

Factors Affecting Performance of Professional Nurses In A Tertiary Care Hospital, Rawalpindi

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Abstract- Objective: To assess the factors affecting performance of professional nurses in a tertiary care hospital, Rawalpindi.

Study Design: A cross sectional descriptive study was conducted on 147 randomly selected nurses using a self-administered, structured questionnaire.

Place and Study Duration: It was carried out from June 2018 to December 2018 involving nurses in a tertiary care hospital, Rawalpindi.

Materials and Methods: Data was collected through self-structured questionnaire This study explores the factors that affect performance of nurses in a tertiary care hospital, Rawalpindi with the aim of providing recommendations for improving the performance of professional nurses. Informed consent was taken and data was analyzed using SPSS version.

Results: Study results showed that there is a need to create awareness among nurses regarding the profession. The majority of professional nurses indicated their knowledge and skills as unsatisfactory. The score of implementing nursing performance standards are 89; 60.5%, providing health education to patients and families 72; 49%, in-service training 103; 70% and supervising students 91; 61.9%. It is appreciating to find that quite a number of respondents rated themselves as satisfied in the following skills; maintaining facilities and supplies got the highest score (112: 76%) followed by interpersonal relationships (107: 72.8%), improvement of quality of care (102: 69%) and clinical competencies (96; 65.3%).

Conclusion: It can be concluded that nursing performance is compromised in terms of inadequate resources, shortage of staff, workload, poor management and lack of knowledge and skills. The study results aimed to improve the performance of nurses regarding their skills and expertise.

Index Terms- Nurses, profession, performance.

I. INTRODUCTION

The nursing profession is a commitment to compassion, caring and strong ethical values; continuous development of self and others; accountability and responsibility for insightful practice; demonstrating a spirit of collaboration and flexibility. Nurses are considered as backbone of health care system. But unfortunately, in developing countries including Pakistan this profession is deprived. Nursing is important in every part of the world, but in Pakistan, the nursing profession needs special focus and attention in the health sector. Although nurses are encouraged to gain higher education and certification in a specialized area so as to give their nursing careers a proper dimension. The organizational structure of many hospitals in Pakistan is poor and conflicts with the genuine practice of professional nursing, which is adversely affecting patients. It is widely recognized that health workers are not producing the desired output of health interventions. Deficient health personnel, in terms of numbers and level of performance, are one major constraint in reducing poverty and diseases. Some of the measures proposed to rectify this situation include improving the motivation, retention, productivity and performance of health workers.¹

This study is designed to identify and analyze factors that negatively and positively affect performance of professional nurses in a tertiary care hospital in order to recommend strategies for monitoring and improving their performance. Pakistan is trying to improve the functioning of health care delivery systems to ensure that the

populations obtain timely quality care. Health care is making human resources one of the most important inputs in health care delivery.²

In 2015, Toso BRGO et al conducted a study in England regarding factors affecting performance of nurses. A qualitative research was conducted in six primary care units. The study results showed that nurses were involved in clinical case management but this strategy was not as effective as a response from complex individual needs. 43% nurses were registered as drug prescriber in NHS as well as medical professionals. Nurses also worked as case manager and it showed strong effectiveness in improving the quality of care in primary health care. The results also showed that nurses' role can be improved by improving the access to health care services, improved quality of nurse-patient relationship, better communication between nurse and patient, greater length of nursing consultation and better adherence to treatment.³

A study was conducted in Philippine in which most of the respondents were female shows that nurses were competent in promoting safe and quality care and applying nursing process in patient care. On the other hand, professional and personal growth development with physiological aspect had the lowest mean score. Which shows that they are not satisfied with their jobs. Communication and collaboration with co-nurses in work place should be enhance for maintaining satisfaction and good teamwork on clinical areas.⁴

Another study conducted in Bangladesh suggested that nurses in tertiary care hospitals perform assigned responsibilities quite adequately. However, due to lack of facilities and knowledge they rarely take part in research. Almost half of the respondents did not have idea about evidence-based practices. Appropriate policy and strategy need to be commenced by the competent authority to involve nurses in research field. Nurses should be trained on evidence-based nursing practice.⁵

Another study conducted in South Africa to identify the factors affecting performance of nurses. A quantitative study was conducted among 180 nurses from six hospitals in Namibia. The study results showed that workload, demoralization, burnout and no recognition for their contributions were affecting the performance of nursing care practices. The results also showed that their performance was not properly indicated and only 19% nurses felt that their performance was indicated in informal manner. 54.6% nurses were dissatisfied with their benefits. They said that there were no benefits except house allowances. All these factors were highly affecting the performance of nurses in providing care to the patients.^{6,7}

A study conducted in Saudi Arabia among performance of nurses. 344 nurses were selected among five mental hospitals in four cities of Saudi Arabia. The study results showed that performance of nurses was affecting due to lack of managerial support, low income and salaries, violent environment, relationship with team members and aggressive behavior of the patients. Qualification of nurses was also another factor: the percentage of diploma holder nurses was decreasing from 74 to 72% during last ten years but the bachelor degree nurses was increasing 25%. Another factor was monthly rotation that affected the performance of nurses. 54% nurses agreed that violent and aggressive behavior of the mentally ill patient was also the main factor that influenced the performance of nurses.⁸

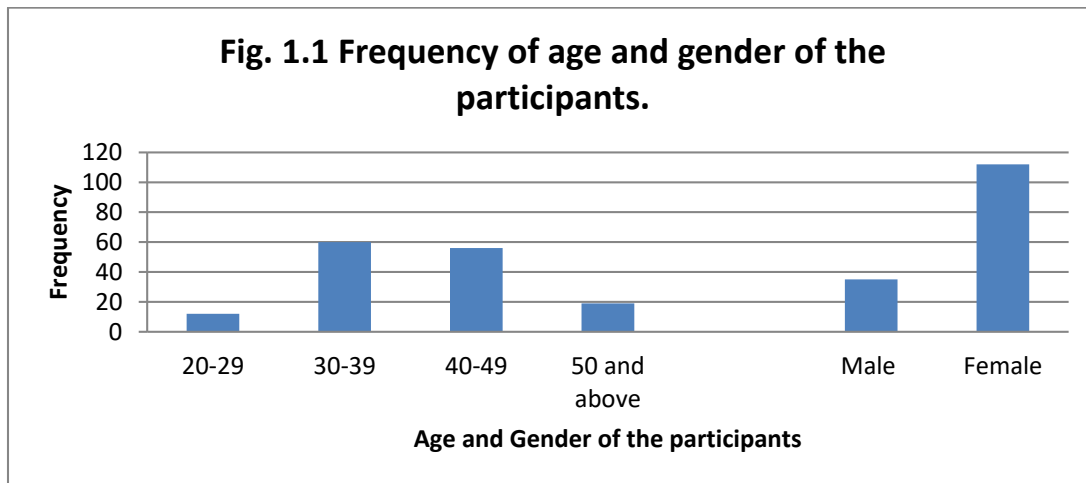
Health care in Pakistan faces difficult challenges such as shortage of health workers, migration of skilled health personnel, and the double burden of disease that affect both the general population and health personnel. A cross-sectional study was conducted in Lahore, Pakistan, showed that burnout and quality of life (QOL) of nurses were the major factor among nurses that affect the quality of health delivering system. 106 nurses were included in study. The QOL included work environment and their relationship with team members. The poor work environment was led to high turnover in nurses that greatly influenced quality of work of nurses. 20% nurses were working in night shift were more prone to burnout and showed low quality of work to their patients as compared to evening and morning shift.⁹ Nurses play a vital role in families and communities care. In Pakistan threats of spreading of contagious diseases like polio, TB and hepatitis are looming. In such circumstances, nurses' importance cannot be ruled out in anyway. Their role is crucial and will remain important and significant in the future to combat against these diseases. The existing literature consistently reports that in Pakistan health workers are dissatisfied and demotivated with the present situation.¹⁰

II. MATERIALS AND METHODS

A cross sectional descriptive study was conducted on 147 randomly selected nurses using a self-administered, structured questionnaire. It was carried out from June 2018 to December 2018 involving nurses in a tertiary care hospital, Rawalpindi. Data was collected through self-structured questionnaire This study explores the factors that affect the performance of nurses in a tertiary care hospital, Rawalpindi. Informed consent was taken and data was analyzed using SPSS version. Anonymity and confidentiality were ensured, by providing a self-addressed return cover with each questionnaire and by requesting respondents not to write their names on the questionnaire.

III. RESULTS

Figure 1.1: Age and gender of respondents



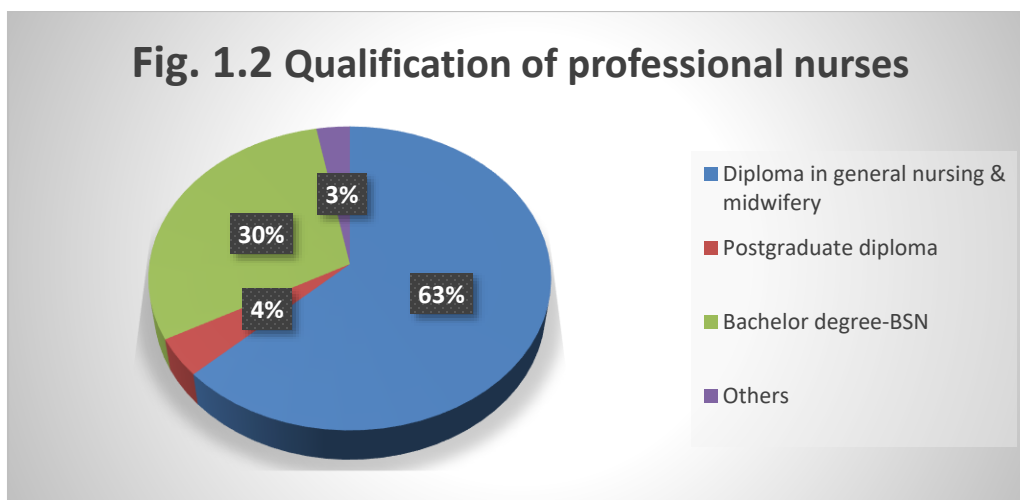
The age and gender of respondents is an important aspect during the interpretation of results. The age distribution of respondents indicated that the professional nurses (116; 78.9%) were between the ages of 30 and 49 years. Although the nursing profession in Pakistan is female-dominated, it is significant to see how many male respondents participated in the study to establish if they will provide any significantly different views from the female respondents. The data revealed that the nurse population is dominantly female as 112 (76%) professional nurse respondents are female. This does not correlate with the Pakistan Nursing Board's Statistics 2004 which indicate that 90 percent of nurses in Pakistan are female and the literature that indicates that the nursing staff in the health sector is mostly female. (WHO 2002c:33).

Highest nursing qualifications

In an attempt to determine respondents' academic qualifications and thus the skill base, respondents were requested to give their highest nursing qualification. Table 4.1 represents the results related to the highest qualification of respondents.

Table 4.1: Qualification of professional nurses

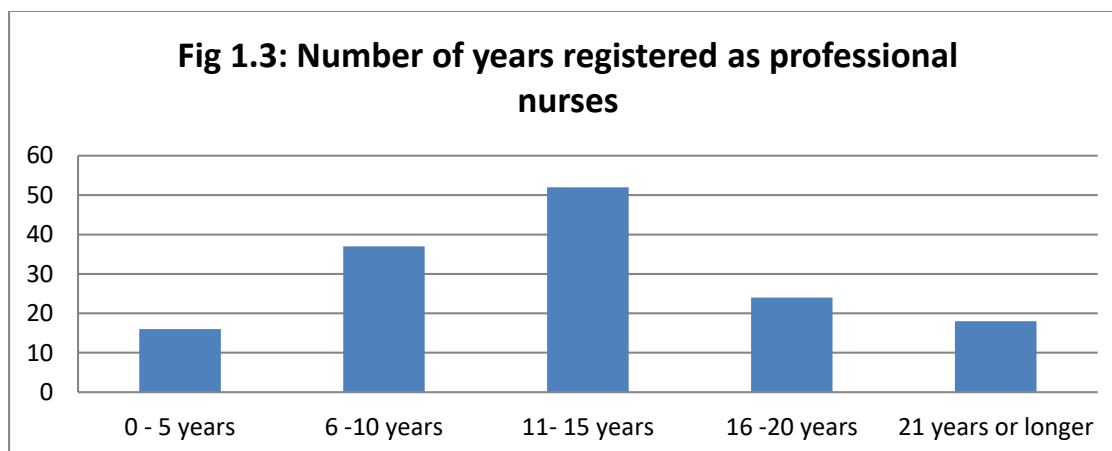
Qualification of professional nurses	Frequency	%
Diploma in general nursing & midwifery	92.6	63%
Postgraduate diploma	6	4%
Bachelor degree-BSN	44.1	30%
Others	4.3	3%
Total	147	100%



The majority of professional nurse respondents 63% reported having the diploma in nursing and midwifery as their highest qualification, while 30% have a Bachelor’s degree BSN. Almost 6% of the respondents have postgraduate diploma which shows increased demand of upgrading education level of professional nurses. Since Pakistan is in transition phase of declaring BSN as minimum qualification for nurses.

Years registered as a professional nurse

Figure 1.3 consists of data concerning the responses of professional nurses about the length of time they have been registered as nurses. The wide experience of professional nurses correlates with their ages as provided in Figure 1.3. Over half of respondents had 6-15 years of experience, which provides a strong clinical background to practice nursing.



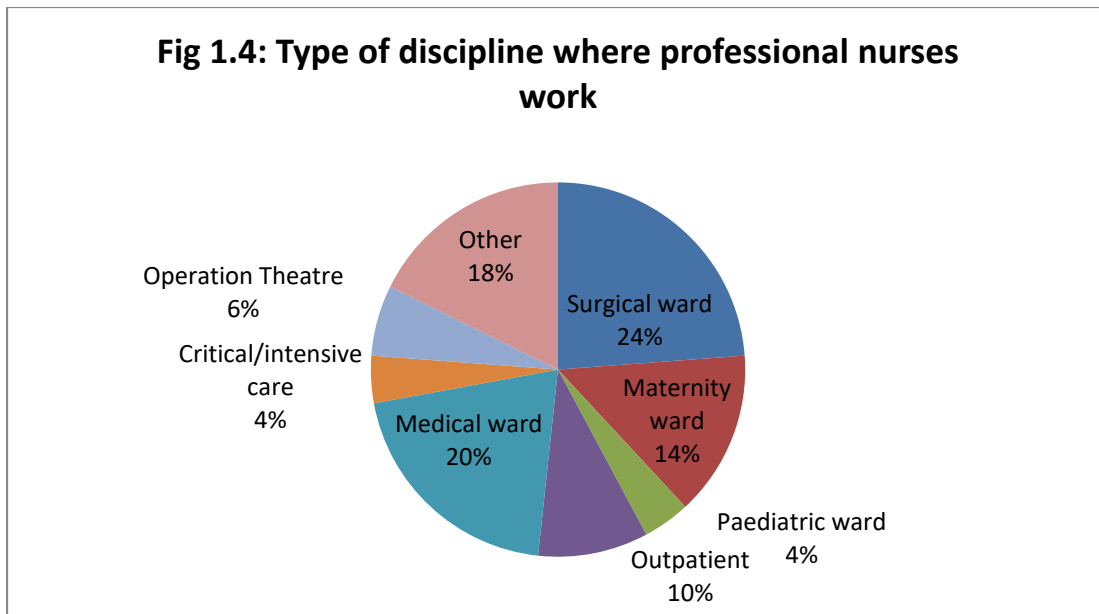
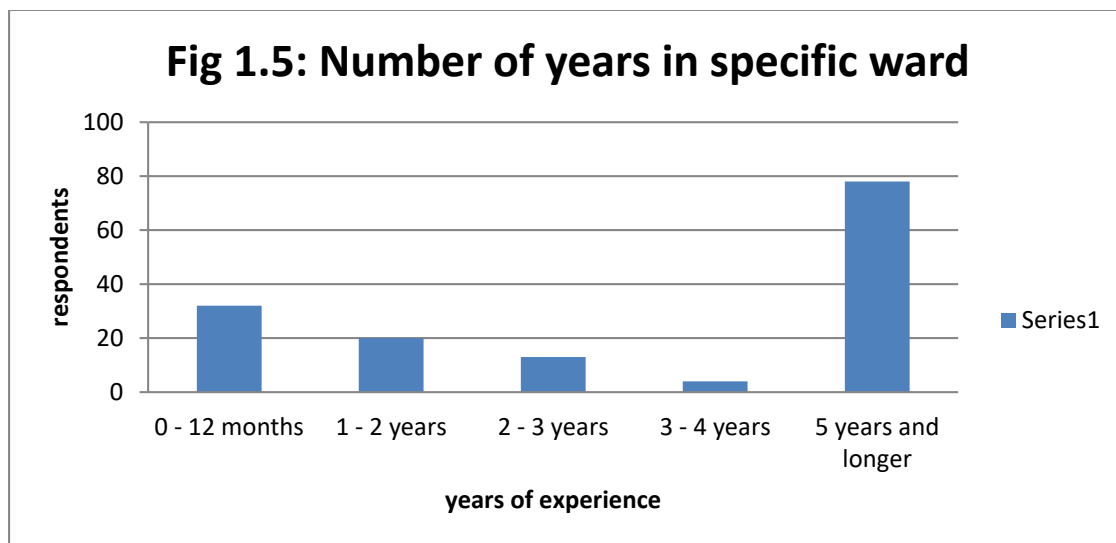


Figure 1.4 consists of data concerning the type of clinical wards or where professional nurse respondents work. The data revealed that professional nurses worked in different types of wards: surgical wards 24%, medical wards 20% and maternity wards 14%. It can be concluded that professional nurses work in different disciplines, environments and workplaces.



More than half 78 participants have worked in their wards for 5 years and longer, this gives them experience on issues pertaining to that specific ward, while less than a third 32 participants worked in their specific wards for 12 months or less as indicated in Figure 1.5.

Table 4.2: Professional nurse responses on aspects related to knowledge and skills

Knowledge and Skills		Satisfied	Unsatisfied	Uncertain	Total
Implementing of nursing performance standards	n	31	89	27	147
	%	21.1	60.5	18.4	100
Health education	n	45	72	30	147

	%	30.6	49.0	20.4	100
Clinical competencies	n	96	38	13	147
	%	65.3	25.9	8.8	100
Interpersonal relations.	n	107	29	11	147
	%	72.8	19.7	7.5	100
Patient counseling skills	n	72	47	28	147
	%	49.0	32.0	19.0	100
Supervising student nurses.	n	28	91	28	147
	%	19.0	61.9	19.0	100
In-service training	n	11	103	33	147
	%	7.5	70.1	22.4	100
Improvement of quality of care	n	102	28	17	147
	%	69.4	19.0	11.6	100
Maintaining facilities, equipment and supplies.	n	112	12	23	147
	%	76.2	8.2	15.6	100

Skills and knowledge of professional nurses

The majority of professional nurses indicated their knowledge and skills as unsatisfactory. It is concerning point that most of the participants rated themselves as unsatisfied in the following skills: Implementing of nursing performance standards (89; 60.5%), providing health education to patients and families (72; 49%), in-service training (103; 70%) and supervising students (91; 61.9%). It is appreciating to find that quite a number of respondents rated themselves as satisfied in the following skills Maintaining facilities and supplies got the highest score (112: 76%) followed by interpersonal relationships (107: 72.8%), improvement of quality of care (102: 69%) and clinical competencies (96; 65.3%).

It can be concluded that not all professional nurses have the required skills that will allow them to provide effective nursing care and guide student nurses' practical learning in the clinical environment. These are very important skills that professional nurses need to have, especially since the hospitals involved in the study is teaching hospital and students are posted there for clinical experience (Martinez 2003:224).

Table 4.3: Professional nurse responses on workspace and environment (n=147)

Workspace and environment	Agreement on a scale (1-5)					*Total	
		Strongly disagree	Disagree	Uncertain	Agree		Strongly agree
My work environment is safe and free from hazards.	n	33	38	27	37	7	142
	%	23.2	26.8	19.0	26.1	4.9	100.0
Good work place layout.	n	15	25	37	39	6	122
	%	12.3	20.5	30.3	32.0	4.9	100.0
Comfortable temperature	n	23	35	28	50	9	145
	%	15.9	24.1	19.3	34.5	6.2	100.0
Necessary instruments are available	n	38	43	14	41	5	141
	%	27.0	30.5	9.9	29.1	3.5	100.0
Instruments in working conditions.	n	38	43	16	41	5	143
	%	26.6	30.1	11.2	28.7	3.5	100.0
Materials and supplies sufficient.	n	40	49	19	29	7	144
	%	27.8	34.0	13.2	20.1	4.9	100.0
Antiseptic hand solutions for protection of staff and patients are available.	n	17	23	14	71	19	144
	%	11.8	16.0	9.7	49.3	13.2	100.0

Infection control strategy guidelines available	n	9	17	22	67	29	144
	%	6.3	11.8	15.3	46.5	20.1	100.0

*Missing values varied between 2 and 25

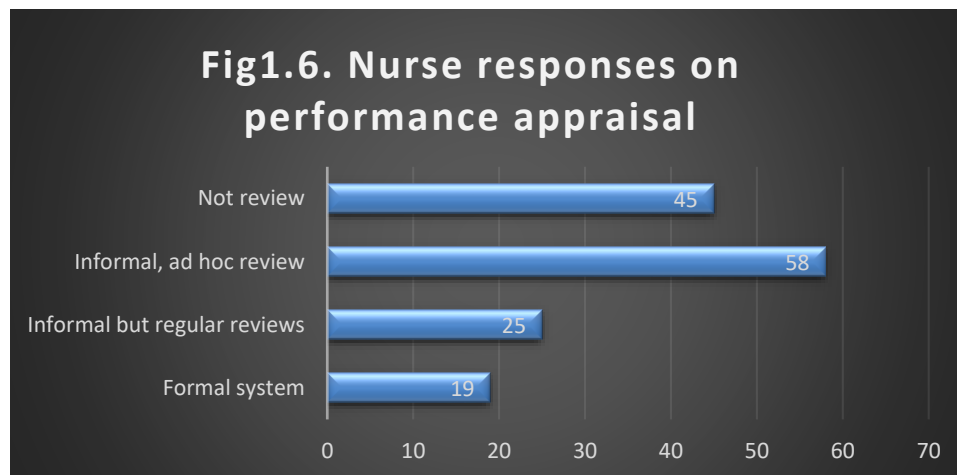
Aspects related to workspace and environment

Workspace and environment include issues related to physical conditions such as work tools, equipment and material as well as physical layout such as space, and clean and safe environment. Table 4.11 presents professional nurses’ responses with regard to workspace and environment. The majority of respondents either strongly disagreed or disagreed that the necessary instruments are available (81; 57.5%), that instruments are in working condition (81; 56.7%) and that materials and supplies are sufficient (89; 61.8%). It is positive to note that more than half of the nurses either agreed or strongly agreed that infection control guidelines are available (96; 66.6%), and that antiseptic hand solutions for protection of staff and patients are available (90; 62.5%). It can be concluded that the opinion of professional nurses is that infection control is taken seriously and thus the patients and health workers are protected against transfer of infection. This is emphasized by Swansburg (1999:676) who stated that infection control is a major aspect of quality control and risk management. Contrary to this, half of the respondents (71; 50%) either disagreed or strongly disagreed that the work environment is safe and free from hazard.

Table 4.4: Professional nurse responses on how performance appraisal is done

How performance appraisal is done	Frequency	%
Formal system	19	13%
Informal but regular reviews	25	17%
Informal, ad hoc review	58	39%
Not review	45	31%
Total	147	100%

Fig.1.6. Nurse responses on performance appraisal



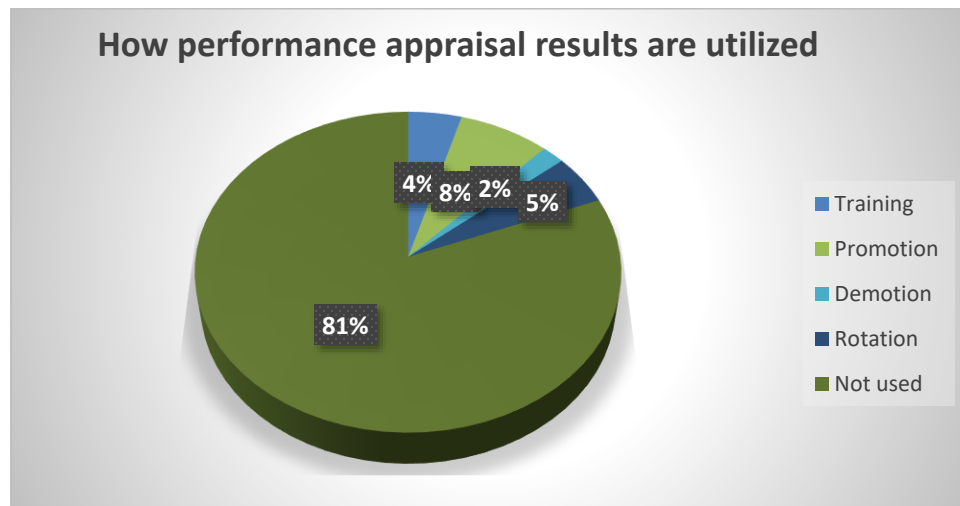
Performance appraisal

Measurement and evaluation of performance are very important tasks in any organization. It is a crucial part of an organization’s improvement process and contributes to assessing the employees’ strengths; weaknesses and development needs (Troskie 1993:534; Torrington & Hall 1998:325). The responses of professional nurses on how performance reviews are done in their hospital are presented in Fig 4.5. In response to the question of how performance is reviewed in their ward the result is very alarming since 39% of respondents said that informal, ad hoc reviews took place and 31% of participants said that performance appraisals are not reviewed. Only 13% of the participants were agreed to formal system of performance appraisal was carried out in the hospital.

Table 4.5: Professional nurse responses on how performance appraisal results are utilized

Responses on how performance appraisal results are utilized	Frequency	%
Training	7	4%
Promotion	12	8%
Demotion	3	2%
Rotation	8	5%
Not used	128	81%
Total	147	100%

Fig 1.7: Professional nurse responses on how performance appraisal results are utilized



Almost 81% of the professional nurses said that the performance appraisal results are not used, while 12% said that the results are used for promotion and training, respectively. These responses correlate with the responses in Fig 1.6, with the majority mentioning that performance is not reviewed. This situation is very alarming, taking into account the crucial role of performance management in an organization (Armstrong 1994:25) and as indicated by Martinez (2003:216) that performance management is generally absent or limited in national health systems in developing countries. There is a lot to be done to ensure that performance appraisal of staff nurses for their motivation and progression in the organization.

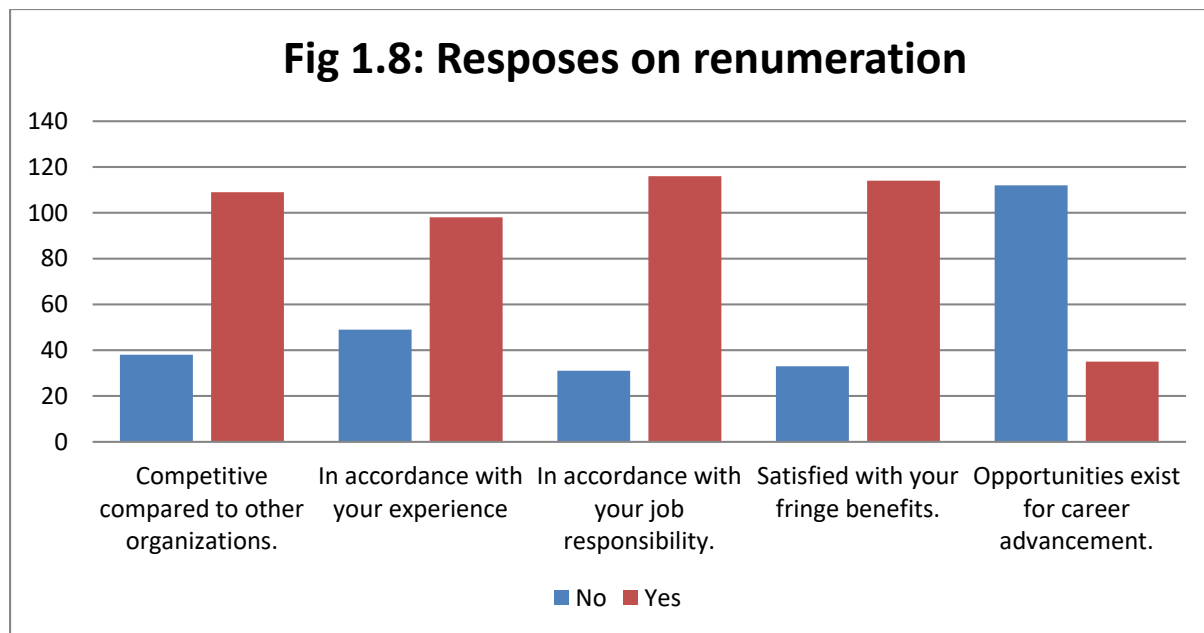


Fig 1.8 contains professional nurses’ responses regarding aspects related to remuneration, benefits and recognition that may affect the performance of nurses. The majority of respondents were in favor that their remuneration is in accordance with experience, job responsibilities and as competitive to other organizations. With regard to the statement on career advancement, the majority of the respondents were in favor that opportunities do not exist for career advancement in the nursing field in the organization.

IV. DISCUSSION

Nursing is important in every part of the world, but in Pakistan, the nursing profession needs special focus and attention in the health sector. Although nurses are encouraged to gain higher education and certification in a specialized area so as to give their nursing careers a proper dimension. The performance of an organization depends on the knowledge, skills and motivation of individuals.

In Pakistan females join this profession at very early stage and they are willing to work very enthusiastically but with the time they are more prone to burnout and dissatisfied with their work environment. They have multiple role responsibilities so that they cannot perform their duties actively. As the health care system demands high level of their concentration, energy, alertness and empathetic behavior. All these roles require energy which cannot be fulfilled by each individual. The higher the positive work environment the lower the burnout and turnover among nurses. On the other hand, the negative environment results in low outcomes with high mortality rates, delay in hospital stay of patients and high level of costs on patients.^{11,12}

The performance of nurses is better in England. 43% nurses were registered as drug prescriber in NHS as well as medical professionals. Nurses also worked as case manager and it showed strong effectiveness in improving the quality of care in primary health care. There is no gender bias and male dominance in these countries. 80% nurses are females and satisfied with their job.

Our study results showed that performance appraisal, remuneration and career opportunities are not revised annually. Majority of nurses are not satisfied with their jobs because of low salaries, over-work load, poor work environment, monthly rotations and others. These factors are highly influencing the performance of nurses and also impact the quality of work.

V. CONCLUSION

The result of this study indicates that aspects related to skills and knowledge is important factor that are affecting performance of nurses. The highlighted aspects that need to be improved through ongoing workshops and trainings were implementation of nursing performance standards, provision of health education to patients and families, in-service training and supervising students. Although the organizational culture and remuneration have positive influence on professional nurses but for better performance of nurse’s aspects related to performance appraisal and its

utilization needs to be reviewed in the organization. Since performance appraisal is a crucial function of performance management and vital method for assessing the outcome of individual contributions to an organization.

VI. RECOMMENDATIONS

The results revealed the factors affecting the performance of nurses in a Hospital of Rawalpindi. These factors should be addressed to ensure gradual sustainable growth in improving the performance of nurses in a changing health environment. The activities should be associated to advocacy; strengthening of knowledge and expertise; development of leadership and management skills; development of mechanisms for enhancing and improving performance, including skills for performance management; generation of information and knowledge and research on the nursing profession.

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