

Work Intensification and Occupational Well-being: A Moderated Mediation Model of Unfinished Nursing Care and Psychological Capital in Emergency Nursing

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Abstract

Background: Healthcare organizations are under a great deal of strain to increase productivity and efficiency of services to meet the rising public demand for Emergency care in Canada. A continuous drive for system performance improvement has triggered an intensification of work and unfinished patient care, to the detriment of health care professionals' well-being. While Emergency Department (ED) nurses are known to have a predisposition for working in fast pace, high pressure, and unpredictable environments, the prolonged exposure to work intensification places them at higher risk for poor occupational well-being. As a malleable individual resource, psychological capital may protect ED nurses' well-being, with potential implications to reducing unfinished patient care. Little is known how psychological capital enhances or mitigates the effects of work intensification on organizational and provider (nursing) outcomes in the ED.

Purpose: The purpose of this study is to test a theoretical model examining the moderating effects of psychological capital on the direct and indirect relationship between work intensification, unfinished care, and well-being (work engagement, burnout) among ED nurses across Nova Scotia, Canada.

Methodology and Methods: A cross-sectional study design will be used to test the theoretical model. Proposed data collection will include use of a questionnaire for nurses' self-reported measurements of work intensification, work engagement, burnout, unfinished care, and psychological capital.

Implications for Practice: Work intensification is an intensified job demand that can contribute to employees' psychological strain and stress, leading to negative patient, provider, and organizational consequences. Identifying pragmatic strategies to help ED nurses cope with work intensification is critical. The influence of psychological capital has been examined as a possible solution to counteract the negative effects of occupational stress on well-being. This study will provide an advanced understanding of ED nurses' well-being and their level of personal psychological strengths to be successful in their work environment.