

**NURSING LEADERSHIP FOR RETENTION OF NURSES IN PUBLIC AND PRIVATE HOSPITAL OF KARACHI**

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**Abstract**

**Introduction:** Nursing is one of the most recognised and stressful fields practice globally; however, in Pakistan nursing ranks at 122nd position out of the 190 nations concerning the quality of healthcare service provided. **Objective:** To evaluate the gap in the health care system in order to increase nurse retention and how nursing leadership can be beneficial in increasing the quality of the care. **Method:** The research was conducted from January 2019 to June 2019 in the 5 public and private hospitals of Karachi with sample size 100. The nurses were randomly selected. Each nurse was given a questionnaire that was divided into two parts. The data collection was performed using a close-ended questionnaire constructed on 5-point Likert scale. The first part analyses the demographics characteristics whereas the second part assesses the impact of leadership on quality of care in the hospital setup. The collected data was analysed using a statistical software IBM SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Science) Version 21.0. The data were normally distributed using Kolmogorov-Smirnov test. The collected data was computed using ANOVA and Pearson correlation. **Results:** The quantitative analysis displayed that the majority of the nurse were in their prime age 28-32 years (32%), with least in 43-47 years (8%). Most of the subjects were educated with the majority of them having a bachelor's degree (59%), followed by Masters (22%), Diploma (15%) and Post Graduate (4%). The majority of the subjects worked in private hospitals (56%), subsequently, (28%) in public hospitals and semi-private hospital (16%). The majority of the subjects had experience of more than 15 years (11%), followed by more than 10 years (23%), and with lowest percentage having less than 2 years' experience (21%). Qualitatively, no significant difference that is suggestive that the leadership style is not supportive and has a negative impact on the nurse attitude. Whereas the ANOVA results displayed no significance thus indicating the absence of nursing leadership practice which decreases the efficiency of the health care system. **Conclusion:** Nursing leadership is necessary for empowerment and better quality of care. Hospitals in Pakistan are still under the process to equip them with such leadership nevertheless, they are focusing on the training of these nurses for the future prospectus.

**Key words:** Nursing leadership, Quality of care, Empowerment.

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**INTRODUCTION**

Nursing is one of the most recognised and stressful fields practice globally; however, in Pakistan nursing ranks at 122nd position out of the 190 nations concerning the quality of healthcare service provided<sup>1</sup>. Nurses are an integral part of the hospital system as these healthcare providers are in constant connection with the patients and are responsible for the coordination of all the related procedures and prescriptions of the patients with doctors<sup>2</sup>. Leadership is the quality of a person to lead a team and coordinate the activities for the long term stability and sustenance<sup>3</sup>. Various types of leadership are known; however, transformational leadership is one of the common approaches applied by the many health care provider. Transformational leadership intrigues motivation,

coordination and direction among the team members<sup>4</sup>. This type of nurse leader inspires, communicates loyalty with shared visions, gains confidence and respect. Thus, there is a gain in productivity, an increase in employee morale and satisfies the healthcare providers.

Currently, nursing management is evidence based leadership that is responsible for the delivering high quality of healthcare and productivity. The combination of management and leadership in healthcare management is necessary for the integration and maintenance of quality care. To achieve high productivity in healthcare, quality of care maintenance is essential. Quality of care is defined in terms of the rate at which the probability increases in achieving desired health outcomes in association with the skills and

knowledge of the health care providers<sup>2</sup>. Various institutes focus on certain measures to maintain the quality of care that includes, patient centered care, evidence based management, reliability, effective, proven efficacy, and safety and equity<sup>5</sup>. For the assessment of the high quality of care certain parameters are taken into account such as the length of stay, mortality rate, hospital based infections, failure to rescue ratio, medical errors, inadequacy in management such as pain management and patient related injuries<sup>6</sup>.

Nevertheless, numerous factors are associated, which affect the quality of care such as the turnover rates. Nurse turnover rates not only have an impact on the working environment but also the financial stability of the hospitals, clinical management of patients and team morale. According to a study, the turnover rate of nursing is one of a major problem faced by the hospital, especially in Karachi Lahore and Islamabad<sup>7,8</sup>. The reason there is a high turnover rate is due to overburdening, limited staff and overtime that exhaust the nurses and raise the chances of sick leave<sup>7</sup>. Several authors suggested that to avoid this issue the nurses should be motivated and empowered so that they can uphold the responsibility of the patients. The authoritative position would encourage them to guide and manage a team along with accepting the challenge and work with a determined goal in the improvement of the quality of care<sup>8, 9</sup>. In addition, the hospitals also lack the training programs necessary for the development of the nurse to cope with new upcoming challenges<sup>9</sup>. Thus, it is necessary to demonstrate and explain the nurse the approach of leadership for a better quality of care and management.

As per literature, healthcare development depends upon the new leadership approaches and management style opted by the nurses<sup>10,11</sup>. European nations have demonstrated a positive relation between the leadership style and work environment with job satisfaction and retention rate<sup>12</sup>. Nevertheless, this approach is yet to be applied in Pakistan. Thus, there is a gap present in the hospital management that needs to be addressed for the welfare of the nurses.

Therefore, the present study evaluates the gap in the health care system in order to increase nurse retention and how nursing leadership can be beneficial in increasing the quality of the care.

## METHODS

The research was conducted from Jan 2018 to May 2019 in the five public and private hospitals of Karachi. The sample size estimated from the monkey survey software 100. Randomly 20 nurses were recruited from the selected hospital, and data was collected. The form of the data collection in the study was categorised in two groups; primary and secondary. In the primary data collection, around randomly 20 nurses were

selected from 5 hospitals. However, secondary data from previous researches were extracted and carefully examined to compare them with the recently collected data.

Each nurse recruited was given a questionnaire along with informed consent. The questionnaire was prepared using a survey monkey that was divided into two parts. The data collection was performed using a close-ended questionnaire constructed on 5-point Likert scale. The questionnaire is divided into sections, each assessing different research questions. The first part analyses the demographics characteristics whereas the second part assesses the impact of leadership on quality of care in the hospital setup.

The questionnaire was constructed defining both quantitative and qualitative parts of the assessment. The quantitative part listed question related to demographics such as gender, age, education level, employer status and experience. The collected data was analysed using a statistical software IBM SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Science) Version 21.0. The data were normally distributed using Kolmogorov-Smirnov test. The collected data was computed using ANOVA and Pearson correlation. For the qualitative analysis, the previous research was extracted and compared with the computed results.

## RESULT

The results analysed presented with a significant effect of demographics on the leadership approach to decrease the turnover of nurses and increase the quality of care. Comparison between the genders displayed that the medical profession is dominated by females with 64 of the participant's women whereas 36 were males. Further analysis of the age presented that the majority of the nurse were in their prime age 28-32 years (32%), followed by 23-27 years (29%), 33-42 years (20 years), above 47 years (11%) and 43-47 years (8%). This defines the presence of a young energetic work force with a prosperous future. Most of the subjects were educated with the majority of them having a bachelor's degree (59%), followed by Masters (22%), Diploma (15%) and Post Graduate (4%). This indicates their understanding regarding the supportive leadership and quality of care. The majority of the subjects worked in private hospitals (56%), subsequently, (28%) in public hospitals and semi-private hospital (16%). Thus our data mostly comprised of the nurse working in the private sector. The majority of the subjects had experience of more than 15 years (11%), followed by more than 10 years (23%), 2-9 years (45%), and less than 2 years' experience (21%). The subjects were literate and had a prior understanding of the leadership and its association with improvement in the quality of care.

Table: Baseline Characteristics of patients		
Total Number	Frequency	Total Percentage
Gender		
Male	36	36%
Female	64	64%
Age groups		
23-27	29	29%
28-32	32	32%
33-42	29	29%
43-47	8	8%
Level of Education		
Diploma	15	15%
Bachelors	59	59%
Masters	22	22%
Postgraduate	4	4%
Workplace		
Public sector	28	28%
Private Sector	56	56%
Semi-Private	16	16%
Work experience		
Less than 2 years	21	21%
2-9 years	45	45%
More than 10 years	23	23%
More than 15 years	11	11%

Furthermore, a questionnaire assessing the relation between the supportive leadership style and retention of nurses displayed no significant difference that is suggestive that the leadership style is not supportive and has a negative impact on the nurse attitude. However, viewing the relation in light of Pearson correlation, it defines a positive relation between leadership and retention of the nurse. Subsequently, addressing the nursing leadership relation to the quality of care, the ANOVA results displayed no significance thus indicating the absence of nursing leadership practice which decreases the efficiency of the health care system. The Pearson correlation is positive that defines a direct relation between the two variables. The Pearson correlation value 0.142 indicates a positive and good correlation between nursing leadership and the quality of healthcare. Consequently, the second part, comparison with previous research displayed that there was no significant change in the working environment provided to the nurses in addition to the respect given to them at the hospitals. The concept of supportive leadership is not appreciated in Karachi based hospitals. Nevertheless, some authors reported that nurse leadership has an important impact on the performance of the nurse<sup>1,2</sup>. However, certain other parameters can be looked before to increase retention such as increasing the pay or additional incentives. It was argued that it is the responsibility of the management to focus on planned procedures held at the hospital. The subjects of the study reported that though they had prior knowledge regarding the nursing leadership; however, this was not followed in the hospital setup. Previous studies have presented a similar result<sup>7,8</sup>. Thus, the reason for lack of motivation lies in the lack of modernisation in technology and intense work pressure.

## DISCUSSION

The present study successfully rejects the null hypothesis and presented with evidence that supports nurse empowerment, which is necessary for a better quality of care. A positive correlation suggests that the nursing leadership approach has relieved the doctors from overburdening and relieves them from constant stress while the nurse looks after the patient during the pre and post-operative periods. Globally, the turnover rate is a critical issue to be sorted. Many institutions have taken up the responsibility to train the nurse and develop a new course of management for them. Currently, with changing time nursing leadership has become an essential component of hospital management. It is considered that previously the nurses were not given a priority in the hospital environment to lead and control the management system; however, recently, there has been a change in the perspective leading to acceptance and empowering the nurse. Any reluctance and lack of support from the side of management lead to a decrease in motivation and increase work pressure and turnover rate. The lack of support is mostly observed in the public sector. Each healthcare provider plays an important role in hospital management and patient centred care. The present study assessed the patient's needs and expectations towards the endowment of quality care, to satisfy, motivate and enhance the performance of the nurses. Underlying critical issues were highlighted through the assessment that is required to build a supportive leadership style in the hospital management in association with the nurses. The present study reported that nurse turnover was a major issue in the hospital industry. This problem that affects the quality of care is the low number of nurses and increasing the morbidity rate<sup>13</sup>. The reduced number of a

nurse often results in high dissatisfaction rate due to the overburdening of work, overtime and overlapping shifts<sup>14</sup>. This, in turn, leads to a decrease in the quality of care provided. Often patients admitted are undergoing a lot of stress and anxiety, which require devoted care and attention that often is not provided by the nurses due to a lot of work pressure. Thus, it is argued that a supportive leadership style is essential to increase the nurse motivation level. The outcomes of the present study demonstrated that demographics play an important part in the growth and development of nurses<sup>15,16</sup>. Many of the nurses in the hospital setup were graduated, which signifies knowledge plays an important role in providing the quality of care. However, there was no positive relation displayed between supportive leadership and retention of nurses indicating, the lack of practice of transformational leadership followed by hospital management. This leads to over burdening and increases the workload on the nurse. Overlapping shifts of the nurse often cause health issues, fatigue and demotivation that result in the increased turnover rate<sup>17</sup>. Moreover, another barrier encountered during the implementation of nurse leadership is a harassment issue<sup>18</sup>. According to the nurses, if the management style is well established these issues could be easily sorted. As per the statistics, the female occupies the majority of the positions as a nurse thus this is an important issue faced<sup>19</sup>. In order to establish a good quality of service, proper transformational leadership is necessary to be established. Nevertheless, some nurses reported biases and harassment in the work environment. As per the nurses if one of their team members would be a leader this would increase their engagement and motivation at their work place. However, this type of system is absent from Karachi hospitals<sup>8</sup>. Most of the subjects were unhappy with the working environment of the hospital and nonsupportive leaders. The response of the patients were similar to the reported study by Alshammari<sup>13</sup>, who debated that despite the discretion between urban and rural hospitals, nursing staff at both ends were not aware of the leadership style and its importance. The government hospitals mostly have their focus on training doctors and treating the patients. Hence, nurses are not exposed to futuristic technology control and management. Samuel et al.<sup>14</sup>, claimed that although the nurse is given brief training during the university period, which they efficiently practiced in the hospitals; however, their performance is limited by their supervisors. The research reported that 60% of the people who can afford to visit the private hospital rather than the government sector due to the good quality of service provided<sup>14</sup>. Another important parameter pointed by the author is to focus to achieve nursing leadership is practicing teamwork in the hospitals. According to the findings of Naseer et al.<sup>15</sup>, the operations and management in the Sindh hospitals are improving and the quality of care was improved through the exploration of certain parameters that go unnoticed by the doctors. The literature stated that the progress of

the healthcare provider depends upon the working environment, leadership and teamwork<sup>16</sup>. The study was conducted because of the availability of limited data regarding the nurse, job satisfaction and retention. Many nurses in the study displayed resentment towards the management system. Nurse expressed that due to lack of technology especially in the public sector, there was a lack of chance to grow and expand their work horizons. The authors stated that in order to improve the working environment for the nurse supportive leadership management style should be employed<sup>17</sup>. In order to retain the qualified nursing staff the hospitals of Pakistan should consider certain parameters to improve the performance of the nurses such as staff quantity, proper scheduling to avoid overburdening and training<sup>8, 20</sup>. The Likert questionnaire revealed that apart from the lack of leadership management, there were no adequate resources in the hospital that affected their performance and quality of care provided. In the opinion of the nurses, lack of incentives was not only the reason for their lack of motivation but they felt the need to be in charge. This would challenge them to develop and implement more effective management strategies for enhancement in the quality of the working environment which is poorly developed. Most commonly recommended leadership style is transformational, transactional and supportive<sup>21</sup>. These leadership styles allow a better quality of healthcare service however, the investigation conducted in the hospitals of Karachi indicated poor development of health care facilities<sup>22, 23</sup>. Nevertheless, some of the nurses did not support the idea of transformational leadership because of their lack of knowledge and demotivation.

#### **LIMITATIONS**

The present study also has certain limitations which include the restriction of time as well as resources which impede the collection of inclusive results to a certain degree. Consequently, the parameter of the region i.e., Pakistan also hinders the generalizability of the results.

#### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

The study displayed a positive correlation between the leadership style and turnover rate which indicated for better productivity, low turnover rate at the hospitals; hence, there is a need for acknowledgement of the nurses, their efforts, and collaboration<sup>20-22</sup>. Moreover, the doctor's collaboration is necessary for the establishment of supportive leadership style, this would lower the turnover rate. Implementation of the nursing leadership allows better teamwork abilities, effective evidence-based and patient centred care. The responsibilities of the nurse would be easily distributed without overburdening them and allowing them to easily adjust to the overtime scheduling. This leads to a low level of health issues and sick leave. However, this inevitable only if the management maintains adequate resources and employees to attend to patient needs and care.

**CONCLUSION**

It can be concluded that to establish a high quality care it is essential to empower the nurse to take in charge and manage the patient responsibilities along with doctors. Hospitals in Pakistan are still under the process to equip them with such leadership nevertheless, they are focusing on the training of these nurses for the future prospectus.

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**Consent to participate:** written and verbal consent was taken from subjects and next of kin

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