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The Effect of Patient to Nurse Ratios on Nurse Burn Out, Resignation, and the Quality of Patient Care

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Abstract for Project Proposal

Background: In the aftermath of the Covid-19 pandemic, the country is facing a nursing shortage and experiencing increasing amounts of nurse burn out and resignation. Current practice on many medical surgical floors in hospitals is to assign six patients to one nurse. Nurses struggle to complete patient care during their shift for all patients leading to rapid burn out in nursing followed by early resignation and a decrease in patient care, satisfaction, and safety. The purpose of this research is to determine the effect patient to nurse ratios has on nurse burn out, nurse resignation, and the quality of patient care in hospital settings. Methods: The rate of nurse burn out, patient to nurse ratios, and the quality of patient care in hospital settings was determined by conducting a systematic review of five peer reviewed scholarly articles published in the last five years. Results: After conducting the systematic review, it was determined that by offering better incentives and conditions for nurses there was a decrease in nurse resignations. By decreasing nurse workloads and reassigning tasks to other personnel, nurses were able complete their required patient care activities which led to a decrease in nurse burn out. Therefore, decreasing the patient to nurse ratios, even from six to four patients assigned to a nurse, in hospital settings will lead to a decrease in nurse burn out and resignation, an increase in patient care, satisfaction, and safety, and more staffing in hospitals overall.

Key Words: burn out, patient care, nursing shortage, resignation, patient to nurse ratios.