supplemental staff (travel or per diem) provided the reasons and their perception of working as a SRN. The t-test and chi-square were used to compare supplemental nurses to permanently employed nurses (PRNs) in demographic characteristics.

Results: There were totally 22,336 nurses surveyed from 604 acute care hospitals. Of them 1,902 (8.52%) reported that they worked for a supplemental staffing company as a primary or secondary job. Over 65% of SRNs took the position as a secondary job. The SRNs reported a mean age of 42 (S.D. = 12.7), and 15 years (S.D. = 10.4) of nursing experience. Compared with PRN, the SRNs were significantly younger, more likely to be male, better educated, but less experienced as RN ($p < 0.05$). The primary reasons for working as a SRN include better wage, schedule control, and supplemental income. The majority of SRNs (>75%) reported that they were at least reasonably prepared by the staffing company for their recent job assignment, their assignments matched their skill levels most of the time, they received fair to excellent orientation, were accepted by RNs, and were satisfied with their job.

Conclusions and Implications: The majority of SRNs are working a second job and have other primary employment. SRNs appear to be as qualified as PRNs. Better wages and control of schedule are primary reasons to work as a SRN. Most SRNs has positive perceptions of their work experience.