



Should I stay or should I go: Nursing careers in the first years after graduation

Oral Presentation (Scientific)

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Background: Switzerland experiences a shortage in nursing that is expected to get even more pronounced in the future. To address this problem, measures in different fields of action are necessary, as for example in recruiting, deployment of staff or in staff retention. Looking at retention, decision-making should be based on data to careers in nursing and an knowledge about influencing factors, but for Switzerland scientific data and insights are still sparse.

Research question: In this context, it is the aim of a nationwide longitudinal study to investigate factors influencing retention and career decisions of nurses in the first years after graduation in Switzerland.

Method and material: Nursing students of one cohort, graduating either at a college of professional education and training or at a university of applied science in Switzerland (2011 German speaking part; 2012 French and Italian speaking part), were surveyed at three-time points in their careers with an online survey. In the past, they were surveyed at the end of their studies and again one year after graduation. The third survey, which is administered six years after graduation, was conducted in autumn 2017 in the German speaking part and will start in autumn 2018 for the Latin part of Switzerland. From 1756 nurses graduating in this cohort 1192 (68%) participated in the first survey. The second survey had 655 participants (37% of all graduates) with a higher rate in the German speaking part (43%). The third survey is at the time only finished in the German speaking part, where again 43% of graduates participated. In the following, preliminary results of this third survey in the German speaking part will be presented using mainly descriptive statistics.

Results: Six years after graduation 95% of respondents are working and 5% are either in additional full-time studies or don't work. About 22% work and participate in further education at the same time. From those who work, 5% of respondents left the nursing profession. From those working, 24% have been looking for another job in the last month, and 15% were thinking often or very often that they should leave the profession. As conditions for staying in nursing, respondents rated increased wages, better reconciliation of work and family life, and less time pressure at work highest.

Discussion These preliminary results reveal that those participating, mostly stayed in the profession and do not intend to leave the profession. Nevertheless, they expect things to change, especially looking at their wages, the reconciliation of work and family and the time pressure. It is possible that based on this survey the rate of those still working as nurses is overestimated, because those who already left the profession may be less willing to participate than those who stayed.

Conclusion: Measures to increase retention could address priority topics indicated as key conditions for a longer stay in the profession by the nurses themselves. But for a better understanding of retention, further analyses are still needed.