International Conference on

HOSPITAL MANAGEMENT AND PATIENT SAFETY

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International Conference on

REPRODUCTIVE MEDICINE & BIOLOGY

J Health Inform Manag 2019, Volume: 3

May 23-24, 2019
Las Vegas, USA

The design of a norm for estimating the required nurses for referral hospital inpatient departments using nurse-to-patient ratio approach in Iran

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Statement of the Problem: Negligence in the human resource planning leads to many problems, including shortages or the excessive human workforce, the unequal human workforce distribution, and inappropriate use of staff in the organization. To prevent the unequal distribution of healthcare providers, some strategies have already been employed, such as the design and implementation of norm estimation of human resource. The purpose of this study is to develop a norm for estimating the required nurses in referral hospital inpatient wards in Iran using the nurses-to-patient ratio method. Methodology & Theoretical Orientation: This cross-sectional study was carried out in 53 inpatient departments in 14 referral hospitals affiliated to MUMS in 2017. The specialized nominal group technique was used to determine the required nurse-to-patient ratio for the inpatient departments interview, reviewing documents and staff records were used to identify factors affecting available working time and calculation of nurses' available working. Finally using nurse to patient ratio and nurse`s available working time was developed a norm a norm for estimating the required nurses for inpatient departments in referral hospitals. Findings: Eleven factors affecting the nurses' available time were identified. The hospital inpatient departments were ranked in nine levels according to the nurse-to-patient ratio and in twelve levels by considering the nurses' available time. In all scenarios, the highest required nurse estimation norm was for the ICU department of burns, and the lowest norm was for the psychiatric departments. Conclusion: The nurse-to-patient ratio and the available time of nurses are two important components in calculating a norm for estimating the required nurses in different hospital departments. Using a norm for estimating the required nurses can prevent the personalization decisions of managers on distributing nurses, and these norms can also be considered as an efficient strategy to improve the levels of employing nursing staff as well as patient care levels.

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