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Nurse engagement and the triple aim: Improving quality, cost management and patient satisfaction

Having the right number of the right nurses is of course an important first step in ensuring that patient care is delivered in the most cost effective, quality-driven manner. However, overall engagement of these qualified staff members also plays an important role in improving quality across a health system. A wide variety of peer-reviewed studies, patient surveys and data-driven reports have documented the impact nurses have on both patient satisfaction and health outcomes. For instance, a recent study showed that nurse engagement is the number one predictor of mortality variation across hospitals. This means that it is not enough for hospitals to simply add more staff; instead, they must look closely at the engagement levels of current staff to maintain optimal care practices. Patient feedback solicited through other surveys has also documented the importance of nurses in the overall care experience. A peer-reviewed clinical study concluded that patient ratings of nursing care have the most direct correlation with ratings of overall quality of care and services. This demonstrates that when a less-than engaged nurse has a poor interaction with a patient, the patient's entire care experience can easily be tainted, regardless of his or her health outcome. In addition, surveys from both nurses and patients showed that patients cared for on units characterized as having adequate staff, good administrative support for nursing care and good relations between doctors and nurses were more than twice as likely as other patients to report high satisfaction with their care. While much of this support happens behind the scenes of care practices, this is yet another direct link between the work environment of nurses and patient satisfaction. In fact, a Press Ganey report shows that while some aspects of nurse staffing, such as hours of care and skill mix, certainly influence outcomes, the work environment of nurses has a much more significant influence across most metrics. Hospital performance on patient experience scores within value-based purchasing models also increased with improved work environments for nurses. These facts provide substantial evidence for the idea that allocating time and resources to promote happier, more engaged nurses can deliver a measurable return on investment for hospitals. In addition to its clear impact on care quality and patient satisfaction, existing evidence also demonstrates the relationship between increased revenue, cost savings and nurse retention. According to the *Journal of Nursing Administration*, when low engagement leads to nurse dissatisfaction and a lack of retention, hospitals will incur costs upwards of \$82,000 to recruit one new nurse. That figure covers vacancy, orientation and training, the lowered productivity of a newly hired nurse and advertising and recruiting costs. Other studies show that retaining just one nurse and utilizing the recommended nurse-patient ratios may result in savings of approximately \$140,000 every year.

Biography

Hussam Al-Nusair has completed his PhD in Hospital Administration from Nottingham University, UK and Master's degree in Advancing Critical Care from Kings College Dubai, UAE. He is the Chief Nursing Officer for Sheikh Khalifa Hospital, Um Alquwain since 2016 and Chief Nursing Officer in Riyadh for 8 years. He has published more than 4 papers in reputed journals. He also has over 25 years' experience in the nursing field and his main interest is around staff engagement and recognition.

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