
● SUMMARY SUMMARY ●

SUMMARY OF THE 1991 SURVEY OF HOSPITAL NURSING

Japanese Nursing Association
Survey & Research Section
Development & Promotion Department

Overview of Survey

This survey was conducted in order to acquire basic data concerning the current status of hospital nursing and nursing administration. The information gathered will be used to determine the future course of activity of the Japanese Nursing Association so as to respond to the rapidly changing hospital nursing environment.

JNA conducts these surveys every four years. The first, was conducted in 1987. The present survey, which is the second, was conducted in October 1991. It was carried out by means of questionnaires sent to 5077 hospitals throughout Japan which employed at least one JNA member. The questionnaires were completed by the hospital's head nurse. The number of valid questionnaires returned was 2,758, or 54.3 percent (60.2% were returned in the previous survey).

Summary of Results

1. Characteristics of Hospitals Which Responded to Survey

Most of the hospitals surveyed were private institutions (54.6%). Virtually all of the remaining hospitals (44.9%) were public institutions established by central or local government, or by social insurance organizations. The breakdown by size was: 20.1% with less than 100 beds,

66.1% with from 100 to 499 beds, and 11.7% with 500 or more beds.

2. Assignment of Nursing Personnel

(1) Wards, Outpatient Division

Nurses* (including public health nurses and midwives) accounted for a larger percentage of the nursing personnel assigned to the wards of general hospitals than of psychiatric or geriatric hospitals. The percentage of nurses* was especially high in hospitals designated as providing Special Class 3 nursing service under the social insurance medical reimbursement system. The ratio of nurses* to assistant nurses** and nursing assistants in such hospitals was 8:1:1.

(Note: "Nurses*" includes male nurses; "Assistant nurses**" includes male assistant nurses.)

The number of patients admitted to general hospitals per nursing staff member (which includes both licensed nurses and unlicensed nursing assistants) was 2.01. In Special Class 3 hospitals, which employ an especially large number of nursing personnel, the corresponding figure was 1.58; the number of patients admitted per licensed nursing staff member was 1.78.

The average number of patients cared for by each licensed nursing personnel assigned to the outpatient divisions of general hospitals was 24. This figure was especially high (30) at large hospitals with over 900 beds and at university hospitals.

(2) Special divisions

In hospitals with operating rooms, the average number of nursing personnel assigned per operating table was 2.74, a 0.3 increase since the previous survey.

Hospitals that have established special departments in which nursing personnel serve as visiting nurses or care for outpatients account for 22.8% of the total. In September 1991, these departments carried out a total of 17,656 home visits and 29,710 health consultations.

The percentage of hospitals which have established independent emergency divisions was 5.6%, while those operating emergency departments as part of their outpatient services accounted for 53.2% of the total. In hospitals whose emergency departments have been designated as tertiary emergency treatment facilities that can treat seriously ill patients, 48.9% of the nurses work under a three-shift system.

(3) Assignment of male nursing personnel

Male nursing personnel were employed by 49.7% of the hospitals surveyed. Of these,

55.3% were assigned to psychiatric wards, 22.0% to wards other than psychiatric, and 24.6% to surgery.

3. Working Hours

(1) Night work

According to surveys conducted in recent years, the number of personnel assigned to each night-shift, period increases in proportion to the nighttime work load. These surveys also indicated that there has been no decrease in the frequency of night shifts worked by each nursing staff member.

The results of the present survey also indicated no decrease in night-shift work: rather, they showed a slight increase. Among nursing personnel assigned to nighttime work under a three-shift system in general hospital wards, the majority (48.2%) worked during the midnight shift with one other nursing staff member. However, the percentage of nursing personnel who shared the midnight shift with two others was 38.2%, a figure which has tended to rise in recent years. Nursing personnel employed under a three-shift system were required to work on average 8.7 times per month, no improvement on the figure of 8.6 times per month obtained in the previous survey.

(2) Prescribed weekly working hours and overtime hours

Nursing personnel were required to work an average of 41.2 hours per week (40.8 hours if national and public hospitals are excluded). The average workweek of employees in general industry in Japan at the time of the survey was 40.3 hours.

Hospital ward personnel worked an average of 9.3 hours of overtime per month. The corresponding figure for outpatient personnel was 7.0, and for operating room personnel 16.6.

(3) Holidays

The results of the survey indicated an increase in the number of hospitals using a system of two holidays in two weeks of the month (with one holiday in the other two weeks) rather than one and a half holidays every week. Of the total number of nursing personnel working in hospitals that responded to the survey, 56.5% had two holidays in two weeks of the month, while only 5.8% were granted a full two holidays every week. In contrast, 45.9% of employees in general industry at the time of the survey had two days off per week.

The average number of annual paid vacation days per person was 10.9 days. The

percentage of hospitals that granted a special summer holiday of one day or more was 78.9%, which represents an 11.4% increase since the previous survey. The average number of special summer holidays granted was 3.7.

4. Relief for Pregnancy and Childbirth and Childcare Support

The present survey revealed that, in fiscal 1990, 5.1 percent of female nursing personnel working in hospitals that responded to the survey gave childbirth.

Among mothers who worked in hospitals which granted childcare leave, 58.8% took such leave, for an average period of 6.5 months.

The percentage of hospitals which provided childcare facilities that could be used by nursing personnel was 38.1%.

As measures to provide relief for pregnancy, 25% of hospitals allowed personnel to transfer to other assignments, 14.4% granted additional holidays for hospital visits. As measures for relief following childbirth, the majority of hospitals (67.4%) granted leave, while others (26.8%) allowed transfers to different assignments. Many hospitals provided no special relief for pregnancy (56.3%) or for childbirth (22.7%).

5. Wages

The starting monthly salary of nurses* was ¥218,400, which is 18.0% higher than at the time of the previous survey. The salaries of nurses* who had worked for a continuous 10-year period was ¥280,770, which represents a 10.6% increase over the same period.

6. Current Staffing Efforts and Measures to Increase Staffing Levels

(1) Current staffing efforts

Hospitals which had plans to hire recent nursing graduates in fiscal 1991 had reached 82.3% of their scheduled target by October of the same year. The separation rate of nursing personnel in fiscal 1990 averaged 11.3%. The survival rate of newly hired personnel in the same year averaged 86.6%.

(2) Age of nursing personnel and years of continuous service

The average age of nursing personnel was found to be 33.4 years. The breakdown by specific nursing occupation is: 32.3 for nurses*, 35.2 for assistant nurses**, and 33.4 for midwives.

The average number of years of service of nursing personnel is 8.3 years. The average number of years of service is highest in hospitals administered by local governments (10.6), lowest in hospitals administered by medical corporations and individuals (6.0%).

(3) Employment of part-time nursing personnel

Part-timers accounted for 3.6% of nursing personnel assigned to hospital wards, and for 23.7% of nursing personnel working in outpatient divisions.

(4) Hiring of previously employed nurses

The number of previously employed nursing personnel hired by a sample of 1,809 hospitals was 12,957. For 64.0% of these employees, there was no break period to search for employment between the time they resigned from their previous positions to the time they started their now jobs.

(5) Measures to retain nursing personnel and to attract new personnel

In this survey, hospitals were asked to indicate which measures had been effective in enhancing their success in retaining currently employed nursing personnel. The measure most frequently given was "salary increases" (47.8%), followed by "improved education and training" (45.0%) and "assistance in higher education." (36.8%), (Some respondents indicated more than one of the above measures.)

As for measures effective in attracting recent graduates, the ones most frequently given were "improved education and training" (35.8%), "scholarship loans" (35.2%), and "higher salaries" (31.9%)

(6) Employment of graduates from nursing-related colleges

The percentage of hospitals that employed nursing personnel who had graduated from nursing-related colleges was 19.1%. The total number of personnel employed was 2,141.

When asked to state their plans for hiring graduates of nursing-related colleges, 70.5% of the hospitals indicated that they wanted to hire such graduates. Of those hospitals which at the time of the survey did not employ graduates of nursing-related colleges, 65.4% indicated that they wanted to hire such graduates.

(7) Plans to increase staffing levels over next three years

The percentage of hospitals that planned to increase their staffing levels was 71.2%. The size of these planned increases was indicated by 1,694 of the hospitals, and amounted to a total increase of 31,075 employees.

7. Education of Nursing Personnel

(1) The cost to nursing departments of education, research and books

According to the fiscal 1991 budget, the average amount spent on education and research per nursing staff member was ¥9,125. The book budget in the same year was ¥1,758.

(2) Hospital-provided education

The main programs in nursing education provided by hospitals include "Education for Newly Hired Nurses" (80.5%), "Current Topics in Medical Treatment and Nursing" (64.9%) and "Education in Manner and Behavior toward Patients" (56.9%).

In comparison with the findings of the previous survey, a larger number of hospitals offered the programs "Support for Nursing Researchers" and "Leader Education."

(3) Acceptance of trainees from overseas

The percentage of hospitals which had accepted foreign trainees with nursing licenses in the preceding year was 4.5%. The majority (45.6%) of these trainees came from China, while the remainder came mainly from other Asian countries (40.0%). When asked if they had plans to accept trainees in the future, 3.4% of hospitals indicated that they did, while 2.3% indicated that they were inclined to do so and were giving the matter consideration.

(4) Optimal level of basic nursing education

Of the head nurses who responded to this survey, 19.3% believed that education should aim at providing practical skills to enable personnel to work independently on the job. On the other hand, 76.6% believed that since practical skills are taught on the job, personnel should be provided with basic education that they can apply to their work.

8. Sharing Work with Other Health Care Professionals

(1) Participation of other health care professionals in case conferences

The percentage of hospitals in which other health care professionals (i. e., physicians, nursing assistants, medical social workers, physical therapists, and occupational therapists)

participated in case conferences was 83.2%. The rate of participation is increasing across all health care occupations.

(2) Services provided by nutritionists and pharmacists to hospitalized patients

The percentage of hospitals that employed nutritionists to provide nutritional guidance and other services to hospitalized patients was 86.7%, virtually no change since the time of the previous survey. The percentage of hospitals that employed pharmacists to instruct hospitalized patients on the taking of medicine and the like was 23.5%, which represents a substantial increase over the results of the previous survey (9.7%).

(3) Assignment of work to employees of other occupations

In comparison with the findings of the previous survey, an increasing percentage of hospitals employ workers in occupations other than nursing to convey medicine, hygienic materials and test specimens around the hospital. As for pharmacy services, however, little progress has been made in transferring to pharmacy departments the work that nursing personnel have been required to do, such as mixing medicine for intravenous drips and inventory control of medicines distributed around the wards.

9. Nursing Assiatant Service

(1) Implementation of direct care service

Over 50% of the general hospitals engaged nursing assistants and virtually all of these were geriatric hospitals. Nursing assistants provided a variety of daily direct care services, including transport of patients to the examination rooms, testing rooms and rehabilitation rooms of other departments, as well as assistance for bathing and showers, meals, use of toilet, and face-washing.

(2) Service supervision

Head nurses had differing views relating to the provision of direct care service to patients by nursing assistants. Specifically, 12.0% indicated that they did not use nursing assistants in this capacity, while 63.6% indicated that they used nursing assistants under the direction of nurses. Also, 21.2% stated that the use of nursing assistants to provide such service is left to the individual judgment of nurses.

Head nurses indicated several problem areas concerning the provision of direct care by

nursing assistants. Difficulties included providing education, specifying work responsibilities, service supervision, and creating a system of providing such service under the direction of nurses.

10. Nursing Administration System

(1) Organization

The total number of administrative personnel (head nurses, assistant head nurses, chief nurses, nurses in charge, etc.) assigned to the nursing departments of a sample of 2,697 hospitals was 38,467. The number of subordinates per administrative personnel was 8.4.

(2) Reflection of the views of the nursing department

Among the hospitals which responded to this survey, 72.4% stated that they had formal rules which stipulated that the views of the nursing department must be taken into account in discussions of the hospital's future development. However, with respect to the implementation of plans for computerizing internal hospital operations, only 53.6% of hospitals had such formal rules, and of these, only 39.4% stated that the views of the nursing department were actually taken into account.

(3) Head nurse

The average age of head nurses was 53.5 years, and 96.6% were women. The average number of years of experience of head nurses was 6.5 years, of which 4.9 were spent at their present hospital.