

ORIGINAL ARTICLE

JOB SATISFACTION IN NURSES WORKING IN TERTIARY LEVEL HEALTH CARE SETTINGS OF ISLAMABAD, PAKISTAN

Habib Akhtar Bahalkani, Ramesh Kumar, Abdul Rehman Lakho, Benazir Mahar, Syeda Batool Mazhar*, Abdul Majeed

Health Services Academy, Islamabad, *Pakistan Institute of Medical Sciences Islamabad, Pakistan

Background: Job satisfaction greatly determines the productivity and efficiency of human resource for health. It literally means: 'the extent to which Health Professionals like or dislike their jobs'. Job satisfaction is said to be linked with employee's work environment, job responsibilities, and powers; and time pressure among various health professionals. As such it affects employee's organizational commitment and consequently the quality of health services. Objective of this study was to determine the level of job satisfaction and factors influencing it among nurses in a public sector hospital of Islamabad. **Methods:** A cross sectional study with self-administered structured questionnaire was conducted in the federal capital of Pakistan, Islamabad. Sample included 56 qualified nurses working in a tertiary care hospital. **Results:** Overall 86% respondents were dissatisfied with about 26% highly dissatisfied with their job. The work environments, poor fringe benefits, dignity, responsibility given at workplace and time pressure were reason for dissatisfaction. Poor work environment, low salaries, lack of training opportunities, proper supervision, time pressure and financial rewards reported by the respondents. **Conclusion:** Our findings state a low level of overall satisfaction among workers in a public sector tertiary care health organization in Islamabad. Most of this dissatisfaction is caused by poor salaries, not given the due respect, poor work environment, unbalanced responsibilities with little overall control, time pressure, patient care and lack of opportunities for professional development.

Keywords: Job, satisfaction, healthcare organization, nursing staff, health, environment, pressure, responsibility, poor salaries

INTRODUCTION

Pakistan has a major shortfall of human resource for health. Research suggests that the private health sector is generally well organised and has better working conditions albeit with reduced job security. The health workers within public health sector face issues which mostly relate to job satisfaction. Job satisfaction depends upon many factors, efficiency and productivity of the human resources is one of the most important among them. Human resource in any institution is the most valuable asset and it works as an engine to provide a sustainable service delivery.¹

An individual's perception in the organisation plays a vital role in job satisfaction.² In healthcare setting doctors' satisfaction plays a great role in their performance and satisfaction among their patients. Similarly nurse's job satisfaction in their jobs determines whether their roles are fulfilled towards service delivery for their clients of various communities.³ Better performance has been directly related with it. Job satisfaction has also been inversely associated with absenteeism, turnover in an organisation, and level of stress as well as eventual exhaustion.⁴⁻⁵ Job dissatisfaction was strongly associated with organisational factors and poor working conditions, social aspects of the job were found to be a important factor in job satisfaction as well.⁶ Evidence exists that there is a close alliance between job

satisfaction of health care professionals and the overall quality of health services.⁷ Productivity and quality of work in any organisation depends on the job satisfaction of nursing staff. This complex phenomenon of approach towards one's job has an impact not only on inspiration, but also on career, health and relation with peers.⁸⁻¹⁰

While many studies have been done to address the subject of level of job satisfaction among nursing staff, however very few have been conducted in Pakistan, especially in the recent past. Elsewhere poor salaries, poor working conditions, no fringe benefits, job insecurity, nepotism, political influences, lack of training opportunities and improper career development structure are the notable factors which hinder the qualified nurses to join public sector.¹¹ The already employed nursing staff also seems to be less satisfied due to many unidentified factors and hence there is a constant threat of attrition among nursing professionals in public sector organizations in Pakistan.

We aimed to assess the level of and determine the factors influencing job satisfaction amongst nursing staff working in tertiary care health settings of Islamabad.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

This was a descriptive cross-sectional study conducted to assess the level of job satisfaction and determine the factors influencing job satisfaction among nursing

professionals in a public sector tertiary care hospital of Islamabad from April to June 2011. Quantitative methods were used in this study. Data collection tool was modified and adapted from university of Limpopo.¹² The tool was pretested before adopting a final version. The researcher was personally responsible for the distribution and collection of all questionnaires to participants in order to ensure the data quality and uniformity. A total of 56 participants were selected purposively and they answered to self-administered questionnaire. SPSS-16 was used to analyse the quantitative data which included both descriptive and inferential statistics.

The questionnaire included demographic characteristics like age, marital status; duration of service etc. as well as 29 questions related to job satisfaction.

RESULTS

Analysis was performed on data from 56 female nurses. Majority (46, 82%), of the participants worked as charge nurse and very few (4, 7%) were working as nursing supervisor, 46 (82%) of participants had permanent jobs and 10 (18%) were contractual employees. About two thirds respondents had diploma in nursing, 16 (28%) were postgraduate while 6 (10%) had done bachelor in nursing. There was no significant association found between the socio-demographic characteristics and the factors affecting the job satisfaction (Table-1).

Figure-1 shows that overall 86% participants were dissatisfied with their job while only 14% were satisfied with their job. Two third (68%) of the respondents were dissatisfied with their working environment and 76% were dissatisfied with their salaries. Majority (78%) were dissatisfied with patient care or services they provided to their clients in their jobs, 68% of the participants were dissatisfied due to time pressure and by assigning irrelevant tasks and not involved in decision making at their job. Near two thirds 64% of nursing staff were not satisfied with their development opportunities, poor resources and their work schedule. Majority (80%) of the nurses were dissatisfied due to lack of respect at working place.

Table-1: Socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents

Variables	Number (%)
Age in years (Mean±SD)	35.5±8.4
Qualification	
Diploma	35 (62%)
B. Sc (Nursing)	16 (28%)
Post Graduation	5 (10%)
Nature of Job	
Permanent employee	46 (82%)
Contractual employee	10 (18%)
Cadre	
Charge Nurse	46 (82%)
Nursing Supervisor	4 (7%)
Head Nurse	6 (11%)

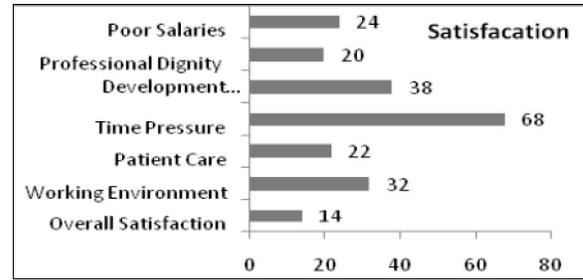


Figure-1: Overall level of satisfaction (%) among participants (n=56)

DISCUSSION

Our study showed that majority of the participants were not satisfied with their job. Among them 26% were highly dissatisfied with their job, while (60%) were just not satisfied. Overall dissatisfaction among nursing staff at a public sector tertiary care hospital of Islamabad is a cause for concern, given that job satisfaction has implications for the efficiency, effectiveness and sustainability of the Pakistani healthcare system. Pakistan has dual healthcare system which comprises public and private health care system. The public sector is usually under-resourced and serves the majority of the population.

Government spending on health is only Rs. 375 (US\$ 6.4) *per capita* out of which Rs. 80 (US\$ 1.3) is contributed by the partners.¹³ The disparity between these two sectors has increased the burden of the public sector, which is perceived as inefficient, ineffective and unable to deliver quality healthcare. It is possible that these conditions impact on job satisfaction among health professionals. A recent Tanzanian study also reported the poor job satisfaction in their healthcare system due to poor job description, weak rewards system, disappointing working environment and frail communications in the staff.¹⁴

Nursing staff had reported low satisfaction with professional development opportunities, recognition, poor salaries and benefits, not being involved in decision making, doing a lot of improper tasks and having more work pressure. Employees' needs and motivators vary, thus it is important to understand what motivates them to perform. In the current study, variables such as the poor salaries, working environment, professional development and dignity at workplace were seen to have a highly effects on job satisfaction. Results show that majority participants were dissatisfied due to workplace dignity, assigning the improper tasks and lack of freedom in decision at their work place. A study conducted in Sweden proved that decision making for health manager is very important for organizational betterment that directly effect on the timely management by the health professionals in the

organization.¹⁵ Dissatisfaction with the working environment correlates with unhealthy working environment and poor output of the organizations.¹⁶ Other study confirmed the contribution of emotional demands to prediction of emotional exhaustion and their effects on job satisfaction levels.¹⁷ Numerous studies conducted among healthcare professionals point to the importance of interpersonal relationships in job satisfaction, and that good interpersonal relationships lead to increased client safety, improved quality of care and greater client satisfaction.¹⁸

Our Study found that a majority of the respondents were dissatisfied with the professional and development opportunities they availed during their professional life. Literature shows human resource can be better developed and improved by providing the training and development opportunities.¹⁹ Training increases the self-confidence and self-esteem of health professionals and improves the quality of care that would significantly elevate the morale of health professionals in the organization.²⁰ This study found that the permanent employee were more satisfied than contractual employee on dimensions of job satisfaction. This contrasts with a Turkish study which found that the working with public sector were not satisfactory and has a low motivation due to their nature of organization and others factors.²¹

The present study also indicated that the respondents were dissatisfied with their income, lack of resources, time spent with each task, doing improper tasks and lack of involvement in decision-making. These findings are similar to those of study conducted in Lithuania where it was found that participants were dissatisfied with the degree of personal autonomy in clinical decision-making, the amount of time spent with patients and salaries.²²

CONCLUSION

Satisfaction with one's job can affect not only motivation at work but also career decisions, relationships with others and personal health. Those who work in a profession that is extremely demanding and sometimes unpredictable can be susceptible to feelings of uncertainty and reduced job satisfaction. Job satisfaction of healthcare workers is also an essential part of ensuring high quality care. This study may serve as a base for future studies in different organizations on a larger scale.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Although the results of a single survey cannot be considered as a solid foundation for making decisions in health planning, the results of this study suggest that interventions should be carried out to increase levels of job satisfaction among nursing staff by reinforcing

relevant human resources polices, improving working conditions and compensation. Priority should be given to improving relationships between management and nursing staff and increasing decision-making latitude among staff members. It is recommended that employees' job be redesigned to have a scope of enrichment and be of interest. Involving the nursing staff in a cooperative, team approach will allow for consideration of ways to improve aspects relating to job satisfaction. Improving the work environment so that it provides a context in line with the aspirations of nursing staff is likely to increase job satisfaction and consequently have a positive effect on individual, organizational and quality of health care services. Improved working climate, suitable and market compatible perks and benefits, taking efforts to improve the career structure including capacity building, promotions and giving due rewards on job performance.

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Address for Correspondence:

Dr. Ramesh Kumar, Instructor, Health System and Policy Department, Health Services Academy, Chak Shahzad, Islamabad, Pakistan. **Cell:** +92-300-9377486

Email: ramesh@hsa.edu.pk