Nurses’ Perceptions of the Practice and Professional Work Environment in the Home Care Setting

What you need to know:
There is a growing need for healthcare organizations to respond to the increasing nursing shortage by addressing structures of healthcare, such as work environments. Work environments that promote effective nursing practice can impact patient as well as organizational outcomes. Strong nursing leadership and quality nursing practice environments with staff engagement have been demonstrated to influence patient safety outcomes, such as adverse events and patient mortality.\(^1\)

The home care sector is particularly unique among all health care settings, and can present very different challenges for nursing staff. Nurses’ evaluations of the professional and practice work environment in the home care setting may significantly impact patient and organizational outcomes. Previous research in the acute care setting exploring nursing staff evaluations of the work environment demonstrated low job satisfaction and moderate levels of burnout.\(^2\) In the home care setting, adequate job orientation, educational and training opportunities, and access to resources have been shown to influence nurses’ intention to remain employed.\(^3\)

What will we do?
The purpose of this research project is to explore home care nurse perceptions and evaluations of the practice and professional work environment in their work settings. Data from the Home Care Nurses Retention Study (Tourangeau et al.) will be accessed. Descriptive and inferential statistics will be performed using SPSS to summarize the data, and where appropriate, analysis of variance and chi-square tests will be used to examine differences among survey respondents.

Survey responses will be analyzed for both respondent characteristics and nurse perceptions of their professional and practice work environments. Demographic variables of interest include age, years of employment, employment status, and geographical area of practice. Aspects of work environments include opportunities for professional development, orientation processes, quality improvement efforts, and safety risks and issues.
**Why are we conducting this project?**

Improving our knowledge and understanding of home care nurse perceptions and evaluations of the practice and professional work environment will help inform key stakeholders to develop effective strategies to improve and sustain patient, nursing, and organizational outcomes. In particular, home care agencies can utilize the results from this research to change policies and structures to improve the safety and satisfaction of their nursing staff.

Furthermore, the findings of this study will inform the development of knowledge and translation materials for policy-makers, employers, and other key stakeholders to strengthen work environments and the nursing workforce in the home care setting.

**Deliverables:**
- Fact sheet posted on the KTEP and Tourangeau website by January 30\(^{th}\), 2015
- Development of 1\(^{st}\) draft of manuscript for publication consideration by March 30\(^{th}\), 2015

**What did we find?**

This project is currently in development.

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**About the Researchers:**

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**Where can you find more information about this project?**

Information regarding this project and other resources is available on www.tourangeauresearch.com

**References**

